





# 2016-2017 Elementary School Handbook

**Dr. Mark Scott**  
*Superintendent*

Houston County Board of Education  
P.O. Box 1850, 1100 Main Street  
Perry, Georgia 31069  
(478) 988-6200  
[www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net)

# HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

## MISSION STATEMENT



*Our Mission  
is to produce  
high-achieving  
students.*

*Dr. Mark Scott  
Superintendent of Schools*

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## **HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CALENDAR 2016-2017**

July 29	Friday	First Day of School
September 5	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Labor Day
October 7	Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> -Students/In-Service for Staff
October 10-14	Monday-Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Columbus Day/Fall Break
November 11	Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Veterans Day
November 21-25	Monday-Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Thanksgiving
December 15	Thursday	Last day before Holidays
December 16	Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Students/Staff Work Day
December 19-January 2		<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Christmas Holiday
January 3	Tuesday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Students/Staff Work Day
January 4	Wednesday	First Day of Second Semester
January 16	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Martin Luther King, Jr
February 20	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - President's Day
February 21	Tuesday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Students/In-service for Staff
March 27 - 31	Monday-Friday	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
May 24	Wednesday	Last Day of School

## **ACCIDENTS, ILLNESS, AND HEALTH SERVICES**

If a child is injured at school, office personnel will render first aid. Parents will then be contacted in those cases which the school deems are serious enough to warrant communication. If the school is unable to reach the parent, the emergency telephone contact person(s) will be called in an effort to find someone to come for the child. Please assist the school by leaving current emergency telephone numbers to be used in the event that you are not available. When a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be notified just as in the case of an accident. Parents will also be contacted in cases of children soiling their clothes at school through accidents such as vomiting, urinating, or defecation. If a child shows signs of illness, he/she should not be sent to school.

Parental assistance is urgently needed in providing pertinent medical information upon the enrollment of the child in school. Please assist the school by notifying the office of any change in student data (medical or otherwise) that will ensure your child's success for a safe and healthy school year.

### *When to Keep Your Child Home*

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

**Please refer to the following guidelines when considering returning a sick child to school:**

1. A child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning.
2. A child with strep throat must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.
3. A child with possible conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be seen by a doctor and may only return to school with a doctor's note.
4. A child with chicken pox may only return to school when all lesions have crusted over. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
5. All open, draining, or contagious skin areas (i.e. ringworm, Molluscum Contagiosum) must be able to be contained by a bandage/covering. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
6. A child with scabies will be allowed to return to school the following day after the first treatment.

**KEEP A CHILD HOME, if she/he:**

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

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

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

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

**The information provided is not intended to replace physician advice. When your child is ill, please contact your health care provider.**

### Medication Administration

Prescription medicines will be given to students by school personnel only when prescribed and ordered by a physician and when the following guidelines are followed:

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

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

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

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

Students requiring an inhaler, injectable epinephrine (Epi-Pen), Diastat, or a Glucagon are allowed to have them at all times. It is critical that you discuss your child's medical condition(s) with the principal, teacher, and school nurse. Students must not share these medications with other students. Disciplinary consequences will apply for students misusing these medications. **Parents must pick up all medication at the end of the school year.**

### Head Lice

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

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

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

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

### Hospital-Homebound Services

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

### **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Most elementary schools offer after-school programs that provide supervision to elementary school-age students until 6:00 p.m. each school day. The program is open to children enrolled in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Each program strives to establish a safe, relaxed and stimulating environment that allows for individual and social growth. Children engage in activities that encourage creativity, build social relationships, reinforce appropriate behavior, and promote a positive self-image. Activities may include study time, recreation, crafts, music, story time, computer experiences, and other enrichment activities.



An application form must be completed before any student can participate in the After School Program. The Application fee of \$25, or the family rate of \$35, must be included with the form. This fee is **nonrefundable**. Tuition is \$35 per child a week for full-time and \$9.00 per child per day for drop-in. Occasionally a school week will be less than 4 days. During those weeks with less than 4 days, full-time as well as part-time students will be charged a daily rate of \$9.00. Weeks with less than 5 days **WILL NOT** be combined for payment.

Tuition is to be paid to the Site Coordinator by Thursday of the preceding week, no later than 6:00 p.m. A \$5.00 **per day per family** late fee will be charged for late tuition. Students may be temporarily or permanently withdrawn from the program due to behavior concerns, excessive late pick-ups, and non-payment of fees. If your child is enrolled in ASP, please refer to the Houston County After-School Program parent handout for more specific details regarding procedures.

Some schools do not have an After-School Program due to lack of participation.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS (INTERCOM)**

Intercom announcements are at the discretion of the principal. Schools are strongly encouraged to make the announcements at the beginning or end of the day where it will not interrupt instructional time.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

The instructional day is from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Upon arrival at school, all students should immediately report to their assigned places and remain there unless permission is received from a school staff member to leave the room. Parents picking up a child should wait in the designated areas for their child to be dismissed.

It is strongly recommended that parents of kindergartners and first graders allow them to go to their rooms on their own after the first week of school so that they may gain independence and self-confidence. **Students will not be admitted to school prior to 7:45 a.m.** It is essential that students be picked up from school by **3:50 p.m. each afternoon**. A parent who continues to drop students off before 7:45 a.m. or fails to pick them up by 3:50 p.m. will be reported to the appropriate authorities (reference: BOE Policy JGGA).

### **ATTENDANCE**

The Board of Education emphasizes values of regular attendance in enabling pupils to profit from the school program.

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

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

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

#### **Level I**

Three (3) unexcused absences.

School staff will contact parents and document the contact. Contacts may consist of e-mail, phone call, letter, note in the agenda, or other forms of communication.

#### **Level II**

Five (5) unexcused absences.

School staff will notify parents of the truancy and request a conference with the parents to sign an Attendance Contract.

#### **Level III**

Eight (8) unexcused absences.

School staff notifies Social Services Department; Social Services provides data to court for judicial proceedings to begin.

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

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absence from school is classified as either excused or unexcused. Reasons established by the Georgia Board of Education as excused absences are set forth in this policy. Students may be temporarily excused from school and allowed to make up work when:

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

**NOTE: An excused absence does not mean the student is given credit for being at school. It means that the student may make up work missed during the excused absence.**

**Students should present a written excuse within three [3] days after an absence whether excused or unexcused.** Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement.

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

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

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

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

### Military Family Deployment - Absences for Special Consideration

The Houston County School System is supportive of our military families, especially during the difficult time of deployment. In an effort to ease the burden of our students who have parents deploying, Houston County Schools will allow up to a total of 10 days of excused absences each academic year to allow families time during the deployment cycle. Absences may be planned to best fit your individual family needs. Excused absences will be allowed for the following situations:

- Pre-deployment, the day before deployment - one day;
- Day of departure - one day;
- Reunion, post-deployment - one day;
- R&R break-up to three days; or
- Travel to visit an injured parent - up to five days.

Other special circumstances will be considered; however, **10 days is the maximum that will be allowed per school year. Students will be responsible for their homework and will need to make up any missed tests or class reports upon return to the classroom. Parents are asked to work with the classroom teacher and their children to ensure that students stay up-to-date on class material.**

The form for special consideration for absences for military deployment can be obtained from the school's office. The form must be given to the principal to sign and submit to the Human Resources department for final review of the absences to determine if they meet guidelines to be excused.

### Perfect Attendance

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

### Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Instruction begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., and a student is considered tardy after that time. A student who is tardy must report to the office to check in. A parent is expected to accompany the student and to sign him/her in. If a school bus arrives after 8:30 a.m., students will not be considered tardy; and, no tardy permit is necessary.

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

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

### Release of Students

The school may not release a student to any person other than the person who enrolled the student in school. If an individual other than the person who enrolled the student in school is authorized to take the student from school on a regular basis (e.g., a grandparent or other relative, childcare provider, etc.), the person who enrolled the student in school must notify the school of such in writing and this notification should be placed in the student's record. If someone other than the person who enrolled the student in school (or an individual authorized in writing by this person) attempts to take custody of the child or to remove the child from the school, the school will immediately contact the person who enrolled the student in school. If a person who attempts to take custody of the child without consent of the person who enrolled the student in school refuses to leave the campus or causes a problem, the school will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency. (This provision shall not apply with respect to state or local law enforcement officers.)

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

### School Day

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

## **ATTENDANCE ZONE REGULATIONS**

The Federal Courts have approved the neighborhood school attendance zone formulated by the Houston County Board of Education. If the natural parent lives in Houston County, the student must attend the school in which the residence of the natural parent is located regardless of whether the student lives with the parent.

If the parents are divorced/separated, the child shall be required to attend the school in the attendance zone in which the **primary custodial parent resides**.

Elementary students in grades K-4 will be required to attend the school for which they are zoned. If the student moves during the school year, the student must transfer to the zoned school. Elementary students who have successfully completed the fourth grade year and have met all requirements for promotion to fifth grade will be allowed to complete the fifth grade year at the same school if the parents move out of that zone. The move must occur after the completion of the fourth grade year. The parent must submit an out of zone request for approval at the time of the address change. This opportunity does not extend to siblings at a different grade level, and transportation will not be provided. If attendance becomes an issue, the out of zone permission may be revoked. The student will then be required to enroll in the zoned school. If the school personnel determine that a parent or guardian has changed addresses without informing the school or used false information to enroll a child in a school other than the school zone in which the parent/guardian resides, the child shall be withdrawn not later than the last grading period. School administrators may request proof of residence at any time that it may be necessary to verify that a parents resides in the school zone.

### **Unsafe School Choice Option**

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

## **AVOIDING DRUGS VIOLENCE AND NEGATIVE CHOICES EARLY (ADVANCE) - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Members of the Warner Robins Police Department will be teaching the ADVANCE Program to fifth grade students as funding allows. All schools will not participate in this program due to funding limitations. This program is designed to give students the skills they need to resist pressures that students may face. The lessons will include topics such as searching for positive alternatives, understanding and avoiding gangs and violence, how to say "NO", and media influences. The program will inform children of the dangers of drugs and violence and teach them how to overcome peer pressure while avoiding making negative choices in their lives.

An important part of this program is for the parents to be involved in assisting their child with homework assignments, reinforcing the importance of maintaining good behavior, and most importantly, helping to keep their child's body drug-free. Parents will be invited to attend a parent meeting at the ADVANCE graduation ceremony.

## **BALLOONS/GIFTS AT SCHOOL**

Students will not be allowed to accept flowers, balloons, or other gifts sent to the school during the school day.

## **BICYCLES**

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

## **BOOK CLUBS**

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

## BUS CONDUCT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Minor Offenses

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

### Major Offenses

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

1. Disrespect of driver/monitor/administrator

2. Fighting
3. Severe vandalism - restitution required
4. Possession of tobacco
5. Inappropriate physical contact (Major)

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

### Consequences for Infractions of Bus Conduct

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **B.Y.O.D. (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE)**

As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, they also provide many new and positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. Bring Your Own Device, BYOD, has been implemented at all Houston County Elementary, Middle and High Schools. Each school will notify parents of the program parameters at their schools. Students who do not have their own device to bring to school will not be penalized. Please do not feel obligated to go out and purchase a device for your child. Students will be encouraged to work collaboratively while allowing the owner of the device to be the one to manipulate and handle the device.

### **Definition of "Device"**

For purposes of B.Y.O.D. (Bring Your Own Device), "device" means a privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic hand held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), hand held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

## Internet

Only the internet gateway (HCBE\_BYOD) provided by the school should be accessed while on campus. Personal internet connective devices such as but not limited to cell phones / cell network adapters should not be used to access outside internet sources at any time.

## Security and Damages

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

## B.Y.O.D. Student Agreement

Students and parents/guardians participating in B.Y.O.D. must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as all Board policies, particularly the Internet Acceptable Use (Policy IFBG) and Internet Safety (Policy IFBGE).

**Students and parents acknowledge that the school district has the right to collect and examine any device that is suspected of violating school rules and/or procedures.**

## CENTRAL REGISTRATION

Parents of any student(s) new to Houston County Schools must complete the enrollment process at the Central Registration site located at 303 South Davis Drive, Warner Robins, Georgia.

### *Change of Address*

Anytime a parent moves (changes address) within Houston County and the move causes a change in the school zone during the school year, the parent must go to Central Registration and show two proofs of address for the new residence (**one must be a mortgage statement or lease agreement**). If the new address remains in the current school zone, the parent will need to take proof of residence (two proofs of address and one has to be a mortgage or lease agreement) to the school so the address can be updated. A service disconnection notice from the previous address may be required.

## CHALLENGED MATERIALS

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

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME and SCHOOL

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

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

### School Messenger

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

### **CONFERENCES - PARENT/TEACHER**

Parents are welcome to visit Houston County schools and are urged to call the school office and schedule conferences with teachers as needed. Teachers are not available for conferences during the school day unless they have been scheduled. Teachers will notify parents of additional times that they are available for conferences.

All visitors to the school are required to report to the school office upon entering the school building to obtain a pass and sign in. Please sign out in the office as you leave.

### **COUNSELING**

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

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

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

SOURCE: American School Counselor Association

### **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY**

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



## DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

### Possession/Use of Drugs/Alcohol/ Weapons- Please read carefully

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

Elementary students who commit offenses involving drugs or alcohol may also be immediately suspended and referred to the Student Review Committee to determine alternative school placement.

### Alternative Placement Program

The purpose of the Elementary Alternative Program is to accommodate the behavioral and academic needs of students who have committed excessive or severe infractions in their home school. The program is very structured and teacher directed. Students are required to adhere to strict rules and guidelines. There is limited interaction with other students in school during the time that a student serves in the program.

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

Students are expected to attend the alternative school each day. If a student is absent, the parent must provide a doctor's note or written note before the student can be admitted back to the program. The student must make up any absences regardless of whether excused or unexcused. Student absences will be reported to the home school.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students who have excessive or chronic behavior issues at their home school may be assigned for 30 days. Extended days can be assigned to students who are not following the rules. An "early out" can be earned based on the students' grades, attendance, and behavior as agreed upon by the home school administrator and alternative school administrator during the intake meeting.

Students in possession of a weapon or other dangerous objects at school as determined by the principal may be referred to the alternative school. The extent of the disciplinary action is dependent on the child's grade level, their actions, the intent to harm or if threats were made, and prior discipline history.

In a case of simple possession without intent to harm or threat, the student may be suspended home and scheduled for a hearing before the *Student Review Committee* to determine appropriate disciplinary action with assignment to the alternative school (minimum of 15 days). For students who possess a weapon along with intent to harm or threats, the student is suspended home and an SRC hearing is scheduled. Disciplinary action will result in longer assignments to the alternative school (minimum 30 days).

Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. Upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer or panel that a student in grades K-5 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student may be assigned to an alternative school. Minimum assignment in an alternative setting for bullying is 30 days.

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

Bus transportation will be provided for students to be transported to and from the alternative placement program. The home school administrator must make arrangements with the transportation department. The bus will pick up and drop the student off at his or her home school. If a student has any bus write up during his or her time in the alternative program, the student's transportation privileges for the alternative school may be temporarily revoked. The parent or guardian will then be responsible for transporting the child to and from the alternative school. Transportation is a privilege and will not be abused.

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

### *In-School Suspension (ISS)*

In-school suspension is used as an alternative to suspension home. It is a time for students to complete their classroom work, make-up any missed work, as well as a time to think about their actions that got them there. We want our students in their classroom, but we want them to make good, responsible decisions.

Each school serves a nutritious lunch to students in ISS. Your school's administration will inform you about their procedures for lunch.

### **DISMISSAL**

When it is necessary for a child to leave school before 3:30 p.m., the person who enrolled the child in school or a person on the approved list must first sign him/her out in the office. Office personnel will then call the student from his/her class. Proper identification may be requested of persons making the checkout request.

### **DRESS CODE**

Appropriate dress and appearance, proper behavior and cleanliness are vital to each member of the school community. Developing good tastes in attire, good grooming habits and good behavior is a part of the educational program. Wearing inappropriate dress to school can have a negative influence on the educational process and the educational climate of the school. Each student, with the advice and counsel of his/her parents or guardian, should dress in a manner which is appropriate for school and its related activities.

**The following guidelines are followed in determining whether or not a student's attire is appropriate.**

- The dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), or grooming is not detrimental to the health and safety of the student or other students.
- The dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), or grooming is not detrimental to the educational process or the educational climate.
- The dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), or grooming is consistent with conventional standards of modesty and decorum.
- The dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), or grooming is free from words, slogans, or pictures, which advertise drugs, alcohol, or sex or which contain vulgar or offensive writing, racial slurs, suggestive pictures or emblems or which may infer membership in gangs.

The campus administrator of the school is charged with the enforcement of the student dress code. The campus administrator is given wide latitude of discretion in the determination of proper or improper dress and behavior of

students. Students who are found to be in violation of the dress code are subject to disciplinary action. The principal's actions may include:

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

**All clothing is to be worn appropriately and in the manner for which it was designed.** Belts should be buckled. The school reserves the right to establish rules during the school year regarding new fashions in dress.

**The following rules for dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), and/or grooming apply:**

- **Male students are not permitted to wear earrings.**
- Outer clothing which resembles loungewear, pajamas, or underwear is prohibited.
- See-through clothing is prohibited. (T-shirts must be worn under mesh see-through shirts.)
- Proper underclothing which insures modesty is required.
- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times. Cleated shoes are prohibited inside the building.
- Clothing that is too tight so as to be immodest is prohibited.
- Holes in clothing that are excessive in size or amount, are a distraction to the learning environment, or allow skin to show are prohibited.
- Halter tops, backless blouses, strapless blouses and dresses, sleeveless T-shirts, bike shorts and short-shorts are prohibited. Shorts appropriate for young children are permitted. Students in grades Pre-K through 3rd grade may wear tank tops.
- Fads and styles in dress that differ extremely from conventionally accepted standards are prohibited.
- Hair must be well groomed; **extremes in style and color should be avoided.**
- Students may not wear hats, caps, combs, or picks, etc., inside the building.
- Extremes in clothing style, color, pattern, and fabric should be avoided.
- Pants, skirts, shorts, and dresses must be knee-length or longer, and must have a hem. Sagging pants are not allowed and pants must be worn at the waist.
- When leggings are worn, a dress or skirt must be worn over the leggings. The dress or skirt must be knee-length or longer and have a hem.

## **DRILLS: FIRE/TORNADO/EMERGENCY/BUS EVACUATION DRILLS**

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

**\*Fire Drills** - These are held ten (10) times a year. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or marshals quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

**\*Tornado/Severe Weather** - Tornado drills are held once a year. Schools do practice walk throughs in order to ensure students know where to go and what to do.

A tornado watch: conditions are favorable for a tornado or severe weather.

A tornado warning: tornado has been sighted.

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

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

**\*Lockdowns** - Code Yellow and Code Red Drills - These drills will take place 2 times each year. When schools have been placed on an actual Code Red lockdown, you will be notified through our School Messenger phone system before the end of the school day.

**\*Bus Evacuation** - Safe Bus evacuation is practiced twice a year during physical education classes with all students.

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

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

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

## **ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) PROGRAM**

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

### **Grade Placement for English Learners (ELs)**

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

## **ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Parents of any student(s) new to Houston County Schools must complete the enrollment process at the Central Registration site located at 303 South Davis Drive, Warner Robins, Georgia.

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

Birth Certificate	At enrollment
Immunization Record (Georgia Form 3231)	At enrollment
Ear, Eye, Dental Screening (Georgia Form 3300)	At enrollment
Guardianship Papers (if student does not live with natural parents)	At enrollment
Records from Previous School (attendance, transcript, behavior)	30 days
(Central Registration will make a direct request to the previous school, but the responsibility rests with the parent)	
Proof of Residence	At enrollment
(A completed mortgage/closing statement or lease agreement AND utility start services at new address: electric/gas/water Stop services at prior address: (from in state or in-county only)	
Social Security Number or Waiver or an Application for Social Security Number	At enrollment
Medical Information which will impact instruction	At enrollment

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

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

those students entering a Georgia public school for the first time must provide a **Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examination (Form 3300)** at enrollment.

Effective July 1, 2014 children born on or after January 1, 2002 who are attending 7<sup>th</sup> grade and for new entrants into a Georgia school grades 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> must have received a dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

#### *Admission to Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade*

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

#### *Transfer Students K ~ 5*

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

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

#### *Notice to Parents/Guardians and Eligible Students*

Under the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act, you have a right to:

1. Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older or those who are emancipated, your own educational records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the child's school principal a written request and identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The child's school principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
2. Request an amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.  
To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district shall forward educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the HCBOE to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920.

### Notice to the Public

The Houston County School District has designated the following information as directory information:

1. A student's name.
2. A school at which a student is enrolled.
3. A student's participation in official school clubs and sports.
4. A student's weight and height if he/she is a member of an athletic team.
5. Awards or honors received during the time the student is enrolled in the Houston County School District.
6. Photographs or other student depiction used in information to the public regarding awards, honors, extracurricular activities, sports or school promotions.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. You have the right to refuse all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled, in writing, within ten (10) school days after the first day of the school year.

Notice of additional rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 USC 1232g) is available through the Office of Superintendent of Schools.

#### FIELD TRIPS

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

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

#### GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The elementary gifted education program is a state program designed to meet the educational needs of students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual ability, talent, and/or creativity. Teaching and learning focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation.

Students obtain eligibility through three of the four established criteria in the areas of achievement, mental ability, creativity, and motivation. The referral and placement process is coordinated by the school's Gifted Eligibility Team.

#### Definitions

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

**Differentiated Curriculum** - In a differentiated classroom, teachers differentiate content, process, product and assessments according to a student's readiness, interest, and learning profile.

- Content - The State Board of Education adopted curriculum standards the student is expected to master and related support materials.
- Process - instructional strategies designed to ensure that students acquired a deep understanding of the curriculum standards.
- Products - vehicles through which students demonstrate and extend what they have learned

- Assessment - formative and summative on and off-grade-level monitoring to document students mastery of curriculum standards and learning levels
- Readiness - a student's entry point relative to a particular understanding or skill
- Learning Profile - how an individual student learns

### Referral

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

### Eligibility

1. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either (a) score at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria approved by the state of Georgia in Achievement, or (b) qualify through a multiple- criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
2. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet the criterion score on a norm-related test. Information shall be collected in each of the four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
3. Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be current within two-calendar years.
4. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category.

### Multiple-Criteria Assessment Process

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

**Mental Ability.** Students shall score at or above the 96th percentile on a composite or full-scale score or appropriate component score.

**Achievement.** Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a norm-referenced achievement test.

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

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

### Continued Participation

As per the Georgia Department of Education, continuation policy includes a probationary period in which a student who fails to maintain satisfactory performance in gifted education classes shall continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status.

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

### Reciprocity

Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria for gifted education services in one Local Educational Agency (LEA) shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any LEA/receiving school system within the state.

There is no mandated reciprocity between states. The Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation relating to the education of children of military families that impact the gifted education reciprocity of students whose households include a member of the United States uniform services. The goal of the legislation is to maximize a student's educational continuity despite the frequent movement across states and school districts.

However, in order to determine Georgia gifted eligibility, the following documents should be presented to the student's new school: a current eligibility report, recent standardized test scores, work samples. Recommendations from teachers are also helpful.

Nothing in this Code section shall preclude/ prevent the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.

### Curriculum

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

## GRADING

### Pre-Kindergarten

Pre-Kindergarten students are evaluated through two parent-teacher conferences and application of a Bright From the Start assessment instrument. Progress Reports are issued to Pre-K students in December and May.

### Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2

The kindergarten Record of Progress is based on the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (GKIDS) and the state mandated curriculum. The first and second grade Record of Progress is based on student progress toward meeting the state mandated curriculum. Reports are sent out at nine-week intervals and parents are asked to come to a conference after the first 9 weeks. Conferences may be scheduled with the child's teacher at anytime throughout the year.

For grades K-2, the following rubric will be used to show the children's level of progress toward meeting the grade level standard:

#### ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL

NA - Not Assessed At This Time

- 1 - Grade Level Standard Not Yet Demonstrated
- 2 - Progressing Toward Grade Level Standard
- 3 - Consistently Meets Grade Level Standard

#### LEARNING AND SOCIAL SKILLS/ART, MUSIC AND P.E./SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES

- 1 - Area of Concern
- 2 - Developing
- 3 - Consistently Demonstrated

### Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grades

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



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

### Grading System for Grades Three, Four, and Five

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

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

Writing progress is reported on specific types of writing taught during the assessment period. This assessment is based on writing the student can produce independently. Beginning-of-year and end-of-year assessments are also based on the students’ independent writing progress. These ratings are determined by grade-level rubrics that state specific expectations

Grade-level expectations for independent reading indicate the target for each grade level. A students’ reading level is determined through the Houston County Literacy Inventory, which is administered individually. A student’s reading level is reported with a letter A-Z, indicating progress along a reading continuum.

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

### Purposes and Guidelines

The purpose of the report to parents is for the teacher to communicate the student’s progress. Grading should be a professional assessment of a child’s progress based on standards.

Examples: Teacher observation of students

1. Counting money
2. Measuring objects
3. Demonstrating concepts with manipulatives
4. Reading and answering questions orally
5. Conducting a science experiment
6. Participating in a group activity - (cooperative learning)
7. Developing a social studies project
8. Playing learning games
9. Summarizing a story that has been read silently
10. Researching a topic

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

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

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

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

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

Report Cards/ Progress Reports / Deficiency Notices

Progress reports (deficiency slips) may be sent home to parents any time during a nine-weeks period that the teacher judges appropriate when a student's progress is unsatisfactory. Parents should discuss these deficiency reports with the student, schedule a conference if desired, and promptly sign and return the deficiency report to the teacher. The parent will be notified if his/her child is in danger of receiving an unsatisfactory grade in art, music, or physical education. Progress reports will be sent home at the mid nine-weeks if the student's work is unsatisfactory. Report cards will be issued on the dates listed below.

Report Card

<b>Nine Weeks Period</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Date Report Issued</b>
Progress Report, Day 21	August 26	August 30
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 44	September 29	October 5
Progress report, Day 66	November 8	November 10
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 87	December 15	January 9
Progress report, Day 110	February 6	February 8
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 133	March 13	March 15
Progress Report, Day 158	April 24	April 26
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 180	May 24	May 24

**HOMEWORK**

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

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

Parents are encouraged to:

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

Types of homework to be expected include:

1. Practice assignments
2. Book reports
3. Special projects which are related to class activities
4. Reading assignments which will expand understanding of material introduced in class
5. Independent reading for a minimum of twenty (20) minutes daily.

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

## **HONOR ROLL/HONORABLE MENTION**

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

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

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

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

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

## **INSURANCE**

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

## **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

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

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

### **Purpose**

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

### **Authorized User**

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

### **Terms and Conditions**

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

It is the intent of Houston County School System to adhere to the provisions of copyright laws as they relate to informational technology. Transmission of any material in violation of United States Law or state regulations is

prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by patent.

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

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

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

### **Encounter of Controversial Material**

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

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

### **Vandalism and Harassment**

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

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Network Guidelines**

1. Users will not post, publish, send or intentionally receive offensive messages or pictures from any source, including but not limited to any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, sexist or illegal material. Access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 shall be restricted.
2. Users will not transmit or download information or software in violation of copyright laws. Only resources for which the author has given expressed consent for on-line distribution can be used. All users should consider the source of any information they obtain as well as the validity of that information.
3. Posting messages and attributing them to another user is prohibited.
4. Downloading of non-instructional materials from the Internet is unacceptable.
5. Disclaimer:  
The Houston County Board of Education makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for services through the Internet. It denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet services. The school system shall not be responsible for any damages a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruption. Use of information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk.

### **E-Mail Guidelines**

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

### **Social Networking**

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

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

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

### **School Responsibilities**

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

### **Student Responsibilities**

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

### **Penalties for Improper Internet Use**

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

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

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

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

### **LIBRARY BOOKS**

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

## LOST AND FOUND

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

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

## LUNCH/BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Lunch and breakfast are served daily at each school. All students will be given information regarding free and/or reduced meals during the first days of school with the exception of students who are enrolled in CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) schools. To apply for free and/or reduced meals, parents must complete an application immediately after receiving the application. A new application must be completed at the beginning of each school year. The fastest and most efficient way to see if your family qualifies for free or reduced priced meals is to apply online at [www.schoollunchapp.com](http://www.schoollunchapp.com).

Meal charging is not encouraged. Meal charging procedures may vary for each school. However, schools will notify parents when the child reaches the charge limit. After the charge limit has been reached, the child will be served a complimentary meal of a deli sandwich, fruit, vegetable, and milk. After the fifth consecutive complimentary meal, the principal will communicate to the school's social worker who will then make a home visit. The complimentary meal will be served until the debt is resolved.

Parents are encouraged to pay for student meals by the week or month. Money can be collected in the lunchroom by the lunchroom staff. **All checks should be made payable to Houston County School Nutrition or HCSNP.** Please write your child's assigned lunch number on the check or write it on the envelope if cash is sent. You can also pay online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com).

### Pre-payment Schedule - SY 16-17

In order for your children to be served efficiently, pre-payments should be made weekly or monthly. Please use the following schedule as a guide for making monthly payments. **Checks should be made payable to Houston County School Nutrition or HCSNP.**

PRIMARY AND ELEMENTARY				
	REDUCED	PAID	ADULT	VISITOR
BREAKFAST	\$ .30	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.75
LUNCH	\$ .40	\$ 2.25	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00
REDUCED STATUS				
MONTH	NO. DAYS	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	TOTAL
August	21	\$ 6.30	\$ 8.40	\$ 14.70
September	21	\$ 6.30	\$ 8.40	\$ 14.70
October	16	\$ 4.80	\$ 6.40	\$ 11.20
November	15	\$ 4.50	\$ 6.00	\$ 10.50
December	14	\$ 4.20	\$ 5.60	\$ 9.80
January	17	\$ 5.10	\$ 6.80	\$ 11.90
February	19	\$ 5.70	\$ 7.60	\$ 13.30
March	19	\$ 5.70	\$ 7.60	\$ 13.30
April	20	\$ 6.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 14.00
May	18	\$ 5.40	\$ 7.20	\$ 12.60
Total	180	\$ 54.00	\$ 72.00	\$ 126.00
PAID STATUS				
MONTH	NO. DAYS	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	TOTAL
August	21	\$ 31.50	\$ 47.25	\$ 78.75
September	21	\$ 31.50	\$ 47.25	\$ 78.75

October	16	\$ 24.00	\$ 36.00	\$ 60.00
November	15	\$ 22.50	\$ 33.75	\$ 56.25
December	14	\$ 21.00	\$ 31.50	\$ 52.50
January	17	\$ 25.50	\$ 38.25	\$ 63.75
February	19	\$ 28.50	\$ 42.75	\$ 71.25
March	19	\$ 28.50	\$ 42.75	\$ 71.25
April	20	\$ 30.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 75.00
May	18	\$ 27.00	\$ 40.50	\$ 67.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>\$ 270.00</b>	<b>\$ 405.00</b>	<b>\$ 675.00</b>

#### USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

#### MONEY

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

#### PARTIES AT SCHOOL

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

#### PERSONAL ARTICLES AT SCHOOL

School personnel are not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal articles belonging to students; therefore, students should not bring toys, electronic games, radios, tape players, cell phones, pagers, etc. to school.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH

All elementary students are required by Georgia law to have 90 clock hours of physical education/health instruction each year. All Houston County Schools have physical education specialists assigned; therefore, a well-planned health and physical education program is available for all students

If a student is ill and unable to participate in physical education, a note from the parent is required each day that the student is to be excused from physical education. If the student is to be excused for more than a week, a note signed by a doctor is required. While a child may be temporarily excused from physical education class because of illness, no child may be exempt from the physical education requirement. Alternative activities or adaptive physical education will be provided if appropriate.

## **PROGRAMS FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS**

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

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

The Houston County Board of Education recognizes its responsibility for the students of Houston County. Part of this responsibility includes a commitment for the student's understanding and mastery of the basics in reading and mathematics. Promotion standards help to provide consistency in instructional emphases and clear expectations for teachers, parents, and students. Promotions are made on the basis of mastery of standards and/or the ability of the pupil to do the work at the next level of instruction, as well as a consideration of social and emotional needs of the student. Promotion and retention of students are administrative matters and are to be made by teachers and principals. The welfare of the student is the primary consideration.

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

1. Every effort shall be made to identify potential retainees as early as possible during the school year.
2. The teacher is responsible for the early identification of any student having learning difficulties. The identification shall be made known to the student, parent, and principal through written notification.
3. **Grade 4** - Effective the 2003-2004 school year, results of the Georgia Milestones Assessment may be considered in addition to grades, attendance, and other local requirements for promotion. Test results shall also be used to determine a student's need for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction.
4. When a child is retained, his instructional program will be modified to accommodate his individual needs within resources available.
5. \*Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) for students with handicapping conditions shall establish standards for promotion.
6. Pre-K State guidelines prohibit a student from repeating the pre-kindergarten program.

The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the Georgia Milestones Assessment but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education.

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

1. **Grade 3** - Effective the 2003-2004 school year, no third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not meet expectations on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in reading and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.
2. **Grade 5** - Effective the 2004-2005 school year, no fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not meet expectations in reading and in math on the Georgia Milestones Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.
3. **For 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students who do not meet expectations in reading and in math on the Georgia Milestones Assessment:** An opportunity will be provided for intense intervention prior to the Georgia Milestones retest. If the child still does not meet expectations on the retest, the child will be retained. The parent may appeal the retention to the school principal. A committee made up of the principal, the teacher, and the parent will make the best decision regarding the promotion/retention of the child. The entire committee must reach a consensus regarding the decision. The committee's decision is final.



The decision to promote or retain a child should be made jointly by principal and teacher. The teacher will notify parents and have at least two conferences prior to retaining a child.

A parent may request an appeal of a retention decision. The request must be in writing and submitted to the Executive Director of Elementary Operations within five (5) calendar days of the last day of the school year. A Retention Appeals Committee will review information relative to the retention and make a final decision.

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

We have an active Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO regularly schedules meetings at each campus. Look for PTO information to come home with your child regularly or call your child's school for more information.

### **SCHOOL PICTURES**

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

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Houston County Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form by any person.

It is the policy of the Houston 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 person to harass a student, an employee, or any other person through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

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

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

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant 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 immediately reported to the school's Title IX Coordinator or a school administrator, be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated by the Principal, the System Title IX Coordinator or the Superintendent or his/her designee. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge.

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

### **STUDENT CLUBS**

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

### Student Extracurricular Activities Notification

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

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

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

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

### STUDENT OR PARENT GRIEVANCE

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

#### Level I

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

#### Level II

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

*Dr. Michelle Masters, Assistant Superintendent for School Operations  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069*

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

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

#### Level III

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Superintendent. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next scheduled BOE meeting.

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

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:

P.O. Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069  
(478) 988-6200 ext. 10213  
Dr. Zabrina Cannady - [zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net](mailto:zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net)

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

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

## **STUDENT SERVICES/ SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

1. 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.
2. Hearing Request: The Request for the Hearing must include the following:
  - a. The name of the student.
  - b. The address of the residence of the student.
  - c. The name of the school the student is attending.

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

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

3. Mediation: The school 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.
4. Hearing Procedures:
  - a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
  - b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
  - c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
  - d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
  - e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
  - f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
  - g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
  - h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
  - i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
  - j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
  - k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
  - l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
  - m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. Decision: The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
6. Review: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

## **STUDENT SERVICES/ SECTION 504 PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

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

### **Step I**

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

### **Step II**

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

Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069  
Phone: (478)988-6200  
Fax: (478)-988-6399 zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net

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

### **Step III**

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

Dr. Mark Scott  
Office of the Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069  
(478)988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the System Section 504 Coordinator. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next scheduled BOE meeting.

## **STUDENT SERVICES/ SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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

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

### **What is Child Find?**

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

### **How can children be referred?**

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

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

### **When should a child be referred to Child Find?**

A child should be referred when:

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

### **Where can I find out more about Child Find?**

For a preschool aged child, with a chronological age of 3 through 5, who has or may have a developmental disability, please contact Student Services at 478-988-6200 ext. 27803

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

### **What is Special Education and who is eligible for services?**

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

### **The Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

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

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

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

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

If you would like a further explanation of any of this information, you may contact Dr. Jenny McClintic, Director of Student Services, at the Houston County School System at (478) 988-6216 or by email at [jenny.mcclintic@hcbe.net](mailto:jenny.mcclintic@hcbe.net).

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

### **STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)**

Student Support Teams are problem solving teams and are required to be in every public school in Georgia. Student Support Teams function within Tier 3 of Georgia's Pyramid of Interventions, which is the framework for Response to Intervention. Georgia currently utilizes a four tier model. Students in grades K through 12 who have learning, speech, and/or behavioral problems may receive support at Tier 3 with research-based interventions to address skill deficits. Monitoring student progress enables the team to determine if the interventions are increasing the expected skills. Parents should be invited to participate in SST/Tier3 meetings. Student Support Teams are a function of general education.

### **TESTING PROGRAM**

In 1971, a statewide testing program was established in Georgia to facilitate instructional planning, to provide feedback to students and parents, and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs. The *Houston County Literacy Inventory* will be administered three times yearly for students in grades Kindergarten through 5.

Kindergartners are to be assessed throughout the school year with Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (GKIDS). Grades 1-5 are administered local and/or state assessments.

The testing schedule for the 2016-2017 school year can be found on the Houston County website at [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net).

- Select the "Parents" tab
- Scroll to the bottom of the tab and click on "Testing"

### **TEXTBOOKS**

All textbooks are provided by the Board of Education, and students are responsible for the textbooks which they are issued. Students must pay for textbooks which are lost or damaged (beyond normal wear) according to the schedule below.

1. All books will be bar-coded. Books will not be accepted with the bar-code removed or damaged. Students will be charged 100% of the purchase price if the bar-code is damaged in any way.
2. The student must pay 100% of the purchase price if the book is lost during the first year the book is used.
3. Students will pay replacement cost for any lost/damaged books.
4. Charges for damaged books are assessed by the principal according to the condition of the book when issued and the extent of the damages.
5. A student's failure to pay for lost or damaged books/media materials will result in the withholding of report cards.

Replacement textbooks will not be issued until payment has been made. A textbook price list is available in the school office.

### **TITLE I/TITLE II PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

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

#### **Step I**

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal within ten (10) calendar days

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

### Step II

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

Ms. Dana Morris, Director of Title and Remedial Services  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069  
Phone: (478)988-6200  
Fax: (478)988-63220 dana.h.morris@hcbe.net

Upon receipt of the written statement, the Title I/Title II Coordinator will schedule a meeting to attempt resolution of the concerns. The System Title I/Title II Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

### Step III

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the System Title I/Title II Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Mark Scott  
Office of the Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069 (478)988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the System Title I/Title II Coordinator. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next scheduled BOE meeting.

## **TITLE IX - NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972); or disability in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Students and parents are hereby notified that the Houston County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities. For questions or concerns about Title IX, a student or parent should contact the school's Title IX Coordinator or contact the system's Title IX Coordinator at: Assistant Superintendent for School Operations, P.O. Box 1850, Perry Georgia, 31069 or by phone at 478-988-6200.

## **TITLE IX PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

The Houston County Board of Education desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the Board prohibits unlawful discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If a student or a student's parents/guardians has a complaint/grievance alleging any action prohibited by Title IX i.e., discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment carried out by employees, other students, or third parties, he/she should discuss the matter with the principal of the school which the student attends in an attempt to resolve the grievance. If the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, he/she should discuss the matter with the Title IX Coordinator. See below for contact information.

The principal may make an attempt to resolve the grievance informally if the complainant expresses a willingness to participate in this informal process. Parties have the right to end the informal process and begin a formal process at any time.



At his/her discretion, the principal may confer with persons having knowledge of the incident that precipitated the grievance. The school and the School System will take all necessary steps to prevent any recurrence of sexual harassment and will do what is necessary to correct its discriminatory effects on those affected by it. If the complainant does not want to participate in the informal process or the informal process does not result in a satisfactory solution, the student or parent/guardian bringing the complaint may seek relief using the formal procedures outlined below. The student alleged to have carried out the harassment may also seek relief by following the procedures outlined below. These procedures apply to complaints of discrimination/harassment prohibited by Title IX. The steps below are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level for any form of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, on the basis of sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual violence is defined as infliction of physical force by a student, employee or third party, with the intent to cause injury or harm to the student.

### **Step I**

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal or the Title IX Coordinator if the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. If the harassment is so severe that the complainant is unable to make a complaint within the ten (10) calendar day time frame, the number of days within which to make the complaint may be waived to provide the student/parent making the complaint sufficient time to notify the principal or Title IX Coordinator of the complaint. Any witness or evidence should be provided at the time of the complaint. All parties involved shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The principal or designee will conduct an investigation. The parties involved will be informed of the outcome and the principal will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

Retaliation against an individual who reports alleged harassment or who assists in the investigation of harassment is prohibited. The District will take appropriate action against individuals who are in violation of this part of the policy.

### **Step II**

If the Step I investigation was conducted by the Title IX Coordinator, skip Step II and proceed to Step III. A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Michelle Masters, Assistant Superintendent of School Operations, Title IX Coordinator  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069  
Phone: (478) 988-6200

This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the parties, complainant and alleged harasser, receives the decision from the school principal. The appeal shall include all reports and comments from Step I and a letter of appeal. The System Title IX Coordinator will initiate an investigation of the grievance and schedule a meeting with the complainant or alleged harasser to attempt resolution of the concerns. The Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting. The case is closed if the complainant is satisfied with the decision or does not wish to take further steps.

### **Step III**

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request for a hearing to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Office of the Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069  
Phone: (478) 988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator. The request for a hearing shall state specifically the nature of the grievance, the relief sought, and the reasons why the Board should grant a hearing. If a hearing is granted, the Board of Education will hear the grievance at the next scheduled BOE meeting and render a final decision within 10 days of the hearing. If a hearing is not granted, the parties will be notified that the decision of the Title IX Coordinator is affirmed.

## **VISITORS**

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

All visitors are required to report to the school office upon entering and leaving the school building to obtain a pass. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with the principal's approval and teacher notification. Classroom visits are not permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment. Classroom visits should be limited to no more than 30 - 45 minutes as determined by the principal.

Parents are encouraged to visit school during the lunch break. Parents may purchase a lunch tray for nominal cost. If possible, please call by 8:30 a.m. of the day of your visit if you plan to purchase a school lunch. Parents are welcome in our schools, and lunchtime is a great time for you to visit us.

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

All visitors are reminded of the following Georgia law:

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

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

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

## **VOLUNTEERS**

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

Volunteers in the school shall be under the supervision of the principal in whose building they are assigned, in accordance with approved procedures. The school principal or designee will provide an orientation to each volunteer prior to volunteer service at the school. They must sign in and out at the designated area in the office. Volunteers are required mandated reports should they have concerns about a child's wellbeing.

### **Security Clearance**

All volunteers, including parents, **must receive a security clearance**. A security clearance form may be picked up in the school office. The form must be completed and approved before volunteering will be permissible. The approval

process may take several weeks. This also includes chaperones for field trips. Requests for emergency clearances will not be accepted, therefore, it is recommended that you submit a clearance form as soon as possible if you feel there may be an opportunity that you will volunteer at some time throughout the school year.

## **WEATHER**

In the event of school cancellation, parents will be notified by telephone through School Messenger, our automated notification system. This system has the capability to call all 15,000+ parents within a matter of minutes, delivering a fast and accurate message. The message will also be posted to our school system's Website, [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net) and HCBOE Facebook page. A Public Service Announcement request will also be sent to the local media, to include 13WMAZ TV, FOX24 TV, WMGT41 TV, WRWR TV-38, and all local radio stations.

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

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

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

# HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in 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.

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

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

### **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

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

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

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator, Counselor, or Teacher
- Loss of Privileges
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Home Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

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

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

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

Parents or students may elect not to contest whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved also by the 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, the student's parents 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. Students vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function,

including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

### **BEHAVIOR WHICH WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

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

- **Possession, sale, use in any amount, distribution, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant, to include prescription, over the counter drugs, and substances represented as drugs or alcohol** may be subject to suspension up to two full semesters.
- **Possession of a firearm, dangerous instrument, or weapon** shall require expulsion for a period of not less than one calendar year; provided, however, that a hearing officer, tribunal panel, administrator, superintendent, or local board of education shall have the authority to modify such expulsion requirement on a case by case basis.
- **Verbal assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** Immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed a verbal or physical assault upon a teacher or other school personnel; possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.
- **Physical assault or battery, including sexual battery, of other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.
- **Fighting:** any student engaged in fighting may be subject to discipline up to and including long-term suspension at the discretion of the student's building administrator. Penalties recommended for fighting shall not be reduced or limited by, but shall be in addition to, any penalties imposed by any court of competent jurisdiction.
- **Terroristic Threats and Acts:** any student who commits a terroristic threat or act shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion.
- **Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel:**  
(1) Immediate suspension and automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher or other school personnel. Possible punishments include short term suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion. Appropriate law enforcement personnel will be notified as necessary.
- **Disrespectful conduct, including use of vulgar or profane language, toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.**
- **Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, up to and including sexual harassment as used in connection with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.**
- **Possession or use of tobacco in any form or any product, paraphernalia, or substance that is represented as tobacco to include all forms of electronic cigarettes and vapor pens.**
- **Unauthorized use of school computers or computer network for anything other than instructional purposes.** This includes, but is not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view or send inappropriate material, hacking, and violation of school computer use policy.
- **Damaging or defacing personal property, including the property of another student or any person legitimately at the school, or school property (vandalism or graffiti) during school hours or off-school hours.**
- **Theft.**
- **Extortion or attempted extortion.**
- **Possession and/or use of fireworks or any explosive.**
- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat shall at a minimum result in suspension for one full semester.**
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives.**
- **Disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff or refusal to talk with an administrator.**
- **Classroom and school disturbances.**

- Violation of school dress code.
- Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words or indecent exposure.
- Use of cell phone or electronic communication device during the school day except as approved by a staff member.
- Inappropriate public displays of affection.
- Gambling or possession of gambling devices.
- Moving and non-moving motor vehicle violations upon school property and at school events.
- Giving false information to school officials.
- Cheating on school assignments.
- Unexcused absence, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission, failure to comply with compulsory attendance law.
- **Bullying:** Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. However, Georgia law mandates that upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.
- **Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts.**
- **Willful and persistent violation of the student code of conduct.**
- **Criminal law violations/Off-campus misconduct:** A student whose conduct off campus could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process may be subject to disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, short-term suspension and referral to a disciplinary tribunal.
- **Gang Related Activity.**
- **Any Other Conduct:** A student shall not engage in any other conduct not listed above subversive to the good order and discipline of his/her school.

#### DEFINITION OF 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.

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

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

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

**Detention:** A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after school. Students are given one days' warning so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.

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

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

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

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

**Extortion:** Obtaining money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

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

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

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

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

**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.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### **BUS MISBEHAVIOR**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESSES**

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

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

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

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

The Code of Conduct specifies within its standards of behavior various violations of the Code which may result in a school staff member's request that a parent or guardian come to the school for a conference. Parents are encouraged to visit the schools regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and behavior.

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

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

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

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

#### **STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES NOTIFICATION**

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

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

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

School extracurricular activities, organizations, or clubs for purposes of this policy are those that are supervised or sponsored by a school system employee designated by the principal, and that meet in school facilities. **See the last page(s) of the handbook for a list of school clubs.**



**DR. MARK SCOTT  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**BOARD MEMBERS  
FRED WILSON, CHAIRMAN**

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HOKE MORROW  
DAVE CROCKETT

### **RIGHT-TO-KNOW TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

**Guidance C-6 is for Advising Parents of the Right to Know Information about Teacher's Qualifications as required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act of 1965 (ESEA) [Section 1111(6) (A)]**

July 29, 2016

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

The schools of the Houston County School System receive Title I and/or Title II funds for federal programs that are part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). 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. We must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined by ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you and will do so as quickly as possible. At any time, you may ask:

- a. Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching;
- b. Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- c. What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The staff of your child's school is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she need to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled.

If you would like to request this information, please contact your child's school or you may contact Dana Morris, Director of Federal Programs, at the Houston County Board of Education at (478)988-6200 ext. 10396 or at email [dana.h.morris@hcbe.net](mailto:dana.h.morris@hcbe.net).

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

Sincerely,  
Dana Morris  
Director of Federal Programs

**P.O. Box 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069  
(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259  
[WWW.HCBE.NET](http://WWW.HCBE.NET)**



DR. MARK SCOTT  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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**ANNUAL PARENT NOTICE- HIGHLY QUALIFIED STATUS**

July 29, 2016

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

This notice is to inform you of the highly qualified status of our district's teachers and paraprofessionals.

The definition of "highly qualified" was established for teachers of core academic subjects, which include English, reading/language arts, math, science, foreign language, social studies, art, music, and drama. All teachers of core academic subjects must have met the federal requirements regarding the highly qualified status by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

Our state has always been a leader in setting high standards for the licensing of teachers and our school district works hard to bring qualified, fully licensed teachers into our classrooms. *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)* gives you the "right to know" about the qualifications of your child's teachers and paraprofessionals.

Currently, our records indicate the following percentage of our teachers of core academic subjects meet the definition for being "highly qualified":

- 100% percent teachers of core academic subjects in Title I and Non-Title I Schools in Houston County are highly qualified per *ESEA*.
- 100% percent of the paraprofessionals in Title I and Non-Title I Schools are highly qualified per *ESEA*.

We are confident in the ability of our schools' faculties to provide the highest level of instruction for all students. As always, we appreciate and encourage your continued involvement at school and support of your child's education.

Should you have any questions, please contact your school principal. You may also contact Dana Morris, Director of Federal Programs, at the Houston County Board of Education, (478)988-6200 ext. 10396, or by e-mail at [dana.h.morris@hcbe.net](mailto:dana.h.morris@hcbe.net).

Sincerely,  
Dana Morris  
Director of Federal Programs

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### FITNESSGRAM ASSESSMENT

July 29, 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As part of your child's P.E. program, all schools throughout the state are required to participate in the FITNESSGRAM fitness assessment which measures health-related fitness for youth. The FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment measures aerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition. Your students FITNESSGRAM assessment will be administered at different times throughout the school year.

Please encourage your child to participate with his/her best effort and to the best of their ability. The FITNESSGRAM assessment is a measure of good health as opposed to athletic ability. Each student will be assessed using the following assessment components:

- PACER or One-Mile Run
- Curl-Up
- Push-Up
- Back-Saver Sit and Reach
- Height/Weight.

A confidential FITNESSGRAM report will be provided for each student at the end of each semester for Middle/High school and end of year for Elementary. This report will include your child's scores and information on the FITNESSGRAM Healthy Fitness Zones. The Healthy Fitness Zone represents the level of fitness needed for good health. The information on this private report will not be displayed or made public.

For more information regarding the FITNESS assessment, please refer to [www.FITNESSGRAM.net/faqparents](http://www.FITNESSGRAM.net/faqparents). If you have any other questions, please contact your school's physical education teacher.

Sincerely,  
Blanche Lamb  
Director, Special Programs

P.O. Box 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069  
(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259  
[WWW.HCBE.NET](http://WWW.HCBE.NET)

# SCHOOL CLUBS LISTING