

**WHITFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**  
**STUDENT DISCIPLINE CODE OF**  
**CONDUCT AND INFORMATION MANUAL**

*Dear Students:*

*I am excited that you are a student in the Whitfield County School System for the 2017-2018 school term!*

*Our staff and our Board of Education want to provide each of you with the finest of educational opportunities in a safe, inviting, non-threatening learning environment. This Student Discipline Code of Conduct and Information Manual outlines the rules and procedures that will help insure that you and all other Whitfield County Schools students have this access. The information in this booklet was written by a committee of students, parents, and administrators and is reviewed and updated yearly. We encourage you and your parents to read all of the information contained in this procedure. I think that you will find it to be helpful. Your teachers and administrators are available to help you with any questions you may have.*

*Our mission is to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe supportive environment. I wish each of you a safe, happy and productive year.*

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. Judy Gilreath*

*Superintendent*

*7/17*

The purpose of this code is to provide students in the Whitfield County School System an effective and safe learning environment. This brochure has been prepared in accordance with the Discipline Procedures of the Whitfield County School System. It contains information for school personnel, students, and parents. Included in the brochure is an outline of expected behaviors and the consequences relating to various violations. Expected behavior is behavior that promotes learning and encourages maturity during the school day as well as during all school related activities. Students and their parents need to know and understand this code in order to achieve these goals. Students **SHOULD**:

**Participate fully in the learning process.** Students need to report to school and class on time, attend all regularly scheduled classes, remain in class until excused or dismissed, pay attention to instruction, complete assignments to the best of their ability, and ask for help when needed.

**Avoid behavior that impairs their own or other students' educational achievement.** Students should know and avoid the behaviors prohibited by this code, take care of books and other instructional materials, and cooperate with others.

**Show respect for the knowledge and authority of teachers, administrators, and other school employees.** Students must obey reasonable directions, use acceptable and courteous language, avoid being rude, and follow school rules and procedures.

**Recognize and respect the rights of other students and adults including persons attending school functions.** All students should show concern for and encouragement of the educational achievements and activity participation of others.

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 each school official will be 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.

## **Note to Parents and Students:**

School officials are required to report any reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected by parents or other persons. Georgia State Law also requires school administrators to report to law enforcement any incident where there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student may have committed certain serious crimes on school property. These prohibited acts include aggravated assault with a firearm, aggravated battery, possession of a deadly weapon, drug offenses, and sexual offenses (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184).

In cases where law enforcement officials are conducting criminal investigations involving students at school, school staff and administrators will not notify parents of students being interviewed unless directed to do so by the investigating officer. Parents will be notified any time a student is taken into custody by law enforcement or juvenile authorities.

Georgia offers a Special Needs Scholarship Program that allows eligible students to transfer to another public school or to use a state-funded scholarship to attend an approved private school. To learn more about eligibility and requirements go to: <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/sb10.aspx>.

## **WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Whitfield County Schools  
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# 1. Students shall be free of any weapon.

## VIOLATION

WEAPONS – Possessing, using, handling, transmitting, carrying to, or having under control a weapon within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, at a school bus stop, or on school property, including in a vehicle, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school.

- a. 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.
- b. Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or taser. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.
- c. A knife of any type with any blade length, any look-alike weapon, mace or pepper spray, tear gas, and similar devices.
- d. Possessing, carrying to, having under control, or use of bullets or gun ammunition.

## CONSEQUENCES

a. Immediate suspension with hearing. A minimum one-year expulsion from school will result, unless a hearing officer, tribunal, panel, superintendent, or local board of education determines that length of expulsion to be excessive given the circumstances and reduces the length of expulsion.

(The District Attorney and other law enforcement officials and parents/guardians must be notified. Removal and arrest could result.)

b. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the intent and circumstances; could include hearing with recommendation for suspension/expulsion.

c. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the intent and circumstances; could include hearing with recommendation for suspension/expulsion.

d. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the intent and circumstances.

**2. Students shall refrain from being involved in an assault and/or battery.**

VIOLATION

- a. Verbal assault, including threatened violence, of teachers, administrators or other school staff
- b. Touching or pushing another student
- c. Battery-intentionally making physical contact with another student in a provocative manner.
- d. Striking or threatening harm or violence to another student including extortion and/or hazing.
- e. Battery which results in serious bodily harm.
- f. Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature or threatening harm to a teacher, school bus driver, or other school employee or official.
- g. Intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee.

CONSEQUENCES

- a. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance.
- b. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance.
- c. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance, with probable arrest and possible recommendation to disciplinary tribunal for suspension or expulsion.
- d. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance, with probable arrest and possible recommendation to disciplinary tribunal for suspension or expulsion. Restitution for all damages.
- e. Immediate suspension with hearing. Possible recommendation for expulsion.
- f. Immediate suspension with disciplinary tribunal hearing. Possible recommendation for expulsion.
- g. Immediate suspension with disciplinary tribunal hearing. Possible recommendation for expulsion for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school.

- h. Bullying – An act 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; or
  - (3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that: (a) causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1; (b) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; (c) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or (d) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through a progressive discipline process which may include but is not limited to counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher-administrator, detention, in-school suspension, out of school suspension or referral to a tribunal hearing. Upon finding by a tribunal panel 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.

**\*\*If you think you are being bullied you should report it immediately to a designated administrator in your school.**

students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. For purposes of this Code Section, electronic communication includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

(Any situation involving assault and/or battery could result in the involvement of law enforcement officials, possibly resulting in removal and arrest.) The local policy governing the disciplinary tribunal process is available at each school, the Whitfield County Schools Services Center, and the Whitfield County Board of Education office.



### 3. Students shall be free of drugs and alcohol.

#### VIOLATION

- a. Unlawful possession of or use of illegal drugs or alcohol (including misuse of prescription drugs), or drug paraphernalia, or vapor pens, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol (including misuse of prescription drugs), and ALL types of synthetic marijuana and synthetic substances known as “bath salts”, which mimic the effects of methamphetamine on school property or at a school function.
- b. Sale of or distribution of drugs, including prescription drugs, alcohol, vapor pens, or ALL types of synthetic marijuana and synthetic substances known as “bath salts”, which mimic the effects of methamphetamine on school property or at a school function.
- c. Possession of, sale of, or under the influence of, misuse of over the counter drugs or herbs, or distribution of over the counter drugs or any material implied or represented as drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school function.
- d. Inhaling or under the influence of substances on school property or at a school function (including aerosol sprays, glue, magic markers, etc.)

#### CONSEQUENCES

- a. Immediate suspension with hearing. Possible recommendation for expulsion.
- b. Immediate suspension with hearing. Suspension term of up to one semester or more possible. Permanent expulsion is recommended.
- c. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. In severe cases referral to juvenile court.
- d. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances.

(Student medicines should be administered according to Board Policy JGCD)

(Because drugs and alcohol are both illegal and harmful to students, in every instance of drug and alcohol use or possession, parents and law enforcement officials will be notified, possibly resulting in removal and arrest.)

**4. Students shall be free of tobacco and related paraphernalia.**

<u>VIOLATION</u>	<u>CONSEQUENCES</u>
a. Possession or distribution of tobacco products on school property or at a school function.	a. Penalty for a, b, c and d at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion.
b. Use of tobacco products on school property or at a school function.	
c. Possession of paraphernalia (i.e. lighters, matches, etc.) on school property, or at a school function.	
d. Possession of electronic cigarettes, or any material implied or represented as tobacco products (including but not limited to herbs, coffee packets, or any other material packaged in a way to resemble smokeless tobacco).	

**5. Students shall be free of sexual harassment.**

<u>VIOLATION</u>	<u>CONSEQUENCES</u>
a. Unwelcome sexual conduct, advances, or propositions; verbal, written abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or degrading verbal comments, jokes, or teasing about an individual or his or her appearance; verbal conduct of a sexual nature; or stalking.	Penalty for a and b may include counseling, conference with parents, detention, in-school suspension, suspension, or possible expulsion.
b. Unwelcome sexual conduct of a physical nature (such as touching or pinching).	<b>**</b> Students should report alleged sexual harassment to a teacher, counselor, or administrator. Any situation involving sexual harassment or assault could result in the involvement of law enforcement.

The General Assembly of Georgia requires that this code of conduct include language encouraging parents and guardians to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

**6. Students shall follow established guidelines when riding a school bus and at school bus stops.**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Unruly behavior or any act that might endanger the life or well being of any student/adult on the bus or persons/pedestrians.
- b. Any other unsatisfactory conduct, such as disrespectful conduct, including the use of vulgar or profane language, toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, or cutting, defacing or otherwise damaging in any way property belonging to the school district.
- c. Any act of physical assault/battery as defined in item 2 of this document, on the school bus.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty for a and b at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion or recommendation for expulsion or removal from bus, or in severe cases may result in referral to juvenile court. Restitution for any and all damages.

c. Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance, with probable arrest and possible recommendation to disciplinary tribunal for suspension or expulsion. May include conference with the parent or guardian and appropriate school system official to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Contract provisions may include but are not limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

Minor disciplinary issues that do not create safety concerns will not be applied to these disciplinary guidelines. Principals' discretion may be applied to guidelines. Penalty may include in-school suspension, suspension with possible recommendation for expulsion or removal from bus, parent conference and in severe cases referral to juvenile court.

## **STUDENT BUS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND BUS SAFETY PROCEDURES**

1. Students should follow the directions of the driver.
2. Students should be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus arrives.
3. Students will cross the roadway in front of the bus after; the bus has stopped, they have looked at the driver for a hand signal, and they have looked in both directions for traffic (left-right-left).
4. The bus driver or monitor has the right to make reasonable requests, including assigning student seats (either individually or entire bus).
5. Student will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat, and keep hands to themselves.
6. Student will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substance on the bus.
7. Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items, hazardous materials, or weapons onto the bus. Students may carry only objects that can be held on their laps.
8. Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity and/or obscene gestures, and respect the rights and safety of others.
9. Students will not extend head, arms, or objects out of the bus windows.
10. Students will be totally silent at railroad crossings.
11. Students will stay seated until time to get off the bus. The open bus door is to signal to get up from the bus seat.
12. Students must provide a written note, signed by a parent or guardian and a school official, giving permission to ride a different bus or to get on or off the bus at a different bus stop location.
13. Students will help keep their bus clean.

### **Parents:**

Issues relating to transportation must be addressed through the school administration. Do not disrupt the bus routes. Bus drivers have a schedule to maintain. Conferences, if necessary, may be arranged through the school administration.

**7. Students shall respect staff members, other students, persons attending school related functions and rules set forth within each school.**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Rude and disrespectful behavior, including use of vulgar or profane language.
- b. Refusal to carry out instruction of faculty or staff member, including giving false or misleading information to faculty/staff members such as, but not limited to names or school.
- c. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.
- d. Verbal assault of, physical battery or battery of, and disrespectful conduct, including use of vulgar or profane language, toward persons attending school related functions.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty for a, b, c and d may be at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. In severe cases referral to juvenile court.

**8. Students will cooperate in maintaining a proper learning environment.**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts.
- b. Classroom and/or school disturbances causing disruption of learning opportunities.
- c. Acts which cause substantial disruption of learning opportunities and/or threaten the safety of other students.
- d. Committing any act off-campus which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty for a and b at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstance. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. In severe cases referral to juvenile court.

c. Immediate suspension with hearing.

d. Penalty at the discretion of the administration. May include suspension or expulsion.

**9. Students will be free from gang involvement.**

**VIOLATION**

Wearing or displaying gang clothing, articles, or paraphernalia which has been established by the school administration as being gang related, or representing one's self as a gang member either through words or actions.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. In severe cases referral to law enforcement.

**10. Students will accept disciplinary actions.**

**VIOLATION**

Failure to accept disciplinary action.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty may include detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. In severe cases referral to juvenile court.

**11. Students will refrain from inappropriate language and actions.**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Use of profane, vulgar or obscene words or gestures; racial or ethnic slurs.
- b. Indecent exposure or inappropriate public display of affection.
- c. Any sexual act on school property or at any school activity.
- d. Possession or transmission of obscene, profane, or vulgar materials including but not limited to images within cell phones, cameras or other electronic devices.
- e. Other such actions which disrupt the school program or threaten the health or safety of others.
- f. Inappropriate use of technology including using computers or the internet or cell phones for extortion, hazing, and harassing of students and/or staff on campus or off campus if such actions are disruptive to the school
- g. Deliberate attempts to by-pass internet security.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty for a, b, c, d, e, f, and g may include detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. Parent conference may result. Sexual activity may result in the involvement of law enforcement. In severe cases referral to juvenile court.

## **12. Students will refrain from violating school rules.**

### **VIOLATION**

Willful and repeated violation of school rules.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances. May include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion.

## **13. Students will respect the property of others.**

### **VIOLATION**

- a. Destruction of and/or threats to destroy public or private property, which may include such actions as the use or threat of bombs, explosion devices, setting fires, damaging lockers and the deliberate marking, destruction or defacement of property that belongs to the school or another student, including during off-school hours; also includes willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school or to personal property of any person legitimately at school, including during off-school hours.

- b. Defacement or "rigging" of lockers.

- c. Theft of public or private property which may include possession of stolen property located on school premises or at a school function.

- d. Vandalism of public or private property located on school premises or at a school function, including during off-school hours.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on intent which may include immediate suspension with hearing, possible recommendation for expulsion, and immediate restitution.

Immediate restitution/clean up.  
Possible loss of locker privileges.

Penalty for c and d may include counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. Immediate restitution. Possible Juvenile Court referral.

(Any situation involving such actions as the use or threat of bombs, explosion devices, setting fires, and the deliberate destruction or defacement of school property could result in the involvement of law enforcement officials, possibly resulting in removal and arrest.)



**14. Students will comply with the compulsory attendance requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 and will attend all classes on time.**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Repeated tardiness.
- b. Skipping class or required activities.
- c. Unexcused absences.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty for a, b, and c, will be at the discretion of the administration depending on circumstances. May include parent conference, counseling, detention, including suspension, referral to attendance review committee or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. Referral to school social worker for possible referral to juvenile court.

**15. Students will remain on campus unless permitted to leave.**

**VIOLATION**

Leaving campus without permission.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of administration depending on circumstances. May include parent conference, counseling, detention, suspension, referral to attendance review committee or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. Referral to school social worker for possible referral to juvenile court.

**16. Students will be free of fireworks.**

**VIOLATION**

Possession and/or use of any explosive or fireworks.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on circumstances.

**17. Students will activate fire alarms or make such reports only when emergency situations exist.**

**VIOLATION**

Pulling fire alarm unnecessarily or making false reports.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on intent. Immediate suspension with hearing with possible recommendation for expulsion for remainder of the school year. Immediate restitution.

**18. Students will not participate in gambling activities or possess items used for gambling.**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Gambling on school property or at any school function.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration which may include detention, parent conference and counseling, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or referral to juvenile authorities.

**19. Students will submit to being searched for reasonable suspicions.**

**VIOLATION**

Refusal to be searched.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Immediate suspension with hearing. Recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion.

**20. Students will complete their own work.**

**VIOLATION**

Cheating on any student work.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on the circumstances. May include zero on graded work, counseling with student-parent(s)-teacher, detention, in-school suspension, short-term suspension or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. Parents and administration notified.

**21. Students will make restitution for all lost and damaged materials or unpaid fees or fines.**

**VIOLATION**

Failure to pay for lost and damaged school resources or lunch charges.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty at the discretion of the administration. Assessment based on cost at time of purchase with adjustment for use, plus \$1.00 processing. Students who fail to pay for lost or damaged school resources or unpaid fees and fines shall lose the privilege of checking out additional materials or in certain cases, the privilege of participating in graduation ceremonies.

**22. Students will not use either one-way or two-way communication devices or laser pointers in school buildings or on school buses.**

**VIOLATION**

**COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

- a. Students shall not be permitted to use any personal electronic communication device, including cell phones, during the school day without teacher or administrator permission. If seen or heard, electronic devices will be confiscated and may be searched by school officials. (See principal for exceptions).
- b. Possession of unauthorized digital music players and other such electronic devices that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus, regardless of whether such possession is in school buildings, on school buses, or at school-sponsored activities. (See principal for exceptions.)
- c. Possession of laser pointers or other laser devices.
- d. Using mirrors, flash cameras or any other lights or reflective devices that might interfere with the bus driver's operation of the school bus.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty for a, b, c, and d–

*1<sup>st</sup> Offense:*

Confiscation of the device and parent conference. Device will be returned to parent or legal guardian only.

*2<sup>nd</sup> and Subsequent Offenses:*

Confiscation of the device and additional penalty at the discretion of the administration, including possible hearing with possible alternative placement. Device will be returned to parent or legal guardian only.

**23. Students will adhere to the Whitfield County Schools’ Dress Code located in the student handbook and on the W.C.S. website.**

**VIOLATION**

Refusal to comply with the dress code.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Students will be required to call parents and obtain a change of clothing. Students will not be allowed to attend classes while in non-compliance and may be isolated in an area of the administrators’ choosing. Penalty may include, but is not limited to; warning, parental notification, parent conference, counseling, detention, in-school suspension, or suspension.

**24. High school students will obey parking and traffic rules on school campus. (Middle school students are not eligible for driving privileges.)**

**VIOLATION**

- a. Parking and parking permit violations.
  
- b. Student drivers leaving campus without permission during school hours in a vehicle.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Penalty may include fines, suspension or loss of driving privileges, having car towed off campus, detention, in-school suspension, or suspension.

*1<sup>st</sup> Offense:* Loss of driving privilege to school. Additional penalty at the discretion of the administration depending on circumstances. May include parent conference, detention, assignment to in-school suspension, or recommendation for long-term suspension/expulsion. Referral to school social worker for proper referral to juvenile court. Parent/guardian will be notified.

*2<sup>nd</sup> & Subsequent Offenses:* Loss of driving privilege to school. Additional penalty at the discretion of administration up to and including recommendation for expulsion.

## **BOARD POLICY JCDB - STUDENT DRESS CODE: GRADES 6-12**

The Whitfield County Board of Education believes that an appropriate dress code will support a safe school environment that is conducive to learning. A committee of board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and students will review this student dress code each year. The Board of Education intends for this dress code to continually adapt to changing styles, reflecting the needs and opinions of our schools and our community.

### **SECTION A: ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS FOR PROPER ATTIRE**

1. **SHIRTS/BLOUSES** (All colors and color combinations are acceptable.)
  - Styles – all styles which conform to rules concerning fit
  - Fabric – all except sheer, see-through, unlined lace, or anything similar
  - Fit
    - Sized appropriately, fitted modestly, (no cleavage showing), sleeveless with material extending from collarbone to end of shoulder bone
    - Buttoned properly
    - Long enough to cover midriff at all times (no skin showing at midriff)
2. **SKIRTS/DRESSES/JUMPERS** (all colors and color combinations)
  - Length – no shorter than knee length when standing
  - Fabric – all except sheer, see-through, unlined lace, or anything similar
  - Fit
    - Sized appropriately, fitted modestly, (no cleavage showing), sleeveless with material extending from collarbone to end of shoulder bone
    - Skirts properly fitted and secured at the waist
    - Jumpers must be worn with blouse meeting the dress code
    - No splits above the knee in skirts or dresses
3. **PANTS/SLACKS/SHORTS**
  - Styles – dress, chino, denim (jeans), cargo, sweatpants (no pajama pants, or similar styles)
  - Fabric – all except sheer, see-through, unlined lace, or anything similar
  - Leggings, yoga pants, any form-fitting pants must be worn with an appropriately sized covering that comes to mid-thigh while standing and made of a material that meets the dress code
  - Fit
    - Sized appropriately (no baggy or oversized pant legs)
    - Shorts at the knee when standing
    - Shorts may be dress, chino, denim (jeans), or cargo, gym, athletic, and basketball shorts are acceptable (must be at least knee length)
    - All styles fitted and secured at the waist
4. **SHOES/BOOTS**
  - Must be properly fastened (tied, buckled, laced)

- No shoes with wheels
5. SWEATERS/JACKETS/OUTERWEAR
- All dress code rules will apply to sweaters/jackets/outerwear when worn inside the school building
  - Hoodies must fit appropriately and not be oversized

## **SECTION B: INAPPROPRIATE DRESS**

The following fads, styles, types of clothing, accessories, and appearances are deemed inappropriate:

- If clothing is worn with rips, holes, tears (above the knee), all holes must be permanently filled with fabric meeting dress code standards. Underwear cannot be visible under pants or shorts with holes above the knee.
- Baggy and oversized clothing
- Pajamas or similar styles
- Revealing, immodest
- Clothing or tattoos with writings, numbers, pictures, graphics, monograms, symbols or drawings, that promotes:
  - Gang/cult memberships or activity
  - Trademarks, slogans, or advertising advocating the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, drug paraphernalia, or other unlawful activity
  - Discrimination based upon cultural, religious, racial or sexual orientations
- Clothing or jewelry deemed a safety risk or unlawful (see Discipline Code)
- Headwear (caps, scarves, bandanas, sunglasses, hoods, etc.) at anytime inside the building
- Any objects in pierced body parts other than the ear and/or one side of the nose (One **small** stud in nose is allowed only). Stretchers, spikes or tunnels are not allowed. Any holes in ear lobes must be plugged for safety reasons.
- Writing on rear of pants or shorts

**The administrator's decision will stand as to the accepted judgment in the preceding examples of inappropriate dress.**

## **SECTION C: ADHERENCE TO THE DRESS CODE**

- During the first five days of attendance within the school year, a student in violation will be asked to correct the infractions.
- Enforcement as to the progressive discipline procedures in the "Student Discipline Code" will begin on the sixth school day for any student.

**No student shall be considered to be out of compliance with this policy in the following instances:**

- When the student's parent/guardian has secured an exemption from the policy as set forth in the procedures outlined in the exemptions section below
- When the student wears a button, armband, or other accessory to exercise the right of freedom of expression, unless the button, armband, or other accessory is related to gangs, gang membership, or gang activity

- When the student wears a uniform of a nationally recognized youth organization such as Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts on regular meeting days
- When a student is wearing an approved form of dress for a school sponsored activity
- When the school administration waives the dress code policy for physical education classes or any class where the dress code is not conducive to the learning environment
- When the school administration waives the dress code policy for school spirit wear (clothing that is affiliated with school clubs, organizations, athletics)

## **SECTION D: EXEMPTIONS**

In order to qualify for an exemption, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Request by mail, email ([wanda.phillips@wcsga.net](mailto:wanda.phillips@wcsga.net)) or in person from the school an "Application For Exemption Form".
2. Complete the application in full and submit it to the designated administrator at the student's school.
3. Meet with the designated school administrator to discuss the reasons and goals of the policy and the objection to the policy.
4. Receive formal approval/disapproval by the designated district administrator.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **1. BATTERY**

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

### **2. BULLYING**

Refer to definition in Discipline Code Violation #2-h.

### **3. CUMULATIVE DISPOSITION SYSTEM FOR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Misbehavior and failure to follow school rules is cumulative. When a student violates the Discipline Procedures, the Cumulative Disposition System will be invoked if it is the more severe disposition for the offense committed. Violations committed in all Whitfield County Schools as well as those committed in other school systems are considered as a part of the cumulative disposition system. Cumulative Disposition begins anew each school year.

### **4. DETENTION**

A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official. Detention may require the student's attendance before school, after school, or on Saturday.

### **5. EXPULSION**

Removal of a student from the school system beyond the current school grading period or permanently by a tribunal whose members have been approved by the Board of Education.

### **6. EXTORTION**

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

### **7. CROSSROADS EXTENDED SUSPENSION PROGRAM**

An alternative to long-term suspension which, under appropriate circumstances as determined by the school district, allows students the opportunity to receive credit for work completed.



## **8. HAZING**

Intimidating, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or ridiculing another, especially with reference to initiation into clubs, societies, or groups.

## **9. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

Removal of a student from class or classes and assigned to a designated supervisor. Students assigned to in-school suspension cannot participate in extra-curricular activities.

## **10. INTERIM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT (I.A.E.S.)**

An Interim Alternative Educational Setting (I.A.E.S.) is a different physical location of the student determined by an I.E.P. committee to provide continued I.E.P. services for up to 45 days in order to enable the student to progress in the general curriculum.

## **11. STUDENTS ON SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

Students suspended or expelled are not allowed on school grounds or at school functions.

## **12. SATURDAY SCHOOL**

Time assigned to students for tardies and other offenses, to be served on Saturday mornings.

## **13. SCHOOL FUNCTION**

A school-related activity supervised by school staff and having prior approval of the school principal.

## **14. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Unwelcome sexual conduct; requests for sexual favors; sexually suggestive comments, statements, jokes or teasing; or other verbal or physical conduct that constitutes sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

## **15. SUSPENSION**

Removal of the student from the school campus and exclusion from all school sponsored activities. Short-term suspension involves from one to ten days. Long-term suspension involves more than ten days but not beyond the current school grading period.

**STATEMENTS ON DUE PROCESS  
STUDENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

**DUE PROCESS:**

Due process will include appropriate hearings and reviews; and, in all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected.

**STUDENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A student has full rights and citizenship as defined by the Constitution of the United States and assumes the responsibility to take positive actions relative to the Constitution; the laws of the State of Georgia; and the policies, rules, and regulations of the Whitfield County Board of Education.

**STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS:**

All student organizations must follow guidelines and procedures governing the creation and operation of such organizations and groups in accordance with the policies of the Whitfield County Board of Education.

It is the policy of the Whitfield County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or disability in educational programs or activities for students.

**EQUITY IN SPORTS ACT**

In compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315 "Equity in Sports Act" and Whitfield County Board of Education Policy IDFA, Whitfield County Schools provides this notification.

Any complaint related to equity in sports programs provided by the Whitfield County Schools should be directed to the Equity in Sports Coordinator. The employee designated with this responsibility is:

Chris Parker, Director of Student Services Support  
Whitfield County Schools  
201 East Tyler Street  
Dalton, GA 30721

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

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Loss of Privileges
- Temporary Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Detention/Saturday School
- 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. The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

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, school lockers, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors, audio and video surveillance devices, 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.

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

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system and at school bus stops.

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

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 report shall be filed with the principal or designee within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or designee.

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

Disciplinary action for violations of expected behaviors will include appropriate hearings and reviews and in all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected. The Whitfield County School District will make every reasonable effort to administer the discipline code consistently in all schools. When applicable, individualized plans (i.e. IEP, 504, and SST) will be reviewed for appropriate consequences.

Pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-2-765, when a student has been identified by a teacher or administration as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by either certified mail or first class mail the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

A written discipline procedure which evolves from the combined thinking of students, teachers, administrators and parents has the best potential of providing an orderly learning and teaching environment. Parents are encouraged to visit the schools regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and compliance with the behavior standards set forth in this document. Also, the development of this procedure should eliminate the possibility of arbitrary discipline procedures within the individual schools and will provide parents and students with a written copy of the school district's regulations.

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

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

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as “Section 504,” is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system’s Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

### **Chris Parker**

201 East Tyler Street

Dalton, GA 30721

[chris.parker@wcsga.net](mailto:chris.parker@wcsga.net)

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

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.

6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.

16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

## **Section 504 Procedural Safeguards**

### **Overview**

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.

### **Hearing Request**

The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

1. The name of the student.
2. The address of the residence of the student.
3. The name of the school the student is attending.
4. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
5. The requested reasons for review.
6. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
7. The name and contact information of the grievant.

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



## **Mediation**

The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

## **Hearing Procedures**

- Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
- Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

## **Decision**

The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

## **Review**

If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

**Student reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct:**  
**REPORTING OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:**

Any student ( or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of suspected inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her school. For more details, please see the Student Discipline brochure.

Georgia HB 1321 addresses the issue of falsifying reports of alleged inappropriate behavior by teachers or school personnel stating it is an offense “falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.”

***“20-2- 751. 7. (a) The Professional Standards Commission shall establish a state mandated process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student which shall not prohibit the ability of a student to report the incident to law enforcement authorities. Each local school system shall be required to implement and follow such state mandated process and shall include the mandated process in student handbooks and in employee handbooks or policies.”***

**Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct**

(a) Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

(b) Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal’s designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal’s designee within 24 hours. *If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent’s designee.*

(c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney. Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

**“Sexual abuse”** means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5.

**“Sexual misconduct”** includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showed or displayed sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Wrote sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spread sexual rumors (i.e. said a student was gay or a lesbian).
5. Spied on students as they dressed, showered or used the restroom at school.
6. Flashed or “moonied” students.
7. Touched, excessively hugged, or grabbed students in a sexual way.
8. Forced a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talked or asked about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, *etc.*
10. Talked repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Made fun of your body parts.
12. Called students sexual names.

## RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Board of Education designates the following information as "directory information." Unless a parent or eligible student makes a timely request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated directory information on the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request:

1. Student's name, address and telephone number
2. Student's date and place of birth
3. Student's email address
4. Student's participation in official school clubs and sports
5. Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team
6. Dates of attendance at schools within the school district
7. Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the district's schools
8. Photograph
9. Grade level

Parents are further notified that students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or school system personnel at school or some school activity or event. **Parents wishing that the above information be denied release must notify the school principal in writing within 30 days of the first day of a school year or the date of enrollment.**

## WCS MESSAGING SYSTEM

If parents wish to opt out of the phone message system provided by Whitfield County Schools, they must notify the school principal in writing within 30 days of the first day of the school year or the date of enrollment.

## **STUDENT USE OF INTERNET**

All students have access to the internet. Acceptable use and internet safety guidelines are available on the Whitfield County Schools website at [www.whitfield.k12.ga.us](http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us). Parents may request a written copy of these guidelines by contacting the school. The school district cannot provide an absolute assurance that students will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials or sending and receiving objectionable communications but the district will ensure that all practical precautions will be taken to keep students safe from illegal and/or inappropriate material. Students are instructed in acceptable use and internet safety and their internet use is monitored as closely as possible. If a parent does not wish their child to be allowed on the internet, they must notify the school principal in writing within the first week of each school term.

## **Whitfield County Schools Attendance Procedures**

Students are expected to be in school each day unless excused for one of the reasons listed below:

1. Personal illness that would endanger the student's health or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in the student's immediate family.
3. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
4. Mandated absence by order of governmental agencies, e.g., court order or pre-induction physical for the armed forces.
5. Conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to health or safety.
6. A period not to exceed one day is allowed for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. Approved college visitation in accordance with high school regulations.
8. Working at an electoral poll site during an election.
9. Student trips deemed educational by the Assistant Superintendent.

Parent notes may be accepted for up to 10 absences in a school year and must be turned in five (5) days after the absence. After 10 absences, parents will be required to provide written medical excuses or documentation. However, in cases when a student's absences become excessive and are addressed through an attendance intervention (i.e. Attendance Review Team, Educational Improvement Team or School Social Work Referral) absences will only be excused by written medical documentation.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly and/or while representing the school in an activity approved by the school and/or Board of Education. Students in foster care shall be counted present when they attend court proceedings relating to their foster care.

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 five (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.

Individual student who have emergencies to arise that necessitate their absences from school for a portion of the school day must have been present for one half of the instructional day in order to be included in attendance counts.

An unlawful (unexcused) absences is one not permitted under the Compulsory School Attendance Law (20-2-690) and policies of the Whitfield County School Board.

Any combination of five (5) unexcused tardies / late check-ins or unexcused early check-outs will be considered one (1) unexcused absence. If a student has excessive absences or tardies, the school social worker may refer the student and parent(s) to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS), Educational Improvement Team (EIT) or the appropriate court when sufficient legal causes for these absences or tardies do not exist. Corrective measures may be taken against the student and/or parent(s).

When a high school student has more than six (6) unexcused absences per semester in a class meeting fewer than 90 days (6 block days), the student will not receive credit for that course. If a high school student has more than 10 unexcused absences a class meeting more than 90 days (year-long courses) the student will not receive credit for that course. Any student who is absent one half day is considered absent the full day. The student must be present for at least one half of the high school class period to be considered present for the class. The student and/or parent/guardian may request the school principal or designee to review the case if there are extenuating circumstances. Upon denial, it can be appealed to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

According to the State Board of Education rules, a student is truant who during the school calendar year has more than five (5) unexcused absences.

- The school will contact you in writing by mail when your child has 5, 10 and 15 total absences each school year.
- Parents may be requested to attend an Attendance Review Team (ART) meeting when students reach 5 unexcused absences or 10 total absences. Parents who do not attend the ART meeting will be referred to the school social worker. Parents may also be asked to provide a written medical documentation to excuse future absences due to illness.
- Upon review of the student's attendance, the social worker may refer the student and family on the community Education

Improvement Team (EIT), the Department of Family and Children Services or the Whitfield County Juvenile or Magistrate Court.

- The ART and EIT process is ongoing and may not start over each year. If the intervention was held the previous school year, the family may not attend an ART or EIT the following year. However, the family will be notified by the school social worker of the continued attendance concerns.

## **Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law**

### **CODE SECTION 20-2-690.1.**

- (a) Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program.
- (b) Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code Section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not to exceed \$100.00 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or both, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part shall constitute a separate offense.



**If, due to lack of housing, you must live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground, on the street, in abandoned buildings or trailers, or doubled-up with relatives or friends, then according to the McKinney-Vento Act, you are considered homeless.**

## **Who is homeless?**

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)

The term “homeless children and youth” ---

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and
- B. includes —
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children...who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

## Educational rights

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in Homeless situations have the right to:

- ◆ Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there
- ◆ Attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in their best interest; the school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled
- ◆ Appeal the enrollment decision made by the school if you disagree
- ◆ Receive transportation to and from the school of origin
- ◆ Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as a birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records
- ◆ Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school arranges for the transfer of records
- ◆ Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students including transportation and supplemental educational services
- ◆ Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness; segregation based on a student's status as homeless is prohibited

Local Contact:

Teresa Sefcik, MSW

Homeless Education Liaison

Whitfield County Schools

201 E. Tyler St., Dalton, GA

Tel (706) 876-3927 Fax (706)260-2255



## **A Special Message to Parents**

Please sign below indicating that you have read and understand the Whitfield County School System's Student Discipline Code of Conduct and Information Manual, the Student Dress Code Policy and the Student Attendance Procedures and return the form to your child's school. If you have any questions, please talk with your child's principal. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us provide a quality education for all of our students.

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Parent or Guardian Signature

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Date

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Student Signature

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Date