

Sumter County Middle School



Student-Parent Handbook

**2026-2027
Grades 7 & 8**

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THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

Name:

Address:

City:

State: Zip Code: Phone:

This is your Student Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year. You will find an acknowledgment page in the back of this handbook. Parent and student signature is required at the back of the handbook and return it to your Homeroom teacher by August 10, 2026.

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear SCMS Family:

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! Our theme this school year is "Putting It All Back Together." We are excited to celebrate our students as they adjust and grow to the next level of learning. As the principal, I look forward to welcoming students into our building. Our teachers are equipped with 21st Century skills and transformational mindsets to help deliver quality and engaging instruction to our students.

We are committed to building a school community where everyone takes pride in the school. Through our commitment, we are here to encourage our students to work, learn, and grow into productive and successful citizens. I'm optimistically looking forward to the opportunity of leading our teachers, parent(s)/guardian(s), students, staff, and the community in working together to accomplish a common goal: Providing our students with the best education possible to prepare them to graduate high school college and career ready so that they can be competitive globally.

We strive to provide a diverse offering of academic and extra-curricular opportunities to our students. Core academic and connection classes, which include academic interventions, provide students with the opportunity to be successful. We will continue to integrate components of virtual instruction that have been successful into our instructional strategies along with our traditional instructional strategies. Clubs, CTAE organizations, band, sports, BETA Club and cheerleading are examples of the extra-curricular opportunities offered to our students. These opportunities allow students to apply lessons learned in class as well as showcase their skills and community service.

Our entire staff will work hard to create a positive learning environment that promotes student achievement and growth. We will create a culture of high expectations for students and staff so that teaching and learning can occur at a high level.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with you this year and I look forward to a successful 2026 - 2027 school year.

Welcome to Sumter County Middle School, Home of the Panthers!

Martin Mitchell

Martin Mitchell
Principal

Sumter County Middle School

PANTHERS PRIDE



School Theme: “THE MIDDLE...where GREATNESS happens”

School Colors: Blue and Gold

School Mascot: Panthers

Each student should remember that school life is comparable to life in a community. They should practice the qualities of good citizenship which are necessary in a good community. Students can contribute to a positive school spirit by following the suggestions below:

- 1. Show loyalty at school functions.**
- 2. Support the school and strive for excellence in academic and extracurricular activities.**
- 3. Show courteous and respectful behavior to teachers, officials, adults, and peers.**
- 4. Take pride in the school and school functions.**
- 5. Demonstrate good sportsmanship by being fair, courteous, and generous in all activities including being a humble victor and/or a graceful defender.**

Panther Code: R.O.A.R.

Responsible
Ownership
Attitude
Respect

PHILOSOPHY OF SUMTER COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sumter County Middle School strives to meet the needs of all students by examining their individual circumstances and abilities and developing learning experiences that encourage students to reach their full potential. Our goal is to develop the mental, physical, social, and academic skills of 7th and 8th grade students, while preparing them to be responsible, contributing citizens of the community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of SUMTER COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL is to provide a safe learning environment conducive to learning that will equip all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in high school and graduate college and career ready.

SUMTER COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL'S BELIEFS

We believe that:

1. Education is the key to success and should be the top priority of our community.
2. Education is a partnership among the home, the school, and the community.
3. High expectations must be established and communicated to teachers, students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the community.
4. Each student is important, unique, and worthy of acceptance.
5. Each child learns at different rates in a variety of ways, and each child can achieve.
6. Every child has the right to learn in a safe, orderly environment.
7. Each individual must be responsible for his/her behavior and must respect the person and property of others.
8. Competent, caring personnel are essential to every position within the school.
9. The school system has the responsibility to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant for success in an ever-changing world.
10. The learning process is a life-long journey.

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

2026-2027 System Calendar

July 23-24 & 27-29, 2026	Pre-Planning
July 28, 2026	Open House
July 30, 2026	1st Day of School
September 7, 2026	Labor Day Holiday
September 9, 2026	Progress Reports
September 11, 2026	Early Release /Parent Teacher Conferences
October 1, 2026	End of the 1st Nine Weeks
October 2, 2026	W.I.N. Learning Day/ Curriculum Planning
October 12-16, 2026	Fall Break
October 21, 2026	Report Cards
November 6, 2026	Early Release/Teacher Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day
November 11, 2026	Progress Reports
November 20, 2026	Early Release/Curriculum Planning
November 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
December 17, 2026	Early Release/ Teacher Workday/
	End of 2nd Nine Weeks/1st Semester
December 18, 2026	Teacher Workday
December 21, 2026 - January 1, 2027	Winter Break
January 4, 2027	Teachers Return/Curriculum Planning
January 5, 2027	Students Return
January 13, 2027	Report Cards
January 18, 2027	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 10, 2027	Progress Reports
February 11, 2027	Early Release/ Parent Teacher Conferences
February 12, 2027	Professional Learning Day
February 15, 2027	Mid-Winter Break/President's Day
February 26, 2027	Early Release/Teacher Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day
March 11, 2027	End of the 3rd Nine Weeks
March 12, 2027	W.I.N. Learning Day/ Curriculum Planning
March 15, 2027	Mid-Spring Break
March 24, 2027	Report Cards
April 5-9, 2027	Spring Break
April 21, 2027	Progress Reports
May 20, 2027	SCHS Baccalaureate
May 21, 2027	Last Day of School/Early Release/Report Cards (K-8)/ End
	of 4th Nine Weeks/Teacher Workday/SCHS Graduation
May 24-25, 2027	Post Planning
May 27, 2027	Report Cards (Grades 9-12)
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day

REVISED 6-1-2026

SUMTER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION – 100 LEARNING LANE – AMERICUS, GEORGIA 31719 -229-931-8500

The Sumter County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap in any educational program/activities or in employment practices.

2026-2027
DATES TO REMEMBER

PROGRESS REPORTS

1 st Nine Weeks Progress Reports	September 9, 2026
2 nd Nine Weeks Progress Reports	November 11, 2026
3 rd Nine Weeks Progress Reports	February 10, 2027
4 th Nine Weeks Progress Reports	April 21, 2027

REPORT CARDS

1 st Nine Weeks Report Cards.....	October 21, 2026
2 nd Nine Weeks Report Cards	January 13, 2027
3 rd Nine Weeks Report Cards.....	March 24, 2027
4 th Nine Weeks Report Cards.....	May 21, 2027

EARLY RELEASE/PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE/
W.I.N. LEARNING DAY DATES

September 11, 2026	Early Release/Parent TeacherConferences
October 2, 2026	W.I.N. Learning Day/Curriculum Planning
November 6, 2026..	Early Release/Teacher Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day
November 20, 2026	Early Release/Curriculum Planning
December 17, 2026	Early Release/Teacher Workday
February 12, 2027	Early Release/Parent Teacher Conferences
February 26, 2027..	Early Release/Teacher Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day
March 12, 2027	W.I.N. Learning Day/Curriculum Planning
May 21, 2027	Last Day of School/Early Release

SECTION I - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

ACCREDITATION

Sumter County Middle School is accredited by Cognia.

COMPUTER USE

Students are required to use computer technology for word processing, communication, research, multimedia projects, and testing. Unacceptable use of the computer and/or technology may result in disciplinary actions that vary depending on the severity, repeated violations, applicable Board of Education policies, and administration discretion. It is not acceptable to use this Internet access for any purpose, which violates the laws of the State of Georgia and the United States of America. Users must adhere to all copyright laws.

CURRICULUM

The state of Georgia has adopted a set of core standards called the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts to provide a clear and consistent framework, so that upon graduation students will be able to succeed in credit - bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) provides a consistent framework to prepare students for success in college and/or the 21st century workplace. The GSE for language arts, mathematics, and literacy in science, history/social studies, and technical subjects will ensure that all Georgia students have an equal access and opportunity to master the skills and knowledge needed for success beyond high school. Effective implementation of the GSE requires support on multiple fronts, including strengthening teacher content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and contextualized tasks for students that effectively engage 21st Century learners. The standards create a foundation to work collaboratively across states and districts, pooling resources and expertise, to create curricular tools, professional development, common assessments, and other instructional materials.

7th Grade

Lang. Arts/Reading

Mathematics

**World History (Asia/Africa/Middle East)

Life Science

Physical Ed

Health/Safety

Connections

8th Grade

Lang. Arts/Reading

Mathematics

GA Studies

Physical Science

Physical Ed.

Health/Safety

Connections

EVALUATIONS

A variety of assessments are used to measure student achievement and program effectiveness. State

administered tests include Norm Referenced Test and Georgia Milestone Test. Other types of assessment are also used to measure individual and group progress throughout the school year.

FIELD TRIPS

Parental permission is required on a form supplied by the school before a student participates in a field trip. All field trips are carefully planned to ensure beneficial learning experiences and adequate supervision of students. Approval of the school principal and the Superintendent is required for any field trip. Any out-of-state or overnight field trips must be approved by the Board.

The Board provides transportation for field trips when directly related to educational purposes. It is recommended that field trips be concluded so as not to require overnight accommodations. If overnight trips are necessary, it is required that the sponsoring groups maintain adequate adult supervision.

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

In seeking to provide services for students who have the potential for exceptional academic achievement, the Sumter County School System offers a gifted education program. Students may be nominated to be tested for gifted education services by teachers, parent(s)/guardian(s), peers, counselors, administrators, self, or other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. Students are automatically referred for testing when achievement test results indicate they have obtained required scores. Students are referred for further testing if they have transferred from an out-of-state school system in which they were enrolled in a gifted education program. Transfer students receiving gifted education services in other Georgia public school systems are eligible for services in Sumter County Schools upon receipt of documentation of eligibility for services.

Students are referred but become eligible for services by meeting criteria in any three of the following areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. Students may also become eligible for services by meeting state required mental ability test scores, although evaluation data must be collected on the student in all four areas. Contact the principal or the gifted education teacher to learn more about these services.

GRADING/GRADING SCALE

Each student will be given a report card at the end of each nine-week grading period. Progress reports will be sent home every 4½ weeks.

If a student is failing, parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to call the school and set up a conference to discuss the child's lack of satisfactory progress. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be formally notified if their child is in danger of being retained at the end of the first semester and the end of the third nine weeks. Conferences will be scheduled.

Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

Academic Grading Scale			
A	B	C	F
90-100	80-89	70-79	Below 70

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND STAFF

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requires that schools are staffed with highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. Additionally, professional development activities must ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals meet the highly qualified provisions of ESEA. Local educational agencies (LEAs) must notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of their rights to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. The principal of each Title I school is required to submit an attestation annually requiring compliance with this provision. To be considered highly qualified to teach in the State of Georgia, teachers must be fully certified to teach by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and be teaching in their field(s) of certification.

Teachers must:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
- Hold a valid Georgia teaching certificate.
- Have evidence of specialized training in the subjects they teach, such as an academic major or the equivalent in the subjects and a passing score on the required content assessment for the area/ subjects they teach.
- Have a teaching assignment that is appropriate for the field(s) listed on the Georgia teaching certificate.

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requires states to develop plans with annual measurable objectives that will ensure that all teachers teaching in core academic subjects are highly qualified. Core academic subjects include English, reading, language arts, mathematics, broad-field science (such as physics, biology, or chemistry), foreign languages, broad-field social studies (such as civics and government, economics, history, geography), and the arts (visual arts, music, band and chorus). Dance and drama are not core academic subjects in Georgia. All teachers teaching a core academic subject, including remedial, extended day, evening, or summer school classes, must be highly qualified to teach the subject.

Paraprofessionals

A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher to assist with instructional and non instructional activities. All paraprofessionals who work in an instructional program supported by Title I funds (school-wide program or targeted assistance program) must be highly qualified. Paraprofessionals must:

- Hold an associate degree (or higher) or
- Meet a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrate through a formal state approved assessment the knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, language arts, writing and mathematics or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

Annual Parent Notice - Right To Request Teacher Qualifications

Our school system receives federal funds for Title I programs that are part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. As a parent of a student you have the right to request certain information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher(s). Specifically, federal law requires the school district to provide you with the following:

- a. whether the Professional Standards Commission has certified or licensed the teacher for the grades and subject in which the teacher is providing instruction.
- b. whether the Professional Standards Commission has decided the teacher can teach under emergency status for which state certification requirements have been waived.
- c. the teacher's college major and the field of discipline for any graduate degree or certificate.
- d. the qualifications of any paraprofessional working with your child.

If you would like to request this information, please contact the school with your written request and we will respond in a timely manner. Thank you for your interest and involvement in your child's education.

HONOR ROLL

Students will be recognized for academic achievement for each nine-week grading period. Honors Day celebrations will be held regularly to recognize and award students for academic achievement.

- A Honor Roll: All A's on a report card for the grading period.
- AB Honor Roll: A's and/or B's on the report card for the grading period.

MAKE-UP WORK

It should be noted that make-up work does not adequately replace the instructional time lost for a school absence. No make-up work will be pre-assigned without sufficient prior notice. It is the student's responsibility to set up a time with his/her teachers to complete any make-up work needed due to an absence. Students shall be given a reasonable opportunity to make up work upon their return to school. The time period for completing make-up work should be relative to the amount of times missed. (i.e. A student absent for one day will have one day to make up the assignments missed). If make-up work is not completed after a reasonable amount of time, it will result in a MISSING grade. Reasonable time will be at the discretion of the teacher based on the assignment and the circumstances for the absence.

MEDIA CENTER

The media center is open during the regular school day and immediately before and after school, as well as during lunch hours. Passes will be required during the regularly scheduled class periods. Books are checked out for a two-week period with one renewal, except by special arrangement. A child may check out a maximum of two books at any given time. Lost or damaged books are paid for at current replacement value.

Students should have I.D. cards in order to check out books from the media center. Lost I.D. cards can be replaced at a replacement cost of \$5.00.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The District will adhere to the requirements established by the Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Middle/High School Athletic Association.

Extracurricular and non-instructional activities and their place in the school program; Limit and control interruptions of instructional time in the classroom and the number of absences for such activities; and requirements those students must meet to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

Secondary Schools

In general, all activities offered by the school will be open to all students. Eligibility to participate may be revoked, at the discretion of the principal, for any students whose general behavior does not meet acceptable standards. In addition, participation will be denied for the following reasons:

1. Students who do not meet the eligibility standards of the Georgia Middle/High Athletic Association (in those activities governed by the GMSAA or GHSA);
2. Students who do not meet the eligibility standards of the recognized agency governing any particular activity;
3. Students in grades 6-8 who did not meet the district's promotion standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Georgia Student Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) Act was passed in the 2009 Georgia legislative session and is now the Official Code of Georgia 20-2-777. Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, the law requires each local school district to conduct an annual fitness assessment program for all students in grades 1-12 enrolled in Georgia public school physical education classes taught by certified physical education teachers.

In Sumter County, Health and Physical Education courses are offered at all schools in accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rules. All Health and PE courses follow the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE).

PRE-K – 8TH GRADE ATTENDANCE/ TARDIES

The school district emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to benefit from the school program. Georgia law places the responsibility on each student to attend school on a daily basis and the responsibility on each parent or guardian to send their child to school on a daily basis.

The child who is tardy for school loses valuable instructional time and causes undesirable disruption in the classroom. If a child is tardy, the parent should accompany the child to the school office to check in. Frequent tardiness will result in an attendance referral.

Each individual student, by his/her presence as a class participant contributes to the education of others. Frequent tardiness for any reason is almost certain to adversely affect a student's schoolwork.

PROMOTION/PLACEMENT/RETENTION - BOARD POLICY

Board Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention

Status: Adopted

Original Adopted Date: 04/13/2000 | Last Revised Date: 09/11/2025 | Last Reviewed Date: 09/11/2025

It is the policy of the Sumter County Board of Education that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program be based on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the educational setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement. The Board further requires that each principal shall annually notify parents or guardians that the promotion, placement or retention of a student will be based on the academic achievement of the student and criteria established by the Sumter County Board of Education.

DEFINITIONS

- a. **Accelerated Instruction** – challenging instructional activities that are intensely focused on student academic foundational skills gaps and deficiencies in reading and/ or mathematics. This accelerated instruction is designed to enable a student who has not achieved grade level, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement, to meet grade-level standards in the shortest possible time.
- b. **Additional Instruction** – Academic instruction beyond regularly scheduled academic classes that are designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement, to grade level performance. It may include more instructional time allocated during the school day, instruction before and after the school day, Saturday instruction, and/ or summer/inter-session instruction.
- c. **Differentiated Instruction** – instructional strategies designed to meet individual student learning needs.
- d. **Grade Level** – the standard of performance as defined by the Office of Student Achievement.
- e. **Placement** – assignment of a student to a specific grade level based on the determination that such placement will most likely provide the student with instruction and other services needed to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.
- f. **Placement committee** – the committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet established criteria to be considered on grade level. This committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parents or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) in which the student did not achieve grade level.
- g. **Promotion** – the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student's achievement of established criteria in the current grade level.
- h. **Retention** – the re-assignment of a student to the current grade level during the next school year.
 - a. **Chronic Absenteeism** – will be reviewed as part of promotion and retention decisions. Students who are chronically absent may be considered for retention if there is insufficient evidence of mastery of grade level standards. For a student enrolled for the entire 180-day calendar, this equals 18 or more days. For students enrolled for fewer than 180 days, the 10% threshold is calculated based on the actual number of days enrolled, whether excused or unexcused.

- j. **Chronic Absenteeism Definition** – In accordance with the Georgia Department of Education and federal accountability guidelines, a student is considered chronically absent when he or she misses 10% or more of the total days enrolled during the school year. For a student enrolled for the entire 180-day calendar, this equals 18 or more days. For students enrolled for fewer than 180 days, the 10% threshold is calculated based on the actual number of days enrolled, whether excused or unexcused.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT OR RETENTION FOR GRADES - KINDERGARTEN – 5TH

- A. Documentation that supports promotion, placement, or retention shall be on file in the student's permanent record.

Steps 1 and 2 must be considered for a student to be promoted to the next grade:

1. A student in grades K-5 must achieve a final grade of 70 or above in Language Arts and Math courses.
2. Attendance/Tardies – A student in grades K- 5 must not be absent more than 10% of enrollment in a school-year. If a student is absent more than 10% of enrollment (excused and/or unexcused), he/she will be retained.
3. The retention decision may be appealed to the principal within 10 working days.

- B. Should a student be recommended for retention in grades K-5, then:

1. The information obtained by the state kindergarten assessment will be considered as part of the required documentation.
2. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the retention decision.
3. Should a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) appeal the retention, the principal will convene a placement committee to determine the appropriate placement of the student.
4. A locally developed rubric and/or set of content mastery criteria will be used by the placement committee to determine placement.
5. To override the recommendation to retain the student requires unanimous support of the placement committee.
6. When a student is retained, an alternative, developmentally appropriate instructional program will be provided.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT OR RETENTION FOR GRADES 6-8

- A. Documentation that supports promotion, placement, or retention will be on file in the student's permanent record.

Steps 1 and 2 must be considered for a student to be promoted to the next grade:

1. A student in grades 6-8 must achieve a final grade of 70 or above in at least three out of four academic subjects and at least one exploratory course.
2. Attendance/Tardies – A student in grades 6-8 must not be absent more than 10% of enrollment in a school year. If a student is absent more than 10% of enrollment (excused and/or unexcused) he/she will be retained.

3. The retention decision may be appealed to the principal within 10 working days.

B. Should a student be recommended for retention in grades 6-8, then:

1. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the retention decision.
2. Should a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) appeal the retention, the principal will convene a placement committee to determine the appropriate placement of the student.
3. A locally developed rubric and/or set of content mastery criteria will be used by the placement committee to determine placement.
4. To override the recommendation to retain the student requires unanimous support of the placement committee.
5. When a student is retained, an alternative, developmentally appropriate instructional program will be provided.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 3, 5, AND 8

A. Promotion of a student will be determined as follows:

1. No third-grade student will be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not receive a grade-level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
2. No fifth-grade student will be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not receive a grade-level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and attain an achievement level of "Developing Learner," "Proficient Learner," or "Distinguished Learner" on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
3. No eighth-grade student will be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not receive a grade-level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and attain an achievement level of "Developing Learner," "Proficient Learner," or "Distinguished Learner" on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
4. The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy.

B. When a student does not perform at grade level in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments specified in section (a) above, then the following will occur:

1. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments individual student scores, the school principal or designee will notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student regarding the following:
 - i. The student's below-grade-level reading designation and/or the mathematics achievement level on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments;
 - ii. The specific retest(s) to be given the student and testing date(s);

- iii. The opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments; and
 - iv. The possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next school year.
2. The student will be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity; and
 3. The student will be retested with the appropriate section(s) of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided by the State Board of Education and this board.

C. When a student does not perform at grade level on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in grades 3, 5, and 8, and also does not perform at grade level on a second opportunity to take the assessment, then the following will occur:

1. The school principal or designee will retain the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided for in this policy.
2. The school principal or designee will notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher(s) regarding the decision to retain the student.
 - i. The notice will describe the option of the parent or guardian or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student;
 - ii. The notice will describe the composition and functions of the placement committee; it will describe the option of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), or principal to invite individuals who can provide information or facilitate understanding of the issues to be discussed to attend the placement committee meeting; and
 - iii. The notice will include the requirement that the decision to place the student must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee composed of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), and principal or designee.
3. If the parent or guardian or teacher(s) appeals the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee will establish a placement committee to consider the appeal.
 - i. The placement committee will be composed of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) of the subject(s) of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments or the alternative assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level.
 - ii. The principal or designee will notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian and teacher(s) of the time and place for convening the placement committee.
 - iii. The placement committee will review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the performance on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments or the alternative assessment instrument and promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends and make a determination to promote or retain.

- iv. The decision to place must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee and must determine that if placed and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year to address foundational skills gaps, the student is likely to progress towards grade level by the conclusion of the school year.
 - v. The placement committee will prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year.
 - vi. The placement committee will provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- 4. A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction to address foundational skills gaps must be developed for each student who does not achieve grade level performance in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments specified in section (a) above, whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year.
 - 5. A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in language arts and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) will take an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided by the State Board of Education and this board. Placement or promotion of these students will follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
 - 6. A student's failure to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in grades 3, 5, and 8 in language arts and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided by the State Board of Education and this board will result in the student being retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student will follow the procedure set forth in this rule.
 - 7. For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee will serve as the placement committee.

Decision of Placement Committee

The decision of the placement committee shall be final.

SPECIAL EDUCATION K-12

Special Education students shall meet criteria for promotion or placement as established in their Individualized Education Plan. The IEP committee shall serve as the placement committee for these students.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENT FOR GRADES 9-12

Credit for Courses in Grades 9-12 and Lower Grades where High School Credit is Awarded

For a student to earn high school credit, all of the standards must be met as listed below:

- A. To earn credit for a course, the student must have a passing grade of 70 or higher. The number of units required for promotion shall be specified in the student handbook.

**To graduate, students must meet the requirements established by the Sumter County Board of Education.*

- B. Meet attendance requirements established by the Sumter County Board of Education.
- C. Meet assessment requirements as listed in State Rule 160-3-1.07 (Testing Programs – Student Assessment) and the testing requirements established by the Sumter County Board of Education.
- D. Statewide Passing Score that the percentage requirement of the numeric score on the Georgia Milestones EOC assessment on a student's final numeric grade in the course assessed by the EOC to count a minimum of 20%.

SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTION

Sex/AIDS education is a required component of the Health curriculum for grades 6-12. parent(s)/guardian(s) may preview the sex education curriculum materials used by his/her child's school by contacting the Health/PE Department Leader of their respective school. If a parent does not wish for his/her child to participate in this portion of the course, notification must be made in writing to the health teacher prior to the beginning of the unit. Alternative assignments will be given and assessed for those students in lieu of the sex/AIDS education lessons.

SPECIAL EDUCATION K-12

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that students with disabilities have the same rights as any other student to receive a high quality public education consistent with all state education standards and policies. Students with disabilities have the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers, in a regular classroom alongside their regular peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Students with disabilities shall be provided real and valid opportunities to learn through specialized instruction, supportive services, related services, supplemental aids and supports, including services and training for teachers to ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn and demonstrate their knowledge to meet developmental goals that have been set.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Students have the privilege to participate in leadership opportunities at school by serving on the Student Government or as Class Representatives.

TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Students are required to have their own materials, books, paper, and pencils as prescribed by the teacher. Basic school supplies can be purchased from the school store. Textbooks are the responsibility of the student. All students must pay for lost or damaged textbooks, based on the state textbook prices. Students will not be issued another text until the lost textbook fee is paid. All fees will be documented in Infinite Campus.

TRANSFERRING STUDENT CREDITS

Students entering the Sumter County School System from accredited and non-accredited public and private schools, including home study programs or schools, will be awarded credit for previous study and placed at

the appropriate grade level based upon the following criteria:

Students Entering from Regionally and/or State Accredited Public or Private Schools. Elementary and middle school students transferring to the Sumter County School System from a regionally or state accredited public or private school, will be accepted and placed at the appropriate grade level in the Sumter County School System according to the student's age and/or grade level at the former school.

Students from Non-accredited Public and Private Elementary and Middle Schools. Students requesting admission into Sumter County Schools in grades K-8 from non-accredited public or private schools, including home schools, will be evaluated for grade placement based upon the following criteria:

1. State and local Board of Education policy requirements relating to entrance into kindergarten or first grade and grade promotion guidelines.
2. Performance on standardized tests and/or instructional placement tests in language arts and mathematics.
3. Grade level placement and performance in the non-accredited school or program.
4. Chronological age verified by certified documents, physical size, social and emotional maturity levels of the particular student.
5. For students enrolling from a home school study program, documentation concerning coursework
6. completed during the operation of the program will be requested. After reviewing the documentation, the principal of the school shall place the student in the appropriate grade level. A review of the placement may be conducted to determine the final placement.

SECTION II - PARENT INVOLVEMENT

CLASSROOM/SCHOOL VISITATIONS

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and other visitors are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. We invite you to visit school and get acquainted with the teachers.

1. All visitors must report to the office upon entering the building.
2. We request that parent(s)/guardian(s) assist us in protecting instructional time by not interrupting instruction during classroom visits. Parent Teacher conferences will be scheduled during a teacher's planning time, before/after school, or designated Parent-Teacher Conference Days.
3. Classroom visitations should be scheduled with the teacher and administration.
4. All visitors must have a visitor's pass before they will be allowed to visit any part of the school building. Visitors who are not authorized are loitering and are considered trespassing. All visitors will receive an escort when available.

COMMUNICATION COURIERS

Students will be given a courier/folder at the beginning of the school year. These will be sent home weekly on Wednesday with important school, community, and/or academic information. parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to review the information and contact the school/teachers if needed. In order to more quickly address your concerns, please discuss issues with the teacher prior to contacting the principal.

PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Parent Resource Center is open to ALL parent(s)/guardian(s) each day from 8:00 am – 3:30 pm. There are a variety of parenting books, brochures, pamphlets, and booklets on a variety of school related subjects to help you meet the academic needs of your children, as well as other information for parent(s)/guardian(s) to use as needed. For more information, please contact the school counselor.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

The purpose of homework is to form good study habits and to reinforce skills taught at school. Taking the assignment home, completing it, and remembering to bring the work to school the next day are important processes in developing responsibility. Accepting responsibility is very important in order for children to learn. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should provide a quiet area and should set a specific time each day for students to complete homework assignments. Homework may be assigned daily and, occasionally, on weekends.

FRESH START/ ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Fresh Start Academy provides a unique and innovative approach for students in grades six through twelve who are not successful in the traditional classroom setting. The goal of Fresh Start Academy is to help students achieve the academic goals necessary for success and to prepare students to be successful in high school and beyond.

Alternative Middle School Programs – Fresh Start Academy is available to students as an alternative option. See the counselor for more information.

Fresh Start Academy - A technology driven, personalized, competency-based program, will address the general educational needs of our student population who have been unsuccessful in a traditional school setting. Students with pending family responsibilities may choose to enroll in this program.

PARENT PORTAL/ INFINITE CAMPUS MESSENGER

The Sumter County School District is using the student information system, Infinite Campus, to communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s) about their child's progress at school through a Parent Portal. The Parent Portal allows parent(s)/guardian(s) to monitor their child's daily academic progress as well as attendance. All parent(s)/guardian(s) are strongly encouraged to sign up for this program at each school at the beginning of the school year. Contact your child's school for information on how to register. Infinite Campus Messenger is an automated student/parent/staff telephone and information center. A link to the parent portal is located on the school's homepage at www.scms.sumterschools.org.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Effective communication between the parent and the teacher is beneficial to the student's success. parent(s)/guardian(s) should plan to meet with their child's teachers frequently during the school year. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should always feel free to request a conference and may do so by calling the school counselor. Teachers will not be permitted to see parent(s)/guardian(s) during instructional time. Teachers and counselors are available for conferences during planning time on Thursdays and Fridays only and after 3:45 pm daily. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are strongly encouraged to call and set up an appointment if a conference is requested.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

As of June 30, 2012, there is no longer a Public School Choice transfer option under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as reauthorized under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and local educational agencies (LEAs) are no longer required to implement Choice or pay for Choice transportation as implemented under the ESEA. On November 2011, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), submitted to the United States Department of Education (USED), a flexibility waiver requesting flexibility through ten ESEA requirements and their associated, regulatory, administrative and reporting requirements.

Any student that has previously transferred to another school by exercising the ESEA Choice must be allowed to attend that school until they complete the school's highest grade; however, the LEA is no longer required to pay for the students' transportation cost during the duration of the student's attendance at their current CHOICE school. The LEA may continue to pay for CHOICE transportation for students, only if the LEA chooses to do so.

However, parent(s)/guardian(s) will still have the Choice transfer option under House Bill 251: The Quality Basic Education Act; Intra-District School Choice. House Bill 251 allows parent(s)/guardian(s) of students enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school to enroll in a school other than the assigned school that is located within the school district, if classroom space is available after the assigned students of that district have been enrolled. Under House Bill 251, transportation will not be paid for by the district. The parent shall assume the responsibility and cost of transportation of the student to and from the school. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Sebrina Pitts, Federal Programs Director at 229-931-8500 or spittsl@sumterschools.org.

REPORT CARDS

Students receive a report card at the end of each nine-week grading period. Students should take their report cards home for parent(s)/guardian(s) to examine, sign, and return. In an effort to continuously monitor student achievement, weekly reports are sent home. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may also monitor grades via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Parent-Teacher Conferences are encouraged, especially for students experiencing failure in one or more classes.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

School councils are created to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation. This endeavor's mission is to solve educational issues and improve academic achievement. The school-based decision-making process is enhanced greatly by providing support for teachers/administrators while collaborating with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the community. The purpose of this group is to help the board of education develop and nurture participation of parent(s)/guardian(s), the community, teachers, and school administrators to share ideas for school improvement. The management and control of the public schools of this district is the responsibility of the Sumter County Board of Education. The instructional and administrative leader of each school is the principal. School councils provide advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parent(s)/guardian(s) and businesses. By law, the School Council is composed of at least two parent members, two teacher members, two business members, and the principal or designee. If you would like to serve on the local school council, please contact the school counselor.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

Students will not be allowed to use the school telephone except in cases of an emergency. **Students will not be called out of class to use the telephone.** Messages for students will be accepted in cases of an emergency. All requests for transportation changes must be submitted in writing. Please submit contact information that contains a valid phone number to verify information.

VIDEO/AUDIO TAPING AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Your child may be photographed, audio taped, or video-taped for instructional and public relation purposes. If you do not wish for your child to be audio taped, video-taped, or photographed please indicate on the Image-News Release Form located in the back of this handbook. Return this form to the school by the assigned deadline.

VOLUNTEERS

Adult volunteers are needed throughout the school year to serve a variety of capacities. All volunteers must participate in an orientation session. Please contact the school counselor if you are interested in volunteering.

Georgia Department of Education

PARENT RIGHT-TO-KNOW LETTER

Please note: Parent(s)/guardian(s) must be notified via standard US mail or by the student handbook. If a statement is placed in the student handbook, parent signature is required to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) received the information.

July 31, 2026

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

At Sumter County Middle School, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we are required to meet federal regulations under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) related to teacher qualifications. In compliance with the requirements of the ESEA/NCLB, you have the right to request information about your child's teachers' training and credentials. The following information may be requested:

- Whether the teacher met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject area in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration; and
- Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

Please be assured that our staff is committed to helping your child reach his or her maximum academic potential throughout his/her school career. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled and delivering quality instruction to your child.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teachers' qualifications, please contact me, Mr. Mitchell, your child's principal, by phone at 229-924-1010 or by email at mmitchell2@sumterschools.org.

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

Sincerely,

Mr. Martin Mitchell, Principal

SECTION III - STUDENT SERVICES

COUNSELING

The goal of the School Counseling Program is to provide services to students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrators, which will enhance the middle school student's personal, social, and educational development. The counselor provides support, encouragement, and advice. Students may talk with the counselor with complete assurance of confidentiality. The counselor concentrates on helping students understand themselves, their interests, and traits so that they will be better able to make decisions about themselves and their future. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of assistance offered through the career center. Information regarding grades, schedules, careers, testing, and matters relating to personal performance or individualized needs may be secured through the office.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

Students attending Sumter County Schools in grades 2, 4, 6 and 9 will receive hearing and vision screening administered by certified personnel. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified if screenings indicate a need for further evaluation. Further evaluations are the responsibility of the parent. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should notify the school in writing if they do not wish for their child to participate in this screening process.

HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND

A hospital homebound program is available for students who are unable to attend school for 10 consecutive days or more due to serious injuries or health reasons. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to contact the principal regarding the condition of extended illness and provide a medical statement from the attending physician prior to receiving home services. More information is available through the Counseling Department.

MULTI-TIERED SUPPORT SYSTEM (MTSS)

Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with academic learning and behavioral needs. The MTSS process begins with high-quality Tier 1 instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress monitoring is used to closely monitor and assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. Data is used when making decisions in reference to interventions needed in general and special education classes to support student achievement.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

The school will provide a nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch to all students regardless of their ability to pay or their race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap. Students are expected to eat in the lunchroom in a quiet and orderly manner. Each student is responsible for returning trays and disposing litter to the proper places. Food cannot be taken from the lunchroom. **Neither fast foods nor soft drinks may be brought into the lunchroom or delivered to the school. (All deliveries will be denied at the expense of the student/parent).** parent(s)/guardian(s) are welcome to have lunch with their child on designated days. Please call the office to make reservations and find out the cost for adult lunches.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

School Resource Officers (SRO) are law enforcement officers who are assigned to either an elementary, middle, or high school. The main goals of the SRO is to promote school safety and prevent juvenile delinquency by promoting positive relations between youth and law enforcement. The SRO position encompasses three major components which allow the SRO to achieve this goal: law enforcement, education, and counseling. The SRO is not responsible for routine school discipline, which remains the responsibility of school administrators.

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL STUDENT INTERNET POLICY

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

**Board Policy Manual
Sumter County Schools**

Board Policy IFBG: Internet Acceptable Use

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 06/13/2002 | **Last Revised Date:** 09/11/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 09/11/2025

Internet Acceptable Use Policy of Sumter County Schools Computers and Network Resources

Sumter County Schools recognizes that access to technology in and out of school gives students greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills.

To that end, we provide access to technologies for student and staff use.

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

- The Sumter County Schools network is intended for educational purposes.
- All activity over the network or using district technologies may be monitored and retained.
- Access to online content via the network may be restricted in accordance with our policies and federal regulations, such as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
- Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct online as offline.
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- Sumter County Schools makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from use of school technologies.
- Users of the district network or other technologies are expected to alert IT staff immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

Technologies Covered

Sumter County Schools may provide Internet access, desktop computers, mobile computers or devices, videoconferencing capabilities, online collaboration capabilities, message boards, email, and more.

As new technologies emerge, Sumter County Schools will attempt to provide access to them. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover *all* available technologies, not just those specifically listed.

Usage Policies/Web Access

Sumter County Schools provides its users with access to the Internet, including web sites, resources, content, and online tools. Sumter County Schools strictly prohibits the use of school equipment, networks, and servers to access, send, receive, view or download obscene materials, materials harmful to minors, and materials that violate CIPA regulations. Accordingly, access will be restricted in compliance with CIPA regulations and school policies, through the use of qualifying technology protection measures as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000. Sumter County Schools will routinely update these technology protection measures to ensure they continue to meet or exceed compliance standards and specifications established by the Georgia Department of Education.

To ensure efficacy and encourage transparency Sumter County Schools will provide reasonable opportunities and procedures for parents/guardians of current students to confer and collaborate with school administrators and teachers regarding appropriate internet access for such students.

Web browsing may be monitored and web activity records may be retained indefinitely. Users are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a user believes it shouldn't be, the user should follow district protocol to alert an IT staff member or submit the site for review, whereupon Sumter County Schools will review the complaint with all due speed, and at a minimum respond to the complaint in writing.

If a student or employee of Sumter County Schools intentionally violates this policy through the use of school equipment to access prohibited materials, regardless of the location of the violation, they will be subject to the consequences listed within this acceptable use policy.

If a person who is not a student or employee of Sumter County Schools intentionally violates this policy through the use of school equipment to access prohibited materials, regardless of the location of the violation, they will be subject to the consequences listed within this acceptable use policy.

Email

Sumter County Schools may provide users with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication. Availability and use may be restricted based on school policies.

If users are provided with email accounts, they should be used with care. Users should not send personal information; should not attempt to open files or follow links from unknown or untrusted origin; should use appropriate language; and should only communicate with other people as allowed by the district policy or the teacher.

Users are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Email usage may be monitored and archived.

Social/Web 2.0 / Collaborative Content

Recognizing the benefits collaboration brings to education, Sumter County Schools may provide users with access to web sites or tools that allow communication, collaboration, sharing, and messaging among users.

These websites and tools might include social media sites only when directed by school personnel, for the exclusive purpose of accessing and utilizing age-appropriate educational resources under the supervision of such school personnel during the course of a school related activity. When not otherwise under the supervision of school personnel, Sumter County Schools prohibits all students from accessing social media platforms through the use of computer equipment, communications services, or internet access that is operated by Sumter County Schools. When using allowed websites and tools, users are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Posts, chats, sharing, and messaging may be monitored. Users should be careful not to share personally-identifying information online.

Parents may ask to be informed which social media sites, if any, their child will access under the supervision of school personnel and may prohibit the use of any social media site for their child.

Mobile Devices Policy

Sumter County Schools may provide users with mobile computers or other devices to promote learning outside of the classroom. Users should abide by the same acceptable use policies when using school devices off the school network as on the school network.

Users are expected to treat these devices with extreme care and caution; these are expensive devices that the school is entrusting to your care. Users should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to IT staff immediately. Users will be financially accountable for any damage resulting from negligence or misuse.

Use of school-issued mobile devices off the school network may be monitored.

Personal Electronic Devices Policy

In accordance with GA HB340 the "Distraction-Free Education Act" Sumter County Schools K-8 students may not use their personal electronic devices for the duration of the school day. All personal electronic devices must be stored within school lockers, a designated place within the classroom, or a magnetically sealed Yondr pouch. Parents and legal guardians will be able to contact their children through the school's front office, which will relay all necessary information to their children. Students will also be able to contact their parents and guardians through the front desk staff at their school. In the event of an emergency, Sumter County Schools will follow the district and school level safety plans.

Sumter County High School students should keep personal electronic devices turned off and put away during school hours—unless in the event of an emergency or as instructed by a teacher or staff for educational purposes.

Because of security concerns, when personal electronic devices are used on campus, they should not be used over the school network without express permission from IT staff. In some cases, a separate network may be provided for personally-owned devices

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, smartglasses, tablets, e-readers, and headphones.

Security

Users are expected to take reasonable safeguards against the transmission of security threats over the school network. This includes not opening or distributing infected files or programs and not opening files or programs of unknown or untrusted origin. If you believe a computer or mobile device you are using might be infected with a virus, please alert IT. Do not attempt to remove the virus yourself or download any programs to help remove the virus.

Downloads

Users should not download or attempt to download or run .exe programs over the school network or onto school resources without express permission from IT staff.

You may be able to download other file types, such as images or videos. For the security of our network, download such files only from reputable sites, and only for education purposes.

Netiquette

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

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

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

Plagiarism

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

Personal Safety

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

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

Cyberbullying

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

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

Examples of Acceptable Use

I will:

- Use school technologies for school-related activities.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert a teacher or other staff member if I see threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, and posts) online.

- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits.
- Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research.
- Recognize that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.

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

Examples of Unacceptable Use

I will not:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful.
- Attempt to find inappropriate images or content.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
- Try to find ways to circumvent the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
- Plagiarize content I find online.
- Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others.
- Agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
- Attempt to hack or access sites, servers, or content that isn't intended for my use.

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

Limitation of Liability

Sumter County Schools will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware.

While Sumter County Schools employs filtering and other safety and security mechanisms, and attempts to ensure their proper function, it makes no guarantees as to their effectiveness.

Sumter County Schools will not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for unauthorized transactions conducted over the school network.

Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy

Violations of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges
- Notification to parents
- Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities
- Legal action and/or prosecution

I have read and understood this Acceptable Use Policy and agree to abide by it:

(Student Printed Name)

(Student Signature)

(Date)

I have read and discussed this Acceptable Use Policy with my child:

(Parent Printed Name)

(Parent Signature)

(Date)

Do Not Remove From Book

Please Sign Internet Acceptable Use Policy Terms and Conditions located in the appendix.

SECTION 504

A student is eligible for a 504 plan under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 when he/she is professionally diagnosed as needing special services because he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If you feel that your child may qualify for these services, please contact the district's Section 504 Coordinator at 229-931-8500.

Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system's central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

SECTION IV - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSION TO SCHOOL

All students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) reside in or are employed by the Sumter County School District are eligible for admission. Any student enrolling in a Georgia Public School for the first time must present these items:

1. A certified copy of the birth certificate
2. A Georgia Immunization Certificate
3. A Vision/Hearing/Dental Evaluation Certificate
4. Proof that parent(s)/guardian(s)/guardians of child live in the county (rent contract, utility bill, phone bill)
5. Social Security Card (School will provide waiver form if necessary)
6. Name of previous school
7. Transcripts or report card of previous school
8. Copy of previous discipline records

For entrance into 6th grade or the equivalent age, all students must have at least one additional dose of MMR for a total of two administered on or after the child's first birthday and at least 30 days apart. This dose may be given at the local county health department or by the child's private physician. Children without this additional vaccination will not be allowed to enter sixth grade.

ATTENDANCE (ABSENCES AND EXCUSES)

The school district emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to benefit from the school program. Georgia law places the responsibility on each student to attend school on a daily basis and the responsibility on each parent or guardian to send their child to school on a daily basis.

Regular and punctual attendance has a direct and positive impact on student achievement. Not only is each day's lesson important to the individual student, but his/her presence as a class participant contributes to the education of others.

Frequent absences and tardies for any reason are almost certain to adversely affect a student's schoolwork. Each student is expected to be in school every day except when illness, injury, or some providential condition beyond his/her control prevents attendance.

Promotion will be based on academic performance and attendance. In order to meet promotion requirements, students must pass at least 3 of the 4 academic classes, at least 1 exploratory course and students may not have more than 10% of days enrolled absent (excused or unexcused).

Documented Absences

Students may be temporarily excused from school by the principal in the following circumstances:

- Serious illness or hospitalization, including maternity confinement and delivery
- Serious illness or death in the immediate family, which would reasonably necessitate absence from school
- Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith
- Court orders or mandates by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for the armed forces

- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Other circumstances where the parent or guardian makes prior arrangements with the building principal for their child to be absent from school, i.e., college visits, serving as a legislative page, and other special family occasions

*****Students who desire to document an absence shall present a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian within five (5) days of returning to school. Failure to present an excuse within five (5) days of returning to school shall result in an unexcused absence. Excuses may be sent by FAX or email. The principal or designee will determine whether or not an absence is excused, and may, at his/her discretion, require supporting documentation from doctor, dentist, clinic, court, funeral home, etc in order to make this determination.

Students shall be given a reasonable opportunity to make up work or tests when they have documented their absence from school within five (5) days of their return to school. Students placed in in-school suspension or participating in school related or sponsored activities are considered to be in attendance at school. Students, otherwise, suspended from school will be considered to be absent.

Consequences of Excessive or Unexcused Absences

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted after the second (2) absence. Students who demonstrate a pattern of absences and tardies shall be referred to the Attendance Officer for counseling and appropriate intervention.

ATTENDANCE APPEALS

In the event that the student is absent more than 10% of enrolled days per year (these are to include any type of absence-excused or unexcused), the student is responsible for providing the attendance officer with excuse notes (doctor or otherwise) during the appeal procedure. No student shall exceed more than 10% of enrolled days per year. Any student, who has been notified that he/she has exceeded the allowed number of absences, has the opportunity to file an appeal. An appeal form may be picked up in the office from the attendance personnel. This form should be filled out by the parent and the student and returned to the office by the student within five (5) days after receiving the excessive absence notice. This form will give the parent and student the opportunity to provide any written excuses, (doctors' and others) explaining the excessive absences. The appeals will be reviewed by the school's attendance committee. The decision made by the appeal's committee may be appealed to the superintendent's office. The student's report card will reflect the decision of the committee.

ATTENDANCE LAW

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, unless with written permission of the teacher, principal, or their duly authorized school official. No student shall encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this policy.

As permitted under state law and State Board of Education policies, students may be excused for the following reasons:

- Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others;
- A serious illness or death in their immediate family necessitates absence from school;
- Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, or by a court order;
- Celebrating religious holidays;
- Conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety;
- Registering to vote or voting, for a period not to exceed one day;
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.

Students shall be counted present under the following circumstances:

- When they are in attendance at least one half of the instructional day;
- When serving as pages in the Georgia General Assembly;
- Students in foster care shall be counted present when attending court proceedings relating to their foster care;
- If a Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) Program is established by the Superintendent and the local election superintendent, eligible students shall be counted present for up to two days per school year while volunteering as poll officers during elections.

Excuses for absences shall be furnished in writing, shall be signed by the student's parent or guardian and shall specifically state the reasons for the absence. Excuses shall be dated and brought to the homeroom teacher within five days after the student's absence. All excuses will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Students shall be permitted to make up work when absences are excused. Work missed due to unexcused absences may be made up at the discretion of the principal or his or her designee. After five (5) days no excuse is valid. Work missed due to out of school suspensions may not be made up. All make-up work must be completed within five (5) days of the student's

return to school.

The Superintendent has the authority to affect the procedures and rules to carry out this policy.

The Attendance Committee is a standing committee composed of five (5) members appointed by the principals and chaired by an administrator. The chair shall vote only in case of a tie.

The Attendance Committee shall use the following guidelines in determining whether to grant a waiver:

- a. If all absences are excused, the student shall be allowed to make up missed work and shall not be denied credit for the semester based on excessive absence.
- b. If any absences are unexcused, the Attendance Committee shall determine whether there exist unusual conditions or extenuating circumstances relating to the student's personal life or family situation which would require that the provisions of this policy be waived. If so, the student shall be allowed to make up missed work and shall not be denied credit for the semester based on excessive absences. If the student has any unexcused absences and there are no unusual conditions or extenuating circumstances relating to the student's personal life or family situation, the student shall not be allowed to receive credit for the semester, even if the student has passing grades.

The Superintendent and/or his or her designee has the authority to enact rules to carry out this policy.

BELONGINGS

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their belongings. Textbooks and other items found should be turned in to the office. The school does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen articles.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to label all items with the student's name for personal identification.

BOOK BAGS

For the safety of our students and staff, book bags **MUST BE CLEAR OR MESH**. Rolling book bags are not allowed. Thanks for helping to keep our school SAFE!

BULLYING DEFINITION (SD 250)

The Sumter County Board of Education believes that students learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, at school related functions or activities, 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;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm;
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that 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;
4. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;

5. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
6. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. However, 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.

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the student/parent handbooks.

BUSES

School Bus Procedures

Buses drop students off and pick up at the front of Sumter Middle School (Industrial Blvd.) Students arriving after 7:45 should report to the front office to check-in and receive a pass. Students who ride the bus home in the afternoon will report to the bus ramp where buses are parked for loading.

Cars are not allowed in the front of the school where buses are to be parked for loading in the afternoon.

Students who are transported to and from school by Sumter County School buses are under school jurisdiction from the time they board the bus in the morning until they leave the bus in the afternoon. School bus drivers are responsible for the behavior of the students being transported and have the authority to correct and/or reprimand students as necessary. Bus students are expected to obey the rules and regulations printed in the *RIDE GUIDE*. Students who misbehave on the bus will be referred to the administrative staff and will receive the appropriate punishment for their behavior. Once bus students have arrived on campus, they are not allowed to leave campus for any reason other than a parent checking them out. Should a child need to ride a different bus home, a parent must send a signed note to school with an appropriate phone number where a parent can be reached. Bus passes are issued at the end of the day from the Main Office.

CAR RIDERS PROCEDURES

MORNING ARRIVAL

Students who arrive early will not be allowed to enter the building before 7:30 a.m. Students must be dropped off and picked up on the side of the school facing Bumphead Road. Please remain in the drop off/pick up line. Students are not allowed to walk through the faculty and staff parking lot. This is for the safety of our students. Please **DO NOT** drop students off or pick them up on the bus ramp or in the front of the school. Students who arrive after 7:45 am should be dropped off in the front of the school and report to the front office to check-in and receive a pass.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Students waiting outside are expected to conduct themselves properly as they wait to be picked up after school. All car riders should be picked up no later than 4:00 p.m.

CELL PHONES

See Cell Phones/ Electronic Devices in Code of Conduct (Offense/Consequence)

CHECK OUT PROCEDURES

The time to end the official school day will be posted at each school and will be clearly communicated to both students and parent(s)/guardian(s). Students are expected to remain in class each day until the dismissal bell rings. This does not, of course, prevent a parent from occasionally picking up his/her child from school for a valid reason. The emphasis here is on the words “occasionally” and “valid.” It is very disruptive to an entire class when a student is called to the office. If your child must leave school before the regular dismissal time, he/she will be paged from the office and sent to you. Teachers are not permitted to release any student until the office contacts them. The school strongly recommends that only parent(s)/guardian(s) pick up students from school.

Students will be permitted to be checked out early only by persons whose names are on the authorized checkout list for that student and who can present a photo I.D.

CHILD ABUSE LAW

State Law requires all caregivers of children to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Family and Children Services.

CLOSING SCHOOLS

School may be closed due to inclement weather or emergency events. Local radio and television stations will carry news and information. Every effort will be made to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified of school closings in a timely manner. The Infinite Campus Messenger Communication System will also be used to notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of school closings.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS STATEMENT

Extracurricular clubs and activities are an important part of the life of the middle-school child. Membership in different clubs and organizations gives students the opportunity to develop skills in social interaction, to be creative, and to assume positions of responsibility. The school provides a variety of activities in which students may involve themselves. All students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. Participation in a club or organization is a privilege and not a right.

CLUB INITIATIONS

No school club/organization or student shall participate in hazing or any type of initiation activity. Involvement in such activity shall be subject to disciplinary action by the administration (as prescribed by the state law).

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

A student who has a contagious disease or condition, such as pink eye, strep throat, chicken pox, ringworm, impetigo or pediculosis (head lice), will be sent home from school and must remain home until the condition or disease is corrected.

DELIVERIES (FLOWERS, GIFTS, ETC.)

No flowers, balloons, or other gifts will be delivered to students during the school day.

DISASTER/LOCK DOWN DRILLS

Monthly disaster drills will be scheduled during the school year and should be respected for the protection of life. Instructions are posted in each room, and teachers will inform students of proper procedures for evacuating the building.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

All electronic or communication devices should be left at home. These devices will not be allowed in classes or at school events without permission. Any item that disrupts the instructional day should not be brought to school. Those items that interfere with the classroom will be confiscated by the teacher and turned into the office. THE SCHOOL WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICES THAT ARE LOST OR STOLEN.

ENROLLMENT RESTRICTION

Parent(s)/guardian(s), or other person has the authority to enroll a student in a publicly funded Georgia school. A student who meets the age eligibility requirements is eligible to enroll in the school system if the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) (or the student in the case of an emancipated minor) is a resident of the school district. Proof of residence is required in accordance with regulations developed by the superintendent.

The principal shall require from any adult who is not the parent of the student, proof of legal custody or a certificate setting forth the circumstances whereby the adult is exercising parental control. However, a student may not be enrolled by an adult acting in the place of the parent if the purpose of the student residing with such adult is to avoid tuition as a non-resident, to avoid a suspension or expulsion imposed by another school district, or to avoid attending school in his or her attendance area. The principal, in conjunction with the central office employee designated by the Superintendent, shall make reasonable inquiry to determine the truth of the facts set forth in the certificate. Upon furnishing the required proof or certificate and appropriate verification of the facts set forth herein, the adult enrolling the student shall be deemed to stand in the place of the parent of the student for all school purposes.

If the person enrolling the student is acting under the authority of a power of attorney executed by a parent(s)/guardian(s) serving in the military, the school shall allow the student to enroll. The school system may require proof of a duly executed power of attorney and/or certificate of acceptance as guardian, escort, or attorney. The school system shall not require such persons to obtain legal guardianship.

A grandparent with a notarized power of attorney properly executed by a parent in accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 19-9-122 through 123 may enroll a child if a hardship prevents the parent from caring for the child. The school system shall enroll a student, otherwise eligible to attend its schools, and allow such grandparents to act on behalf of their grandchildren without requiring them to go through court proceedings to obtain legal guardianship.

Age Eligibility

The parent(s)/guardian(s), or other person must provide:

- A copy of the enrolling student's social security number or sign a form stating the individual does not wish to provide the social security number, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150.
- A certificate in accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771, concerning the immunization of students, which includes an exception for religious grounds.
- A certificate in accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-770, concerning nutritional screening and eye, ear, and dental examinations of students.

Proof of residence shall be required, unless the student is homeless and the McKinney-Vento Act applies. A homeless child shall be enrolled immediately even in the absence of any appropriate documentation. Upon determining that a student is homeless, the child must be allowed to either remain in the district in which he or she was enrolled prior to becoming homeless or enroll in the district where he or she is now located. Proof of residence is not required. The employee or other designated individual responsible for care of homeless students shall assist the homeless student in acquiring the necessary records for enrollment.

Documents which may be used as proof of a student's primary abode include a current lease or rental agreement, and a current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable). Records must include the name and street address of the parent/guardian.

It is the policy of the Sumter County Board of Education to deny enrollment in any school in this school district to a student who has been suspended or expelled from another school district in this state or any other state for misconduct until the period of time for which the student was excluded in the previous school district has passed. The Board determines that the admission of students who have been suspended or expelled from other school districts for disruptive conduct would be disruptive as well to this school district.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Sumter County Schools offer a wide range of activities to help provide a well-rounded educational program. Included are clubs, band, sports including cheerleading, and academic teams. Membership and information regarding qualifications are presented to the student body. Additional information can be obtained from the office, coach or sponsor of the activity.

Extracurricular activities are governed by state standards and regulations. Any student participating in activities must have passed five subjects the previous semester to be eligible. Sponsors are expected to check all candidates' records carefully. This rule is part of state requirements for all extracurricular activities.

Students who are assigned to In-School-Intervention (ISI) or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will not be allowed to attend or participate in any extracurricular activities on any school campus until the suspension time is served.

FEES AND FINES

Students who owe fees and fines must pay those in full in order to receive their final report card. Students who owe fees for textbooks or materials should pay their teacher during the school year. During the summer, textbook fees and fines should be paid in the front office. Students who owe media center fines should pay those fines in the media center. All fees and fines will be documented in Infinite Campus and must be cleared by the bookkeeper before the end of the school year.

HALL PASSES

All students outside a class period must have in their possession a valid hall pass or agenda planner. Students can expect disciplinary action if found without a hall pass or agenda planner.

All students will respect any school personnel checking hall passes or agenda planners. Students will be expected to give name, grade, and answer any other questions asked.

Teachers will not allow a student to enter or disrupt a class without permission from the teacher who is responsible for the student at the time.

HEALTH RECORDS

Student health records and immunizations documents are required for school attendance. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should complete the Consent for Medical Treatment Health Form sent home at the beginning of the year and return to the homeroom teacher. This form must be on file and kept updated in order for the school nurse or representative to provide treatment to a student for any health reasons.

HOMELESS

Students defined as homeless are allowed to enroll in school. A homeless child or youth is defined as "Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence," including, but not limited to:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason ("doubled up").
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters, etc.

Students meeting the above description are allowed to stay in their school of origin for the duration of homelessness or until the end of the school year after they find permanent housing, as long as that is in the child's best interests. The school counselor should be notified of students experiencing homeless situations during the school year.

IDENTIFICATION BADGES (IDs)

In an effort to increase school security and safety, all students are required to wear a student ID card and lanyard, both of which will be provided at the beginning of the school year. All students must wear the ID/lanyard daily during school hours. There is a \$5 fee to replace a student ID.

IMMUNIZATIONS

New 7th Grade Immunization Requirements

Georgia's immunization requirements for children attending seventh grade have been revised to align with the current Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). Effective July 1, 2014, all children born on or after January 1, 2002 who are attending seventh grade, and children who are new entrants into a Georgia school in grades eight through twelve, must have received one dose of Tdap vaccine and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

ILLNESS/ACCIDENTS

If a student becomes too ill to remain in class, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to pick up the child. It is very important that the school has an updated working phone number on the emergency contact form. If a child is ill, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should not send him/her to school.

In case of an emergency, each student is required to have on file at the school office the following information:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) names(s)
2. Complete and up-to-date address
3. Home phone number and parent(s) work phone (connected and working)
4. Emergency phone number of a friend or relative (connected and working)
5. Physician's name and phone
6. Medical Alert information

7. Authorized person(s) allowed to pick up child

MEDICATION/ NURSE

Medical care of the individual student is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. No school employee shall be responsible in any way for administering any drugs or other medication to a student attending Sumter County Schools, except as consented by parent(s)/guardian(s) and following specific administrative procedures.

Medication to be administered during school must be brought to the Student Services. The parent/guardian must send a note to the office in order for the student to take any medication while at school. Medicine must be in the original container. The note must include the name of the medication and the time it is to be given.

*Prescribed medical marijuana will not be administered by school personnel. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for administration. Students will not be allowed to possess medical marijuana at school.

PLEDGE

Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance during morning announcements is a part of the daily school routine. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to opt out of the pledge for religious reasons. Those students are required to remain seated and silent during the Pledge as an exercise of their rights to freedom of speech and religion.

RETURNED CHECKS

The only forms of payment accepted by the school are cash and/or money orders. Checks are not accepted by the school as a form of payment.

SALE OF ITEMS AT SCHOOL

Students or student organizations and groups may not sell items on school property without an approved Fundraising request form on file. Students are not to buy or sell toys, food, supplies, or products at school. Basic school supplies may be purchased during the school day.

SCHOOL HOURS

Regular School operating hours for the school day will be 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Students who arrive before 7:30 a.m. (car riders, walkers, bus, and etc.) will not be allowed in the building.

STUDENT SURVEYS

Students will occasionally be asked to participate in local and state surveys. If you do not wish for your child to participate, please send a dated, written statement to the principal.

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

STUDENT DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

Students, always, should observe the rules governing body cleanliness, neatness of appearance, and good grooming. T-shirts with improper suggestions or advertising of any alcoholic drink, or illegal substance will not be allowed at school. When, in the opinion of administration or teacher, a pupil is inappropriately dressed for school, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called for proper school attire. Though pupils have the right to choose individual dress, the school has the responsibility to see that the attire is not immodest or offensive to anyone.

All students must adhere to the following rules:

Student Dress Code Rules

1. Students must wear **shoes at all times**. Flip-flops, house/bedroom shoes, and stiletto high heels are not allowed. Some classes may require closed-toe shoes for safety. No slides
2. Clothing may **not display profanity, alcohol, drugs, marijuana, or inappropriate or suggestive images or language**.
3. **Hats, caps, sun visors, bandanas, do-rags, wave caps, sweatbands, stocking caps, or other headgear (including bonnets)** are not allowed inside the school building.
4. **Hair accessories** such as combs, rakes, picks, or rat-tail combs may not be worn in the hair. Students may not carry combs or brushes in their hands during the school day.
5. **Pants must be worn at the waist** and should not sag, be rolled up, tucked into socks or shoes, or secured with rubber bands. Belts should not hang from pants or shorts.
6. **Clothing must not have holes above the knee that expose skin**. Holes must be at the knee or below.
7. Clothing may **not expose the midriff, back, cleavage, buttocks, or undergarments**. Proper undergarments must be worn at all times. No sleepwear may be worn to school.
8. **Tank tops, muscle shirts, spaghetti straps, tube tops, and mesh/net shirts** are not allowed unless worn with an acceptable shirt with sleeves.
9. **Sundresses must be worn with a jacket or appropriate shirt**.
10. **No writing across the buttocks** of pants or shorts.
11. **Oversized clothing and oversized jewelry** are not allowed. Earrings must not be oversized, and necklaces with medallions larger than one inch are prohibited.
12. **Sunglasses may not be worn inside the building**.

13. No towels, bandanas, or other items may hang from pockets.

14. Joggers are allowed.

The **administration has final discretion** in determining whether student attire is appropriate and does not disrupt the educational environment. Check the upcoming handbook for full disclosure of the full dress code.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

DRESS CODE VIOLATION

***Administration will use its discretion on whether or not student attire is appropriate. Dress shall not be extreme to the point of creating a disturbance of the educational atmosphere.**

Disciplinary actions are as follows:

CONSEQUENCES:

- 1st Offense: Sequester in ISI until clothes are changed/the office will call parent(s)/guardian(s).
- 2nd Offense: Sequester in ISI the rest of the day (Parent Contact)
- 3rd Offense: 1 Days in ISI and Parent Contact
- 4th Offense: 1 Day OSS, Parent Conference before returning to school.



SUMTER COUNTY — SCHOOL SYSTEM — DRESS CODE

DRESS RIGHT. LEARN RIGHT. EVERY DAY.

1



WEAR SHOES

No slides.
Crocs allowed
but wear properly.

2



KEEP IT CLEAN

No profanity,
alcohol, drugs,
marijuana, or
inappropriate images
or language.

3



NO HEADGEAR

No hats, caps,
bandanas, do-rags,
or other head
coverings inside
the building.

4



KEEP IT NEAT

No combs, picks,
or rakes in hair.
Do not carry combs
or brushes during
the day.

5



PANTS UP

Wear at the waist.
No sagging or
rolling up.
Belts should
not hang.

6



APPROPRIATE FIT

No holes above
the knee.
Holes must be at
the knee or below.

7



KEEP IT COVERED

No exposing midriff,
back, cleavage,
buttocks, or
undergarments.
No sleepwear.

8



SHIRTS & DRESSES

No tank tops, muscle
shirts, spaghetti straps,
tube tops, or mesh
shirts unless worn
with a shirt
with sleeves.
Sundresses need a
jacket or shirt.

9



POCKET CHECK

No towels, bandanas,
or other items
hanging from
pockets.

10



INSIDE RULE

Sunglasses may
not be worn
inside.

JOGGERS & SWEATPANTS



- ✓ Joggers and sweatpants are allowed.
- ✓ Must be worn at the waist.
- ✓ No leggings as pants.
- ✓ Wear appropriate size.



The administration has final discretion in determining whether student attire is appropriate and does not disrupt the educational environment. See upcoming handbook for full details.



PANTHER PRIDE.

| RESPECT.

| RESPONSIBILITY.

| SUCCESS.



TARDIES

Tardiness is defined as (1) being late for school, or (2) late for class. Students are tardy to school at 8:30 a.m. Tardies accumulate on a nine week basis. Students are tardy to class when the student is not in the classroom when the tardy bell sounds. Students who are tardy to class will report to class and sign the tardy roster.

TARDY TO SCHOOL

Students tardy to homeroom will check-in in the front office and receive a tardy slip to submit to the teacher. Students must be signed in by a parent or guardian when they arrive late to school.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are the responsibility of the student. All students must pay for lost or damaged textbooks, based on the state textbook prices. All fees for lost or damaged textbooks will be documented in Infinite Campus. Students will not be issued another text until the lost textbook fee is paid.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

If a student needs to ride another bus home, parent(s)/guardian(s) must notify the school office in writing. A phone number where parent(s)/guardian(s) can be reached must be included for official verification; this information must be turned in before lunch. Permission will not be granted if the parent cannot be reached.

WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

Our school receives local, federal, and state tax dollars to fund the numerous educational programs provided. School employees must take precautions to be good stewards of tax dollars by not participating in fraud, waste, or abuse. These terms are defined as follows:

Fraud – Intentional Deception that would result in tangible or intangible benefit to themselves or others.

Waste – Intentional, unintentional, or careless expenditure, consumption or mismanagement.

Abuse – Excessive or improper use of something; contrary to the legal rules of use.

Anyone suspecting fraud, waste, or abuse concerning federal, state or local programs should report concerns to the Principal. Reports can also be made to the Superintendent or the Sumter County Board of Education.

WITHDRAWALS

A student withdrawing for any reason must complete a withdrawal form provided by the school. All books, materials, dues, and other obligations must be cleared before records can be completed and released.

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to notify the school in advance if a student is withdrawing or transferring to another school.
2. The withdrawal form must be signed by each teacher, the counselor, the media specialist, and the principal.
3. All books must be turned in at the time of withdrawal.
4. There will be no refunds on lockers.

SECTION V - STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Board Policy JCDA: Student Code of Conduct

It is the policy of the Sumter County Board of Education that each school within this school district shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment and which will comply with state law and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15. Each code of conduct shall include, at a minimum, the requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-4-8-.15, STUDENT DISCIPLINE.

Each school shall involve parents in developing and updating student codes of conduct. Each code shall require disciplinary action for each infraction of the code. All student codes of conduct shall be submitted to the board for approval.

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. The parents shall be requested to sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of the code of conduct and return promptly the acknowledgement to the school. The student code of conduct shall be available in the school office and each classroom.

Sumter County Schools Date Adopted: 9/12/2002 Last Revised: 4/11/2013

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 covered or not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures that 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. Only action taken by principals can be appealed to the Associate Superintendent.

All consequences for offenses listed below are minimum consequences. Depending on the severity of the situation, school officials may apply stricter measures. An administrator has the discretion to determine the offense and the appropriateness of the consequence assigned. Misbehavior governed by the code may occur during school hours, outside school hours, on school grounds or campus, off school grounds or campus, at school-sponsored activities whether on or off school grounds/campus, and/or on school-sponsored transportation.

** Each time a student is given In-School Intervention (ISI) or Out-School Suspension (OSS), the parent(s)/guardian must meet with a member of the school administration before the student may return to his/her regular classes.

Students who repeatedly violate the various rules and regulations may be subject to disciplinary action more severe than the consequences specified for the individual offenses committed, up to and including suspension to a formal hearing and possible long-term suspension or expulsion.

School administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for misconduct which occurs:

On the school grounds during or immediately before or immediately after school hours; On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; Off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event; within a school safety zone; and in any situation that has an adverse effect on the climate and safety of the school.

Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school related actions by students, at any time of the year, which has a direct and immediate impact on school discipline, the educational function of the school, or the welfare of students and staff. A student who has committed a criminal act while off campus is subject to disciplinary action and may be excluded from school. Such act could, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act which would be considered to be felony if committed by an adult, an assault misconduct of a serious nature. A student whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare and/or safety of other students or staff, whose presence may cause substantial disruption at school, is also subject to In-School Intervention, and assignment to an alternative education.

NOTE: A student attempting to enroll/re-enroll into school that is or may be criminally charge with a felony or a designated felony (O.C.G.A 15-11-63) must be referred directly to the department of Safe Schools and Student Relations and subject to the Student Placement Protocol.

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

AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER

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

Each teacher shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737 which requires the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct. Such a 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may contact the principal or designee.

The principal or designee shall notify in writing the teacher and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the discipline or student support services which have 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) has received the written notification, including information as to how the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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. The degree of discipline to be imposed by the school official, Sumter County Middle School is a 7th– 8th grade school; therefore, discipline will be based on middle school in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

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

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Loss of Privileges
- Isolation or Time Out
- Temporary Removal from Class or Extracurricular Activity
- Notification of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Temporary Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term 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 when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.
- After-school Detention can be used at Teacher/Parent discretion

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

Parent(s)/guardian(s) or students may elect not to contest whether a student violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parent or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer in accordance with local board policy.

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 out of school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified if possible. School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence surrounding a situation necessitates their involvement or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported.

School officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Student vehicles brought on campus; student book bags, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parent(s)/guardian(s). Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, 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

All teachers and staff members at the school encourage the best behavior possible from all students. The following summarizes school-wide rules that all students are expected to follow:

1. Obey all school personnel - teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, food service staff, custodial staff, school bus drivers and school volunteers.
2. Be on time for school and class.
3. Use all school facilities for the purpose intended and help to keep them clean.
4. Always walk quietly to the right in the halls - never run!
5. Keep hands, feet, insults and objects to yourself.
6. Always speak softly in halls, classrooms, cafeteria, and restrooms.
7. Respect other people and their property. (Toys, games, radios and other items taken from the students for inappropriate use will be returned the last day of school or can be picked up by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF DISCIPLINE/TERMS

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 or in a way that physically harms the other person.

Bullying: In accordance with Georgia law, bullying is defined as (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student: A student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which 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 specific 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 board approved uniform policy of how students are expected to dress.

Drugs: "Drugs" shall mean all substances, including but not limited to, alcohol and alcoholic beverages, marijuana, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, look-alike drugs, inhalants, pills, tablets, capsules, synthetic substances and all other legal and illegal drugs or substances.

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 money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

Fighting: A physical altercation between two or more individuals.

Firearm: A firearm is a portable gun, being a barreled weapon that launches one or more projectiles often driven by the action of an explosive force.

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

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

Long-Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period greater than 10 days which may be imposed only by a disciplinary tribunal.

In School Intervention (ISI): Removal of a student from class or the regular school program and assignment of that student to an alternative program isolated from peers to receive intervention support to address behaviors.

Physical Violence: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another: or intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another.

Placement Review Committee: The committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet established criteria to be considered on grade level. This committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parents or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) in which the student did not achieve grade level.

Possession: The act of having/owning, having on one's person, or being in control of something.

Probation: A situation or period of time in which a person who has made a serious mistake or done something bad is watched and must behave well in order not to be seriously punished.

School Authorities: The administrators (principal and assistant principals) within a school in addition to Central Office personnel (superintendent, assistant superintendent, and human resources).

School Bus Suspension: Student suspension from being able to ride any school bus for a specified period of time.

School Safety Zone: School safety zone means in or on any real property owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or school board and used for elementary or secondary education.

Short-Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed 10 days.

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

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

Under the Influence: A person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs when his/her mental or physical faculties are so impaired as to reduce his/her ability to think and act with ordinary care.

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

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

MIDDLE SCHOOL 7- 8

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OFFENSES AND CONSEQUENCES

FAILURE TO ACCEPT DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Students will not refuse or fail to serve detention, **In-School Intervention**, or any other disciplinary action imposed by a teacher or school administrator.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION

Academic dishonesty or academic misconduct is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise. It can include:

Plagiarism: The adoption or reproduction of original creations of another author (person, collective, organization, community or other type of author, including anonymous authors, AI, ChatGPT, etc.) without due acknowledgment.

Fabrication: The falsification of data, information, or citations in any formal academic exercise.

Deception: Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise - e.g., giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.

Cheating: Any attempt to give or obtain assistance in a formal academic exercise (like an examination) without due acknowledgment.

Bribery: or paid services. Giving certain test answers for money.

Sabotage: Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books or willfully disrupting the experiments of others.

Professorial misconduct: Professorial acts that are academically fraudulent equate to academic fraud.

Students will not engage in an act of providing false information including, but not limited to, falsifying school records, forging signatures, making or providing false statements, to teachers, administrators or other School district personnel, cheating, bribery, or using an unauthorized computer user ID or password. **Students are prohibited from falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting or erroneously reporting information to legal authorities, teachers, administrators or other school district personnel regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school district employee.**

NOTE: In ALL cases the student's grade will be penalized at the discretion of the teacher.

ACTS OF BIGOTRY

While on school grounds or during school activities engaging in any verbal or physical acts of bigotry whether observed, overheard, or known to be fact, by a member of the school faculty.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any drug alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, or intoxicant of any kind. (Influence is defined as noticeably impaired behavior and/or obvious physical symptoms.)

As used in this Code of student Conduct- drugs shall mean all substances, including but not limited to, alcohol and alcoholic beverages, marijuana, medical marijuana, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, look-alike drugs, inhalants, pills, tablets, capsules, synthetic substances and all other legal and illegal drugs or substances. Use of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs by minors is illegal and harmful.

NOTE: A student must never touch or handle drugs at any time. Never take or agree to hold weapons, **drugs, illegal** or unknown items from other students. Tell administrators if any of these items are found.

A. Intent/Attempt/Sell/Distribution of Drugs - Students will not sell, attempt or intend to sell,

distribute, or attempt or intend to distribute, drugs or substances represented or believed by the buyer or receiver to be drugs.

B. Possession/Use/Under the Influence of Drugs - Students will not possess, **use, attempt to use,** or be under the influence of drugs or substances represented or believed by the student to be drugs.

C. Possession and/or Distribution of Drug-related Paraphernalia - A student will not possess or distribute “drug-related paraphernalia”. As used in this Code of Student Conduct drug related paraphernalia includes, but is not limited to pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers and other items used or related to drug use.

ARSON

Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device

ASSAULT/BATTERY/THREATENING ON SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

Engaging in an assault on and/or battery on any school employee on or off school property, if school related. This includes touching, striking, pushing, or threatening the person, bodily or psychologically, and/or the property of any school system employee. (GA Code 20-2-753) Code Section (20-2-751.6) Relating to suspension policy for students committing acts of physical violence resulting in injury to teachers would be amended in: Subsection (a), (b), (c) to permit local boards to use disciplinary hearing officers or panels, in addition to tribunals, to hear cases involving students committing acts of physical violence resulting in injury to teachers.

ASSAULT/BATTERY TOWARDS STUDENT

Engaging in an assault on and/or battery on any student on or off school property, if school related. This includes touching, striking, pushing, or threatening the person, bodily or psychologically, and/or their property.

BEING IN AN UNAUTHORIZED AREA

Being in areas designated as unauthorized.

Students are not to be in unauthorized areas of the school without written permission.

BREAKING AND ENTERING-BURGLARY

Unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime.

BULLYING/HAZING/CYBERBULLYING (SOCIAL MEDIA)

Students will not threaten, intimidate, harass, make physical contact with or subject another student to any other form of physical or emotional hurt, including hazing associated with membership in extracurricular organizations (sports teams, band, etc.). **School officials will address even one act of bullying/hazing if necessary.** Violations of this offense code include, but are not limited to **a student who has engaged in bullying should be given an age-appropriate consequence which will include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.**

STUDENTS MUST NEVER SEND INAPPROPRIATE MESSAGES, PICTURES AND/OR VIDEOS USING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES OR THE INTERNET/INTRANET AT ANY TIME.

Certain information transmitted via electronically may be considered as a form of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, **emails**, and websites.

NOTE: Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall at a minimum be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process hearing by disciplinary Due Process facilitators, panels, or tribunals (O.C.G.A. 20-2- 751.4).

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

NOTE: Depending on severity, inappropriate messages and shared materials may result in disciplinary tribunal and referral to law enforcement.

CAMPUS/SCHOOL DISTURBANCES

Students will not commit any behavior that disrupts **school operation**, distracts students and/or teachers, or creates a dangerous or fearful situation for students and/or staff.

Students will not engage in acts that cause or may cause disruption of the school and/or threaten the safety or well-being of other students. Prohibited acts include, but are not limited to **walk-outs, sit downs, rioting/ chaos, picketing, trespassing, inciting disturbances, pulling fire alarm, calling 911, and actual violence during periods of disruption, etc.**

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Only school-issued or approved devices necessary for student learning will be allowed for use during the school day from arrival to departure time. **The following personal electronic devices (PEDs) are not allowed to be used:** Cell phones, AirPod/like devices, IPAD/like devices, Bluetooth headphones/earphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, toys, games, or other unapproved electronic communication devices. Any material stored or saved on confiscated electronic devices/cell phones may be searched by school officials. ALL CONFISCATED DEVICES that are not used for investigative purposes or picked up by a parent/guardian, WILL BE DISCARDED AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Permitted Use: Devices may still be used under specific circumstances, like for students with IEPs or medical needs, or for emergency communication protocols.

Sumter County Middle School will assume **NO LIABILITY** for lost or stolen phones and/or electronic devices. **No searches will be conducted for any electronics reported stolen or lost.**

CLASSROOM DISTURBANCES

Disrupting the learning environment.

COMPUTER TRESPASS

Unauthorized use of a computer, computer network, or data

DISOBEDIENCE, DISRESPECT, AND/OR INSUBORDINATION

(Refusal to follow directions, refusal to obey faculty, inappropriate behavior, interruption of instruction)

Acting in a rude, disobedient, disrespectful and/or insubordinate manner and/or refusing to identify oneself correctly upon request.

NOTE: Blatant disrespect may result in immediate suspension.

BLATANT DISRESPECT

Blatantly acting in a rude, disobedient, disrespectful and/or insubordinate manner. (ie., telling an adult to “shut up” or “stop talking”, ignoring a request by an adult)

DRUGS: Drug related, Drugs, Pseudo Drugs

Selling of or attempting to sell, distribution of, possession of, use of drugs or under the influence of drugs on school property or at a school function*(illegal, prescription, over the counter, or substances represented to be illegal drugs, inhalants, vapors, CBD products with or without THC and/or drug paraphernalia such as rolling papers, roach clips, pipes, etc.) Mere possession of inhalants such as glue, white-out, and/or rubber cement does not constitute a violation of this policy.

Georgia law, 16-12-191, provides that persons may be in possession of *medical* marijuana under limited circumstances defined in the law. Because of **federal law** parents should make other arrangements for administering medical marijuana **at school** and students should not possess the medical marijuana at school. Parents must administer medical marijuana off campus to the student.

Cannabis Oil (CBD) is permissible but it must be self-administered in the presence of the school nurse or designee. It must be housed in the nurse's office.

Federal law has NOT changed and possession of any form of marijuana is illegal.

(Influence is defined as noticeably impaired behavior and/or obvious physical symptoms.)

**(In every instance, law enforcement officials and parents will be notified.)*

FIGHTING

It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to engage in fighting. Fighting is a serious offense. It is defined as repeated aggressive punches/hits/kicks with another student. Students may be charged with affray, disruption of public school, battery, and/or assault. If a student claims self-defense, it is the student's responsibility to prove that they acted in self-defense.

(Based on investigation and evidence presented administrative discretion of consequences.)

NOTE: If a school system employee is hit, whether intentionally or not, during the process of breaking up a fight, the student will receive a minimum ten-day suspension. In addition the student may be referred to a formal hearing.

NOTE: If a fight involves 2 students, any additional students that participate may result in a disciplinary tribunal at the discretion of the administration.

NOTE: A legal complaint may be filed with the proper law enforcement officials at the discretion of the administration.

FOOD ITEMS (soft drinks, junk food) unless school-approved activity

Unauthorized possessing/eating/selling/buying of identified food items

NOTE: In all instances, items and/or money will be confiscated and disposed of.

FORGERY

Forging checks, school or parent documents, hall/bus passes, and absence/check-out excuses.

GAMBLING

Students will not engage in acts of gambling including, but not limited to, betting money or other items on card games, dice games, or the outcome of games or activities, and/or possession of gambling materials or paraphernalia

NOTE: All gambling devices and/or money will be confiscated.

HOMICIDE

Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, killing of one human being by another, killing a person through negligence.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR/MISCONDUCT

Students will not engage in acts that are prohibited in school. Prohibited acts include but are not limited to wrestling, joking, school pranks, slap boxing, inciting disturbances, horseplay, etc.

INAPPROPRIATE DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Displaying inappropriate expressions of affection such as kissing, holding hands, embracing, and petting, etc., while at school or at any school-sponsored activity.

INDECENT EXPOSURE

Violating the school's dress code and/or removing one's own or another's clothing or acts which offend against commonly recognized standards of good taste.

NOTE: Indecent exposure is defined as removing clothing items, pulling down pants, wearing pants significantly below the waistline, or unzipping pants in public. Unzipping pants and/or pulling them down while wearing shorts underneath will be treated as indecent exposure.

KIDNAPPING

Unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parents or legal guardian.

MISBEHAVIOR IN IN-SCHOOL INTERVENTION (ISI)

Acting in a rude, disobedient, disrespectful, and/or insubordinate manner, causing a disruption, use of profanity, and/or failure to follow rules while in ISI.

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

Theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle, RV, dune buggy, ATV, or anything that is self-propelled.)

NON-SANCTIONED GROUP ACTIVITIES (GANG RELATED ACTIVITIES)

Participating in an activity related to non-sanctioned groups while on school premises or at a school function. Gangs are herein described as clubs, groups, or organizations of limited membership, which are known to the Sumter County School System through its personal intelligence or through information furnished through local law enforcement officials, to advocate, practice, engage or participate in unlawful acts such as intimidation, violence, or destruction to property. Gangs shall not be permitted on school premises or in school facilities, or to conduct any activities, meetings, or gatherings on or about school facilities, premises, or property at any time. The presence of such gangs is a disruption to the education process and a threat to the safety and well-being of the students and faculties of the Sumter County School System. Membership in or affiliation with gangs as defined above shall not be permitted. Wearing of any insignia, and/or uniforms, or other means of any gang identification, or using or making any signs, signals, or other means of gang communication or identification by any students or non-student visiting on the premises of any school facility shall not be permitted.

There is zero tolerance in the Sumter County School System for non-sanctioned group activities which are detrimental to a healthy and safe school environment.

No color, bandanas, articles of clothing, or paraphernalia which promote or identify with a non sanctioned group is acceptable. No extremes in dress and/or grooming will be permitted.

No recruiting, intimidating, initiating, or hazing will be permitted on school property and/or at school related functions.

No signs, symbols, gestures, songs, drawings, or writings which show an allegiance or affiliation with non-sanctioned groups will be permitted. Tattoos, body carvings showing allegiance or affiliation with non sanctioned groups must be covered at all times.

Any items found on school property which display signs, symbols, gestures, songs, drawings or writings which show allegiance or affiliation with a non-sanctioned group will be confiscated by school officials and turned over to law enforcement agencies.

No student shall threaten to commit, or actually commit, any crime of violence or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another; cause the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, school bus, or other school facility, or otherwise disrupt the orderly operation of any activity on any school campus or school property in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or disruption.

Any student who urges, encourages, counsels, furthers, promotes, assists, causes, advises, procures, or abets any other students to violate any section or paragraph of this policy shall be deemed to have violated this policy.

POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF EXPLOSIVE COMPOUNDS/BANNED OBJECTS (LIGHTER/MATCHES)

Carrying, possessing or having under such person's control while at school building, school function, on school property, on a bus or other transportation not furnished by the school, ammunition of any type or explosive compound, (matches, lighter, explosives, fireworks, flammable incendiary devices, pepper spray/mace, etc.). (GA Code O.C. GA. 16-11-127.1)

PRANKS

Causing substantial disruption of learning opportunities including using odor altering devices, the normal operating procedure of the school, and/or threatening the safety of other students. Destroying, vandalizing of, and/or threatening to destroy public or private property located on school premises or at a school function. (This may include such actions as use of bombs, explosive devices, setting fires, pulling or vandalizing fire alarms, calling 911, the deliberate destruction or defacement of school property.)

Substantial disruption may lead to law enforcement referral

Georgia Code Section 20-2-1181 states that "it shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public school bus stop as established by local school boards of education. Any person violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature."

PROFANITY/OBSCENITY

Students will not engage in conduct that includes, but is not limited to, cursing; profane, vulgar, obscene words or gestures; spitting on another person; possession of obscene material/pornography; and profane, vulgar or obscene comments or actions.

NOTE: If obscenity is directed toward any school system employee, consequences will result in a minimum of five (5) days suspension from school and may result in a formal hearing.

ROBBERY (Actual or Attempted)

Taking or attempting to take anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force, threat, or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT/INAPPROPRIATE BODILY CONTACT OF A SEXUAL NATURE/ SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment means unwanted sexually oriented words or actions that hurt or humiliate people. It causes tension for others.

Students will not engage in inappropriate bodily contact of a sexual nature. This offense prohibits sexual conduct between or among students and between or among a student and School District employees or visitors on school property or at any school activity or event, including, but not limited to, consensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual contact, sexual assault, unwelcome sexual advances or comments, request for sexual favors and/or indecent exposure.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or any member of the district staff to harass a student through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined below. Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a member of the school staff to a student or when made by any student to another student or system employee constitutes sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's education;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual;
- 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 environment;
- Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:
 - Verbal harassment or abuse
 - Pressure for sexual activity
 - Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications
 - Unwelcome touching
 - Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.

Sexual harassment is a kind of discrimination. It means that someone is treated differently because of his or her sex. It is behavior or words that:

- are directed at a person because of his or her sex
- are uninvited, unwanted, and unwelcome
- cause a person to feel uncomfortable or offended
- create an environment that makes learning difficult
- are pervasive and ongoing

Any person who alleges sexual harassment by a staff member or student in the school district may complain directly to a principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, or other individual to receive such complaints. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment, grades, or job assignments.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complaint and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board'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 fully investigated and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated. Appropriate documentation shall be maintained on all allegations of sexual harassment. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion. Additionally, in all cases a report of sexual

harassment will be reported to the system's Title IX coordinator. At the building level, sexual harassment should be reported to the principal, assistant principal, and/or counselor.

It is the policy of the Sumter County Board of Education to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the district to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined.

SEXUAL BATTERY

Forcible sexual union against a person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will when the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or mental incapacity, (Includes rape, attempted rape, fondling, indecent liberties, child molestation).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A student shall not engage in physical sexual activity on school property or at school sponsored events. A student shall not be in possession of any sexually oriented device or material.

Parents and students should be aware of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct that can include criminal charges and the student being tried as an adult. Sexual offenses are prohibited with and against members of the same sex as well as members of the opposite sex. Students may not engage in consensual sexual acts on school grounds or at a school activity, function, or event whether on or off school grounds. Sexual Misconduct is defined as amorous kissing or similar displays of affection; any form of sexual activity; or exposing one's intimate body parts or "mooning" to another student or adult. A student may be charged with Sexual Battery for intentionally making physical contact with the intimate parts of another person without the consent of that person. A student may be charged with Sexual Molestation for doing any immoral or indecent act to or in the presence of another person, without that person's consent, with the intent to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires of either the student or the other person. This includes forcing another person to make physical contact with the student's intimate body parts. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of abuse, sexual misconduct, or other inappropriate behavior is urged to immediately make a report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. Other sexual offenses include but not limited to inappropriate sexually-based contact, public groping, inappropriate bodily contact, sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials, simulated sex acts, or engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or school activities.

What Teenagers Need to Know About Sex and the Law?

If you are 18, you are considered to be an adult even if you are still in high school. Anyone younger than 18 is a "minor."

"Sexting" is a crime. You and your friends can be charged criminally if there is a nude or partially nude photo of you on their cell phone or computer—even if you took the photo yourself. You can get into trouble, too, for sending it to them. Once you send the photo, you cannot control who else they share it with or where they post it.

If you touch, slap or pinch someone's breast or bottom as a joke in school, it may not be a joke to that person. If the person you touch finds it offensive, the legal system will not take it as a joke either.

If you are convicted of a sex offense, even as a juvenile, you will be required to register as a sex offender. You will have to notify the police every time you move, get a new job, or attend a new school.

If you have consensual sexual contact with someone under the age of 16, you can be charged with statutory rape in juvenile court even if you are under the age of 16 as well. If your case is then transferred to adult court, you will be treated as an adult sex offender and subject to the same penalties as an adult.

SKIPPING CLASS OR REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

Students will not skip classes and required school activities. If students do not report to class/required school activity or leave school or school property without permission from an administrator, they are in

violation of this offense.

SKIPPING AFTER SCHOOL INTERVENTION (ASI)/IN-SCHOOL INTERVENTION (ISI)

Failure to report to After School Intervention /ISI when assigned. In all cases the students must serve assigned additional ISI day(s) upon returning to school.

STUDENT DRESS CODE VIOLATION – SEE DRESS CODE

Students will not dress inappropriately on school grounds or at school events. ALL students are expected to dress appropriately and adhere to the student dress code found in this handbook and any additional requirements listed in the local school regulations.

TARDINESS (Chronic)

Students will not demonstrate chronic tardiness. Being repeatedly late to school, class, or a school activity constitutes a violation of this section. Chronic tardiness is described as 6 or more tardies in a semester.

TERRORISTIC THREATS TOWARDS SCHOOL OR STUDENT

O.C.G.A. 16-11-37(a) A person commits the offense of a terroristic threat when he or she threatens to commit any crime of violence, to release any hazardous substance, as such term is defined in Code Section 12-8-92, or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another or of causing the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation or otherwise causing serious public inconvenience or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.

Students charged with making a terroristic threat toward the school or students (verbally or via social media) may be permanently expelled or expelled for a specific period of time. OCGA 20-2-690.1 clearly gives the school system the authority to expel a student, particularly when there is a threat to the safety and security of the school.

****(Law enforcement officials will be notified in all incidents)***

THREATENING AND/OR INTIMIDATING ANOTHER STUDENT

Threatening and/or intimidating another student: touching, pushing, or threatening the person bodily or psychologically.

THEFT OR POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY/ATTEMPTED OR THREATENED THEFT/ROBBERY/BURGLARY/EXTORTION/POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY.

Students will not engage in **attempt** or threaten theft; theft by deception of public or private property; extortion; robbery; burglary; possession of stolen property or missing property; possession and/or distribution of counterfeit money/money orders/bank cards.

NOTE: The student must make restitution for any loss of school or personal property caused by his/her behavior while on school property.

TOBACCO AND OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Students will not possess or use any tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, etc.) on school property or on a school bus or at any **school event** away from school. **No student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product at any time on any school District owned/leased property or at any school event, including non-school hours, 24 hours a day, seven days per week**

TRESPASSING

Entering or remaining on a public school campus or any facility of the Sumter County School System without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry (includes students under suspension or expulsion, and unauthorized persons who enter or remain on a campus after being directed to leave by the chief administrator or designee.) No trespassing or loitering is allowed.

VANDALISM/PROPERTY/LOITERING OR GOING ON ANY SCHOOL CAMPUS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION/TRESPASSING/BREAKING AND ENTERING

Actual Attempted or Threatened Destruction/Damage/Vandalism/Arson to School, Public or Private Property. Students will not enter the premises of a school other than their own school, unless prior permission is received from an administrator of the school to be visited, or unless the school is hosting a school-related function, such as an academic or athletic activity. A student will not enter or remain in any school building on weekends or after school hours without authorization or permission.

NOTE: When a student refuses to leave any school property and/or returns to any school property after being instructed by school staff or law enforcement staff to leave the property, the student will be in violation of this section and the matter may be referred to law enforcement.

NOTE: Immediate restitution for damages. Possible referral to law enforcement.

VAPORS

The possession or use of a vape on school campus and/or school property is not permitted. This includes all school related activities that meet inside school facilities or sponsored by an organization of the school meeting elsewhere.

NOTE: If vape is tested and found to contain marijuana or other illegal drugs, consequences for DRUGS (#14) will apply.

WEAPONS, EXPLOSIVES AND OTHER DEVICES

Possessing a dangerous instrument or weapon on school property or at a school event. A student shall not supply, possess, handle, use, threaten to use or transmit any weapon or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury and intended for use as a weapon, in a school safety zone, at a school building, school function, or on school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school. A "weapon," "tool" or "instrument" means and includes by way of illustration but is not limited to the following items:

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

Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year expulsion. The Superintendent shall have the authority either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing to reduce the mandated one-year expulsion under circumstances where the one-year expulsion appears excessive to the superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment. Finally, in any tribunal decision appealed to the board of education, the board may reduce the mandated punishment but shall consider whether the superintendent and/or tribunal considered a reduction and any rationale in denying such a reduction.

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

Reporting Requirements

Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student possesses a weapon as defined in paragraph 1, is involved in an assault using a weapon as defined in paragraph 2, or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus must report such violations to the principal or assistant principal of the school. If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that a report is valid, he/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney. The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any activity involving weapons.

If a student turns in a weapon found, school authorities have to make an insightful determination as to whether the student is truthful in reporting finding a weapon as opposed to being in possession of the weapon. In cases where doubt exists, proof remains with the student. Please be reminded that the case law ruling from the State Board of Education is that **intent** must be determined in order to expel a student for possession of a weapon.

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

A student is deemed to be in possession of an illegal and/or banned item(s) under BOE policy when such item(s) is/are on the person of the student, in the student's possession or in the student's vehicle on school property or on property being used by the school system.

NOTE: Weapons present an immediate and real danger to students, faculty and staff, and can also damage the learning climate and reputation of a school. Federal law states that school districts must have a policy requiring the expulsion of a student from school for at least one year for possession of or for bringing a firearm to school.

NOTE: A student must never touch or handle weapons at any time. Never take or agree to hold weapons, drugs, illegal or unknown items from other students. Tell an administrator if any of these items are found.

THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS ON OTHER SCHOOL MATTERS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE STUDENT BODY IN ANY OR ALL MATTERS NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED IN THIS HANDBOOK. ANY ITEM BROUGHT ONTO SCHOOL PROPERTY MAY BE SEARCHED AT ANY TIME. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE CONSEQUENCE FOR ANY DISCIPLINE VIOLATION BASED ON THE SEVERITY OF THE INFRACTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION.

STUDENTS MAY SERVE A MAXIMUM OF 15 DAYS IN ISI (IN SCHOOL INTERVENTION). ONCE A STUDENT HAS REACHED THE 15 DAY MAXIMUM, ANY FUTURE OFFENSES WILL RESULT IN

IMMEDIATE OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION.

STUDENTS WHO ACCUMULATE 8 DISCIPLINE REFERRALS (to not include bus and tardy referrals) IN A SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE PLACED ON BEHAVIOR CONTRACT. VIOLATION OF THIS CONTRACT WILL RESULT IN A MANDATORY 10 DAY SUSPENSION AND REFERRAL TO TRIBUNAL.

***Alternative Programs are available based on the needs of all students.

SCMS Levels of Student Code & Consequences

These are the levels of infractions by category for SCMS and the possible consequences for them. School administration reserves the right to determine consequences based on the severity of the infraction and frequency of individual violations.

Level	Infractions/Offenses	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th & Subsequent Offenses
Level 1 Minor	· Academic Dishonesty · Classroom Disturbance · Digital Misuse (Non-Harmful) · Dress Code · Food Items · Hallway Misbehavior · Inappropriate Affection · Inappropriate Language (Non-Directed) · Minor Defiance/ Disrespect · Not Following Directions, Tardiness, Unauthorized Area, Unexcused Classroom Refusal to Work	Verbal Warning Parent Contact (as needed) Referral for Counseling Session	Parent Contact ISI (1–2 Class Periods/Days)	Parent Contact ISI (1–3 Class Periods /Days)	OSS (1 Day) Mandatory Parent Conference/ Restorative Session before the student can return to SCMS
Level 2 Moderate	Aggressive Misbehavior/Horseplay, Campus Disturbance, Cyberbullying (Minor), Dishonesty During Investigation, Disrespect/ Insubordination, Forgery, Gambling, Leaving Campus/Skipping, Minor Physical Aggression, Misbehavior in ISI, Misuse of Technology, Obscenity/Inappropriate Language Towards an Adult, Repeated PDA,	ISI (2–3 Days) Parent Contact Referral for Counseling Session	ISI (3-5 Days) Parent Contact	OSS (1–3 Days) Mandatory Parent Meeting/ Restorative Conference before the student can return to SCMS	Minimum 10-Day OSS referral to Tribunal

	Recording Others Without Permission, Social Media Misconduct, Threatening Student, Vandalism				
Level 3 Serious	Acts of Bigotry, AI Misuse for Harm, Bullying/Cyberbullying, Distribution of Inappropriate Media, Explosives/Lighters/Matches, Extortion, Gang Activity, Inappropriate Sexual Behavior, Repeated Harassment, Serious Cyber Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Terroristic Threats, Theft, Tobacco/Vaping	ISS (1–3 Days) Parent Contact Referral for Counseling Session	OSS (3–5 Days) Mandatory Parent Meeting/ Restorative Conference before the student can return to SCMS	Minimum 10-Day OSS referral to Tribunal	Tribunal Hearing Alternative School Recommendation Expulsion Recommendation (if applicable)
Level 4 Major Safety/ Criminal	Alcohol, Assault on Employee, Arson, Bomb Threats, Burglary, Drugs, False Reporting of Emergencies, Homicide, Kidnapping, Motor Vehicle Theft, Robbery, Sexual Battery, Sexual Misconduct, Severe Cybercrime, Substance Distribution, Use of AI to Create Credible Threats, Weapons	Minimum 10-Day OSS Law Enforcement Referral Parent Notification	Tribunal Hearing	Alternative School Placement or Expulsion Recommendation	Long-Term Alternative Placement or Expulsion, as permitted by district policy and Georgia law

CONTINUOUS VIOLATORS:

- Students who accumulate 5 discipline referrals (to not include bus) in a school year will result in a Behavior Contract/Behavior Contract/Parent Notification of Continuous Violator letter or a behavior contract.
- Students who accumulate 8 discipline referrals (to not include bus and tardy referrals) in a school year will result in a mandatory 10 day suspension and referral to tribunal.
- If a student who has been placed on a behavior contract violates the code of conduct with any infraction, the student may be referred to a tribunal for possible placement at alternative school or expulsion.

Tier	Violation Threshold	Consequences / Interventions
Tier 1	0 - 4 Infinite Campus referrals Referred to next tier	Parent Conference; Refer to Counselor; Restorative Conference; Classroom/School-Based Interventions
Tier 2	5 Infinite Campus referrals Referred to next tier	Behavior Contract; Parent Conference; Check-In/Check-Out with Counselor or Staff Mentor; Restorative Conference
Tier 3	8 Infinite Campus referrals Referred to Tribunal	Minimum 10-Day Out-of-School Suspension (OSS); Tribunal Hearing; Alternative Placement Referral (Waiver)

Student Due Process

Students must be given:

- Written explanation of incident
- Opportunity to respond
- Parent/guardian notification
- Appeal process (if applicable)

Special Education / 504 Protections

Disciplinary actions must consider:

- Manifestation determination review (MDR) when required
- IEP/504 accommodations
- Behavioral intervention plans (BIP)

1. CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Only school-issued or approved devices necessary for student learning will be allowed for use or visible during the school day from arrival to departure time. **The following personal electronic devices (PEDs) are not allowed to be used:** Cell phones, AirPod/like devices, IPAD/like devices, Bluetooth headphones/ earphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, toys, games, or other unapproved electronic communication devices. Any material stored or saved on confiscated electronic devices/cell phones may be searched by school officials. ALL CONFISCATED DEVICES that are not used for investigative purposes or picked up by a parent/guardian, WILL BE DISCARDED AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Permitted Use: Devices may still be used under specific circumstances, for example, students with IEPs or medical needs, or for emergency communication protocols.

Sumter County Middle School will assume **NO LIABILITY** for lost or stolen phones and/or electronic devices. **No searches will be conducted for any electronics reported stolen or lost.**

CONSEQUENCE(S): (For all prohibited PEDs)

1st OFFENSE: The PED is confiscated, parent contact, placed in a Yondr Pouch/Box and returned during dismissal

2nd OFFENSE: The PED is confiscated for 2 days, parent contact, placed in a Yondr Pouch/Box and returned during dismissal each day

3rd OFFENSE: The PED is confiscated for 3 days, parent contact, placed in a Yondr Pouch/Box and returned during dismissal each day

4th OFFENSE and all other: The PED is confiscated for 5 days, parent contact, placed in a Yondr Pouch/Box and returned during dismissal each day

NOTE: If a student refuses to give their PED to an administrator, the student will be assigned ISI until a parent conference has taken place and the PED is confiscated. If the student refuses to report to ISI, the student will be suspended from school until there is a parent conference and the PED is confiscated.

2. FIGHTING/BATTERY

Offense: It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to engage in fighting/battery. Fighting/Battery is a serious offense. It is defined as repeated aggressive punches/hits/kicks with another student. Students may be charged with affray, disruption of public school, battery, and/or assault. If a student claims self-defense, it is the student's responsibility to prove that they acted in self-defense.

(Based on investigation and evidence presented administrative discretion of consequences.)

CONSEQUENCE(S):

1st OFFENSE: 3 Days OSS and mandatory parent conference prior to the student returning to school.

2nd OFFENSE: 10 Days OSS with Tribunal Referral

NOTE: If a school system employee is hit, whether intentionally or not, during the process of breaking up a fight/battery, the student will receive a minimum ten-day suspension. In addition the student may be referred to a formal hearing.

NOTE: If a fight involves 2 students, any additional students that participate may result in a disciplinary tribunal at the discretion of the administration.

NOTE: If a battery involves 2 or more students toward 1 student, the offending students may receive a disciplinary tribunal at the discretion of the administration.

NOTE: A legal complaint may be filed with the proper law enforcement officials at the discretion of the administration.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student desks, student lockers or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. As used in this discipline code, the term “unauthorized” means any items dangerous to the health or safety of students or school personnel, or **disruptive to any** lawful function, mission or process of the school, or any item described as unauthorized in school rules available beforehand to the student. A student’s failure to permit searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Personal Searches: A student’s person and/or personal effects (e.g. purse, book bag, etc.) may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. If a search of a student’s person is conducted it will be conducted by a school employee of the same sex and with an adult witness present, when feasible.

If the school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student has on his or her person an item imminently dangerous to the student or to others, a more intrusive search of the student’s person may be conducted. Such a search may only be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex, with an adult witness of the same sex present, and only upon the prior approval of the Superintendent or his or her designee, unless the health or safety of students will be endangered by the delay which might be caused by following these procedures.

Desk and Locker Searches: Student desks and lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. **Periodic general inspections of desks and lockers may be conducted by school authorities for any reason at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.**

Seizure of Illegal Materials: If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such items shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

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



2026-2027 SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS



STUDENT TRANSPORTATION **RIDING INSTRUCTIONS**

SAFE STUDENT RIDING INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to another great year! We look forward to transporting your child this school year. To ensure that your child will have a safe riding experience this year, we ask that you review the safe riding instructions with your child now and periodically during the school year.

Statistics show children riding a school bus are much safer than in their parent's personal vehicle or any other type of transportation on the roadways. The Sumter County Board of Education believes the school bus is an extension of the classroom; therefore the same rules of Self Respect, Respect for Others, and Respect for the property of others will apply at the bus stop, departing from the bus stop, and while on the bus.

Safe riding begins before your child leaves the house or arrives at the designated bus stop. In order to keep your child safe, your child needs to arrive at the bus stop approximately five minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. These few minutes will allow your child time to arrive at the bus stop without the need to hurry. These five minutes will also limit your child's time near roadways and exposure to various weather conditions for prolonged periods.

While Waiting For the Bus

Students should wait away from the roadway at their designated stop. There should be no horse playing, pushing or shoving while on the way to the bus stop or at the bus stop. Students who do not live on the same side of the road as the bus pick-up must wait on their side of the road until the bus arrives. If your child has to cross the road, he/she must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and wait for the driver to give instructions when it is safe for him/her to cross.

While Loading the Bus at Designated Stop (same side of road)

Students must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the entrance door to open, and make sure that the red stop lights are flashing before approaching the bus to board. When more than one student boards at the same bus stop, they must line up in a single file line just prior to the arrival of the bus. There should not be pushing, shoving or horse playing while boarding the bus. Students should always use the handrail when stepping onto the bus. Students should be seated in their seat as carefully but as promptly as possible and remain there until they reach their school or destination.

While Loading the Bus at Designated Stop (opposite side of road)

When a student has to cross the road to board the bus, he/she must stand on their side of the road. Students must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the entrance door to open, and be sure the red stop lights are flashing before approaching the bus to board. Students must wait for the driver to give a verbal or physical sign that it is all clear to cross the road. Even after all the above, students must quickly look both ways to be sure the road is still clear and all other vehicles have stopped. Students must always cross in front of the bus and should always use the handrail when stepping onto the bus. There should not be pushing, shoving or horse playing while loading the bus. Students should seat themselves as carefully and as promptly as possible and remain seated until they reach their school or destination.

While on the Bus

Once students board the bus, the driver has total responsibility for your child's safety. Students must follow

the listed "Bus Regulations" found in "Code of Student Conduct" to ensure a safe ride, whether they are being transported from home to school or back home or any school-sponsored trips.

While Unloading the Bus at School or Destination

Students should unload the bus in single file from front to back with no pushing, shoving or horse playing while unloading the bus. Students should use the handrail as they depart the bus until both feet are on the ground. Students should check for an approaching bus on the door side before exiting the bus.

Students should look both ways before crossing the traffic area and should clear this area as quickly and safely as possible. Students should **never** return to the bus without the supervision of an administrator.

While Loading the Bus at School

Students should wait for buses in a safe area designated by the school. The bus should come to a complete stop and your child must wait for the driver to open the entrance door before approaching the bus. Students should look both ways before leaving the curb and crossing the traffic area to approach the bus. Students must watch for other buses pulling up on the right side while loading the bus. Students should line up in single file according to the order they arrive to the bus and should use the handrail to board. There should be no pushing, shoving or horse playing while coming to, while loading or while getting to their seat. Students should be seated as carefully but as promptly as possible and remain seated until they reach their designated stop.

While Unloading the Bus at Designated Stop

Students should unload the bus in single file from front to back with no pushing, shoving or horse playing. Students should use the handrail as they depart the bus until both feet are on the ground. Students should exit the bus and clear the roadway and continue to move until they are safely away from the bus. Students who live on the opposite side of the road must cross in front of the bus while the bus is at their stop. When a student must cross the road, they should stop at the front of the bus and look both ways before continuing to cross. When all is clear, students should clear the roadway as quickly as possible. Students should go directly home and **never** return to the bus for any reason. Please instruct your child to **never** retrieve an item that rolls under the bus. Students who have permission from parents to check their mailbox who live on the same side of the road as their mailbox must clear the roadway and wait for the bus to depart and for traffic to clear before returning to the roadway to the mailbox. If your child lives on the opposite side of the road from their mailbox, they must cross over to their side of the road while the bus is at their stop. If your child has permission from you to check the mailbox and you live on the opposite side of the road from your mailbox, your child must also wait until after the bus has departed their stop and for traffic to clear before crossing the road to check their mailbox.

Rail Road Crossing

History has shown that more lives are lost in school buses at railroad crossings than at any other location. Each time a school bus and a train collide, the train wins! This is why it is so important for the driver to have their full attention on the railroad crossing. There is no other time when a driver's distraction can cost the loss of so many lives. Please reinforce with your child the importance of being "Silent At All Rail Road Crossings".

Bus Evacuation

Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the bus driver's control, your child may have to evacuate a bus at some time during the year. The decision to evacuate may be based solely on having the best interest of the students in mind. When evacuating a bus is necessary, students are placed in a safer location while waiting for assistance to arrive.

Most evacuations are due to breakdowns which may leave the bus in questionable surroundings. Not all breakdowns result in an evacuation; several factors are taken into consideration before the decision is made to evacuate a bus. The location of an inoperative bus is the greatest factor when making a decision to evacuate a bus. A bus may be required to be evacuated if it is disabled next to a high volume roadway, high

speed limit roadway, on or near a bridge, on a steep hill or in a curve or near water, or any unsafe area.

When any type of evacuation occurs, students must follow the instructions of the driver to safely unload and to relocate in a safe location away from the hazard. On rare occasions, the driver may be incoherent so we may depend on the older, mature students to help with evacuation. This type of evacuation is practiced with all students during the beginning of each school year. There are several reasons that students may have to be unloaded from one bus to another bus without it being an emergency. We ask for you to periodically remind your child to stay calm whenever it is necessary to unload from one bus to another bus for any reason and to always use their directions found in this handbook

While Loading and Unloading the Bus

All buses are designed with several Emergency Exits; these locations are, but are not limited to the entrance/exit door, rear door, emergency exit windows and roof hatches. Students should always use the front entrance/exit door during all evacuations when possible. When the service door is not available, the second choice should be the back door. All other exits should be used only when the loading door and the back door are not practical. When the rear door is the chosen exit, selected students designated by the driver are instructed to assist students to the ground. All students are instructed to leave all personal belongings on the bus and to exit from the front to the back of the selected exit location. Students are instructed to walk at least 100 feet away from the bus at the direction away from the recognized hazard or hazards.

School bus transportation is an important part of the educational system in Sumter County. We appreciate your assistance as we try to provide the safest and most efficient transportation for our precious cargo ... your children!

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY
SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
100 LEARNING LANE
AMERICUS, GEORGIA 31709
229-931-8529 (Phone)
229-931-7455 (Fax)

I have read and understand the contents of the Student Riding Instructions. Please keep the Student Riding Instructions for your future reference to review with your child during the course of the school year.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

DO NOT SIGN THIS PAGE

Middle/High School Bus Discipline Procedures

BUS PASSES

If a **student** needs to ride a bus other than their assigned bus, they must bring a letter stating the bus number, reason for bus pass request, parent name, signature, and **contact number**. Verification of bus pass must be completed before students will receive a bus pass. All bus pass requests should be submitted **to the Main Office by 10:30 a.m. of the day of the bus pass.**

The following rules are published for the safety, health, and welfare of all children who ride school buses. Parents are requested to share with their children the importance of obeying the rules so that all students may be transported safely and comfortably. If a student is suspended from the bus, he or she may also be suspended from school depending on the severity of the offense. The school reserves the right to combine school consequences with transportation consequences. When a student is suspended off a bus, he or she **CANNOT** ride any Sumter County School Bus. **If a student is suspended and gets on another bus to or from school, then 3 additional days will be added to the current suspension. This rule also applies to activity buses/field trips.**

BUS OFFENSES AND CONSEQUENCES

FIGHTING

CONSEQUENCES:

1st OFFENSE: Ten (10) days suspension and mandatory parent and transportation department conference before student can ride the bus.

2nd OFFENSE: Twenty (20) days suspension.

3rd OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the semester (minimum 30 days).

4th OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the school term.

PROMOTING A FIGHT, THROWING OBJECTS, ARGUING with or PROFANITY towards students

CONSEQUENCES:

1st OFFENSE: Five (5) days bus suspension and mandatory parent and transportation department conference before student can ride the bus.

2nd OFFENSE: Ten (10) days bus suspension.

3rd OFFENSE: Twenty (20) days suspension.

4th OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the semester (minimum 30 days).

5th OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the school term.

BULLYING

CONSEQUENCES:

1st OFFENSE: Ten (10) days suspension and mandatory parent and transportation department conference before student can ride the bus.

2nd OFFENSE: Twenty (20) days suspension.

3rd OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the semester (minimum 30 days).

4th OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the school term.

ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICE

CONSEQUENCES:

1st OFFENSE: Twenty (20) days

2nd OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the semester (minimum 30 days).

3rd OFFENSE: Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

GENERAL BUS RULES

The following are not allowed on the bus:

- A.** Disrespecting the bus driver/monitor
 - Refusing to obey the driver or person in authority.
 - Refusing to sit in an assigned seat.
 - Refusing to answer the driver when a question is asked.
 - Giving the driver the wrong information.
 - Getting off the bus at the wrong stop without a note from the school.
 - Refusing to obey the railroad crossing rule.
- B.** Water, food, gum chewing, juice or sodas
- C.** Toys of any size.
- D.** Supplies out on the bus except a book to read.
- E.** Graffiti
- F.** Extending any part of the body or other objects out the windows, doors and aisles of the bus.
- G.** Standing, walking, playing or kicking.
- H.** Sunglasses unless prescribed by a physician.
- I.** Yelling out the window or inside the bus.
- J.** Getting on or off the bus while in motion.
- K.** The use of mirrors, lasers, flash, cameras, lights, reflective devices or any electrical communication devices is prohibited.
- L.** Any other action that might cause disruption for the driver.
- M.** Dress Code Violation

CONSEQUENCES:

1st Offense: Needs Improvement Form

2nd Offense: Five (5) days bus suspension.

3rd Offense: Ten (10) days bus suspension.

4rd Offense: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the semester (minimum 30 days).

5th Offense: Loss of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the school term.

MAJOR OFFENSES

The following behavior will not be tolerated in any form and **MAY** result in an automatic suspension for the entire year. Additionally, students may be referred for a disciplinary tribunal for these offenses:

- A.** Sexual misconduct offenses (engaging with or fondling one another).
- B.** Ignition of lighter, matches, and /or combustible or flammable materials, etc.
- C.** Possession of a dangerous instrument /Firearm/Other Weapon.
- D.** Physical assault /Physical Violence.
- E.** Smoking, dipping, use of drugs/alcohol, or possession of related products.
- F.** Theft/Vandalism of school or personal private property.
- G.** Arson/Unlawful and intentional damage real or personal property by fire.
- H.** Sexual Harassment/Gestures
- I.** Intentional spitting at or on another person
- J.** Racial slurs
- K.** Profanity towards an adult

CONSEQUENCES:

Minimum of 10 days' suspension with possible tribunal unless another penalty is given at the discretion of the administrator according to the policy listed above, including, but not limited to an automatic suspension of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

BROUGHT BACK to SCHOOL

The student is returned to school when no one is home to get him/her off the bus.

CONSEQUENCES:

1st OFFENSE: Meet with Parent(s) and present a letter with Consequences for them to sign.

2nd OFFENSE: Student suspended from the bus for three (3) days.

3rd OFFENSE: Student suspended from the bus for five (5) days.

4th OFFENSE: Student suspended from the bus for eight (8) days.

5th OFFENSE: Student suspended for the Remainder of the Year.

*****No student shall be allowed to ride any school bus if the student's riding privileges have been suspended. If the school year ends and the student has not served his/her entire bus suspension, then the student shall finish the bus suspension at the beginning of the next school year. *Restitution for damaging bus seats and/or property is required.**

SECTION VI - APPENDIX A

ATHLETICS

Where selection is based on competitive skill or the activity involved is a contact sport, athletics may be provided through separate teams for males and females, or through a single team open to both sexes. If separate teams are offered, they must provide equal opportunity-comparable facilities, equipment, etc.-but equal aggregate expenditures are not required.

COUNSELING MATERIALS

Counseling materials developed and disseminated in keeping with these regulations must exclude references, which portray biases toward race, sex, color, national origin, age, religion or disability.

COVERAGE

The final regulations cover all operations of the Sumter County School District with the exception that the Vocational Education Guidelines cover vocational programs only.

EMPLOYMENT

The regulations apply to nondiscriminatory policies and practices including both full-time and part time employment and students. Specifically, the regulations cover:

- Employment criteria;
- Recruitment;
- Compensation;
- Job classification and structure;
- Fringe benefits;
- Marital or parental status;
- Effect of state or local law or to other requirements;
- Advertising;
- Pre-employment inquiries.

Employment coverage generally follows the policies of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Classes in health education may not be offered separately on the basis of sex except that separate sessions for boys and girls are permissible during times when materials and discussion deal exclusively with human sexuality.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Sex segregated physical education classes are prohibited. The regulations allow separation by sex within physical education classes during competition in wrestling, boxing, basketball, football, and other sports involving bodily contact.

ORGANIZATIONS

The school district may not provide significant assistance, in connection with its education program or activity, to any organization, agency, or person, which discriminates on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age or disability.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal {or appropriate school official} a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the Sumter County School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contacted to perform a special task, (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Ave. SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4605

The school district has designated the following types of personally identifiable information about students "Directory Information." Directory information may be released by the school district without consent of parent or student.

Student's name, address and telephone listing; Date and place of birth; Dates of attendance; Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; Weight and height of members of athletic teams; Diploma Award.

A parent or eligible student who desires that the school district not release any or all of the directory information about a student must notify the school district to that effect in writing addressed to Sumter County School District, Attention: Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Personnel, 100 Learning Lane, Americus, GA 31719 no later than 30 days after the first day of school.

TREATMENT

All schools must treat students and employees without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability. The regulations cover the following areas:

- Access to and participation in course offerings and extracurricular activities, including campus organizations and competitive athletics.
- Eligibility for and receipt or enjoyment of benefits and services.
- Use of facilities.

A recipient school district may not participate with single-sex organizations other than the following: Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; YWCA; YMCA; and certain voluntary youth services organizations that meet the provisions of Title IX.

RESEARCH

All instructional material, including teachers' manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis or evaluation conducted by or for the school district, shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students involved in the survey, analysis or evaluation.

No student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis or evaluation which reveals any of the following information without prior consent of the student (if an adult or an emancipated minor) or of the student's parent or guardian:

Information concerning political affiliations, mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to students or their families, sexual behavior and attitudes, illegal, anti-social, self incriminating and demeaning behavior, critical appraisals of other individuals with whom students have close family relationships, legally recognized privileges and analogous relationships such as those with lawyers, physicians and ministers, or income (other than that required by law) to receive eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972, THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT, THE HATCH AMENDMENT, AND THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES

It is the intent of the Sumter County School District to comply with the above referenced federal statutes and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, in terms of employment, programs and other related activities in the school district. Part of our compliance effort is to periodically apprise employees, parents and students of the existence of these statutes and regulations, and our intent to carry out the mandates thereof.

COMPLIANCE

Dr. Brian Simon, Director of Human Resources has been named to coordinate the school district's activities in complying with all regulations and purposes cited above.

GRIEVANCES

If employees or students think that they have been discriminated against because of their sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, or disability, they should contact:

Dr. Brian Simon
Director of Human Resources
Federal Regulations Compliance Officer
Sumter County School District
100 Learning Lane Americus, GA 31719
(229) 931-8500

OR

The Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education 101 Marietta Towers
Atlanta, GA 30323
(404) 221-2352

Contact should be made in writing stating the nature of the grievance and indicating how you may be reached in order to schedule a conference.

Note: This Appendix is a review of federal regulations cited above. Only those areas related to the Sumter County School District are reviewed in this summary. The complete implementation plan includes the regulations, the Sumter County School District's Policies and Rules related to personnel and students, a Grievance Procedure, and a Title IX record of implementation activities.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR, EACH SCHOOL SYSTEM MUST PROVIDE PUBLIC NOTICE TO ADVISE STUDENTS, PARENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT ALL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS WILL BE OFFERED WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, OR HANDICAP. THE NOTICE MUST INCLUDE THE NAME, OFFICE ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE PERSON DESIGNATED TO COORDINATE TITLE VI, TITLE IX, AND SECTION 504/ADA.

DISCRIMINATORY DISCLOSURE

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 and the Perkins Act of 1998); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Students, parents, employees and the general public are hereby notified that the Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.

The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the school system's effort to implement this nondiscriminatory policy:

Title VI
Dr. Sebrina Pitts
Sumter County BOE
100 Learning Lane
Americus, GA 31719
229-931-8500

Title IX
Dr. Brian Simon
Sumter County BOE
100 Learning Lane
Americus, GA 31719
229-931-8500

SECTION 504
Vamsee Mallineni
Sumter County BOE
100 Learning Lane
Americus, GA 31719
229-931-8500

BOE POLICY STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Complaints of Discrimination/Harassment

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability or gender in employment decisions or educational program and activities, including its athletic programs. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the School district based upon any of the factors listed above should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or the appropriate coordinator as listed below, who will implement the Boards' discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor.

Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Policy JAA (Equal educational Opportunities) or under Policy IDFA (Equity in Sports) [or whatever the specific titles of the policies are] is located in the School District policy manual which is available in the school office, the central office, or on the District website.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT

On July 8, 2010, the Georgia Board of Education approved rule 160-5-1.35 regarding the use of restraint in Georgia Schools. The Sumter County policy is provided below.

BOARD POLICY SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT

DESCRIPTOR CODE:

The Sumter County Board of Education establishes the following standards for the safe administration of physical restraint with regard to enrolled students.

1. The use of chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, or prone restraint, as defined by the Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-5-1-.35, is prohibited within the Sumter County School District.
2. The use of seclusion, as defined by Georgia department of Education rule 160-5-1-.35, is prohibited within the Sumter County School District.
 - a. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de escalation techniques or restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student.
 - b. Seclusion does not include “time-out” defined as a behavioral intervention in which the student is temporarily removed from the learning activity but in which the student is not confined.
 - c. Seclusion does not include in school- suspension, detention, or a student-requested break in a different location in the classroom or in a separate unlocked room.
3. Physical restraint may be utilized only when the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques.
 - a. Physical restraint does not include: providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or promoting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing guidance to a location, or providing comfort.
 - b. Physical restraint shall not be used:
 - i.As a form of discipline or punishment, or
 - ii.When the student cannot be safely restrained, or
 - iii.When the use of the intervention would be contraindicated due to the student’s psychiatric, medical, or physical conditions as described in the student’s educational records.
 - c. All physical restraint must be immediately terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress.
4. Before any staff member may implement physical restraint, he or she should have completed an approved training program.
 - a. Approved training programs will address a full continuum of positive behavioral intervention strategies as well as prevention and de-escalation techniques and restraint.
 - b. Schools and programs shall maintain written or electronic documentation on training

provided and the list of participants in each training. Copies of such documentation will be made available to the Georgia department of Education or any member of the public upon request.

c. If a staff member who has not completed an approved training program has to physically restrain a student to prevent injury to a student or others in an emergency situation when staff members trained in physical restraint are not available, he or she should ask other students, if present, to request assistance immediately.

5. Whenever possible, the use of physical restraint on a student shall be monitored by another staff member or administrator. The use of physical restraint shall be documented by staff or faculty participating in or supervising the restraint for each student in each instance in which the student is restrained.

6. Whenever physical restraint is used on a student, the school or program where the restraint is administered shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian within one school day after the use of restraint.

7. This policy does not prohibit a staff member from utilizing time-out, as defined in paragraph (2) above, or any other classroom management technique or approach, including a student's removal from the classroom that is not specifically addressed in this rule.

8. This policy does not prohibit a staff member from taking appropriate action to diffuse a student fight or altercation.

9. Deciding whether the use of physical restraint is necessary to protect students or others from imminent harm or bodily injury, and taking the actions deemed necessary to protect students or others from imminent harm or bodily injury, are actions that involve the performance of discretionary, not ministerial, duties.

10. In some instances in which a student is an immediate danger to himself or herself or others, the school or program must determine when it becomes necessary to seek assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.

11. School officials must notify a student's parent or guardian immediately when emergency medical or law enforcement personnel remove a student from a school or program setting.

ESEA FLEXIBILITY WAIVER SCHOOL DESIGNATION STATUS

2022-2023 School Year

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

On February 9, 2012 the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) received waivers from ten requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001. ESEA/NCLB requires that parents or guardians who have children attending a Title I school be notified of the school's academic achievement as well as the school's designation under Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver. This letter is intended to provide additional information concerning the options available to your child under Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver and to help you understand what the waiver will mean for you and your child.

Beginning with the 2012---2013 school year, the GaDOE will transition from needs improvement (NI) school designations based on adequate yearly progress (AYP) reports to Reward, Priority, Focus and Alert Schools designations based on ESEA Flexibility Waiver formulas. Title I schools will now implement specific programs and interventions based on Reward, Priority, Focus, and Alert Schools status. In addition, the GaDOE ESEA Flexibility Waiver outlines Georgia's new Single Statewide Accountability System, the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). The CCRPI will serve as a comprehensive report card for all schools in Georgia. The state system will give parents, students, teachers and families a more complete and comprehensive picture of where a school or district is meeting performance expectations and where it is not.

The Georgia ESEA Flexibility Waiver also eliminated Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and Public School Choice (Choice). However, schools designated as Priority or Focus will be required to implement and develop Flexible Learning Programs (FLP) beginning June 2012. Alert Schools may also implement and develop a FLP if they choose to do so. The Georgia ESEA Flexibility Waiver provides greater flexibility in designing a FLP tailored to the needs of the schools. As a result, these identified schools will have the capacity to serve more students in need of additional academic support. Priority Schools and Focus Schools were identified with 2011 test data and will be served with support interventions for 3 years. Alert and Reward Schools will be identified annually.

- Reward Schools replace the Title I Distinguished Schools and Distinguished Districts designations. They are identified annually and may be classified as either a Highest---Performing School or a High---Progress School. Schools designated as a Highest---Performing Reward School are in the top 5% of Title I schools and either have the highest performance for all students over three years or is a high school with the highest graduation rates in Georgia. Schools designated as a High---Progress Reward School the school must be in the top 10% of Title I schools and either have the highest progress in performance for all students over three years or is a high school that is making the most progress in increasing graduation rates.
- Priority Schools are Title I schools that are among the lowest 5% of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the All Students group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the All Students group; are a Title I---participating or Title I---eligible high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years; or a Tier I or Tier II school under the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention models.
- Focus Schools are 10% of Title I schools that have the largest within---school gaps between the highest-- - achieving subgroup or subgroups and the lowest---achieving subgroup or subgroups or, at the high

school level, have the largest within-school gaps in graduation rates (within-school-gaps Focus School). They can also be Title I high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years that are not identified as a Priority School (low-graduation-rate Focus School).

- Alert Schools consist of Title I and Non-Title I schools based on nine ESEA/NCLB subgroups. They fall into one of the three following categories using ESEA disaggregated subgroups or subject performance on both statewide assessments and graduation rate: Graduation Alert, Subgroup Alert or Subject Alert.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact, Dr. Sebrina Pitts, the Title I Director at 229- 931-8500.

FORMS

**Please sign and return
all forms to your
child's homeroom
teacher.**

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM STUDENT

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

AGREEMENT

STUDENT'S FULL NAME

Application Date_Homeroom teacher

School_Grade

.....

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Agreement: (If under 18 years of age.) Signature required for all students Internet Access

Privileges

As the parent or guardian of this child, I have read the Sumter County School Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy Terms and Conditions. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes and that the Sumter County School System has taken some available precautions to eliminate controversial materials. I will not hold the Sumter County School System responsible for materials acquired on the Internet. I hereby give permission to issue Internet privileges for my child and certify that the information contained on this form is correct. I may withdraw my permission at any time and my child's access privileges will be canceled within twenty-four hours (working days only). I understand that the Sumter County School System may cancel my child's access privileges at any time for Internet policy violation.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

.....

Student Agreement:

I understand and will abide by the Sumter County School System Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy Terms and Conditions. I further understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken and/or appropriate legal action may be initiated.

Student Signature Date

User Name (Please Print):

SCS
SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS
SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS
IMAGE-NEWS RELEASE FORM

I, the undersigned, being the parent or legal guardian of the below named student, do hereby grant permission for the student's name to appear in photographs or in video tape to be used by Sumter County Schools, their Board of Education and other video media organizations. This permission is not limited to inclusion in newspaper articles, system and district website, school publications, social media, and/or SCS "KIDS UNDER CONSTRUCTION," a television production with Georgia Southwestern State University. I further release the Sumter County Board of Education, Sumter County Schools, and any of its representatives, agents, and employees from any liability related to the creation or use of student's image, excepting only such injuries or damages resulting from the willing act of said representatives, agents or employees.

Student:

Parent or Guardian:

Date of Signature:

Home Telephone Number:

Emergency Telephone Number:

PARENTAL OPT-OUT OF CLUB PARTICIPATION

Student Name

School

I hereby acknowledge receipt of information regarding student clubs that are scheduled to be operational at the school during the current school year. I understand that if a club for which information has not been provided is started after this information is distributed, I will be provided the club information at that time and my written permission will be required prior to my student's participation.

I wish to withhold permission for my child to participate in the student club(s) listed below:

Parent/Guardian Name

(Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date:_____

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

**100 LEARNING LANE
AMERICUS, GEORGIA 31709**

229-931-8529 (Phone)

229-931-7455 (Fax)

I have read and understand the contents of the Student Riding Instructions.
Please keep the Student Riding Instructions for your future reference to
review with your child during the course of the school year.

Please sign and return this page.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____