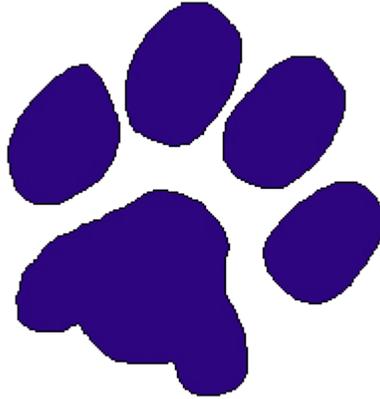


# Morningside Elementary



The  
**Leader in Me™**

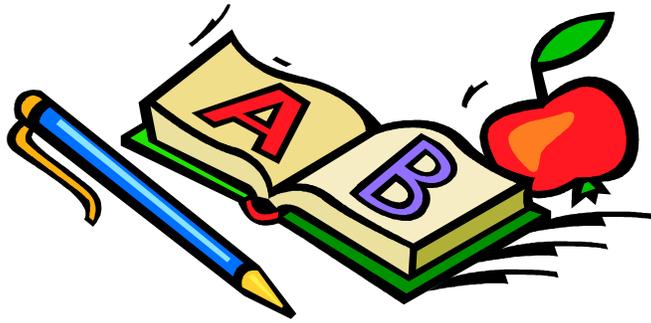
great happens here

Vision: Students Today, Leaders Tomorrow  
Mission: Nurturing ALL Students to be Leaders

Parent/Student Handbook/Communication Guide  
2014-2015

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

Dr. Pat Witt, Principal  
Mrs. Tami Godman, Assistant Principal for Instruction  
Dr. Kasandra King, Asst. Principal for Discipline & Title IX Coordinator  
Mrs. Holly Torok, Counselor and 504 Coordinator



## Morningside Elementary Supply Lists

### Kindergarten Supply List 2014-2015

- 1 book bag (no rolling book bags, please)
- 1 composition book (wide ruled)
- 1 pack of washable markers
- 1 pack of Jumbo size crayons
- 1 pencil box (standard size)
- 2 large glue sticks
- 1 pair of student scissors
- 1 bottle of glue
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 packs of baby wipes
- 2 bottles of hand sanitizer
- 3 three prong folders, with pockets (Plastic) in the colors of red, yellow, and blue
- 1 set of headphones/ear buds
- 1 pack of dry erase markers
- 1 pack of standard pencils
- 1 pack of white copy paper

#### PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Please do not send the 3 ring notebooks, Trapper Keepers, or Five Stars
2. Items may be collected for classroom use. Please do not write your child's name on any of the supplies.
3. Supplies (especially pencils and tissues) may need to be replenished throughout the year.
4. A list of school supplies for second semester will be sent home in January.

## **First Grade Morningside Leaders' Supply List 2014-2015**

- 3 pack of pencils
- 1 pencil box
- 1 box of cap erasers
- 2 boxes of 24 count Crayons
- 2 packs of wide ruled notebook paper
- 3 non-spiral composition notebooks
- 3 plastic 3- prong folders with pockets (solid colors, no prints)
- 1 bottle of glue
- 4-6 glue sticks
- 1 pair of student scissors
- 1 pair of sturdy headphones or buds

### **Wish List:**

#### **Boys please bring:**

- One pack of baby wipes
- One pack of expo black markers
- One box of quart size bags

#### **Girls please bring:**

- One bottle of hand sanitizer (8 oz. or larger)
- One pack of copy paper
- Kleenex

## **Second Grade Supply List 2014-2015**

1 box 16 or 24 count crayons  
2 boxes of pencils (no mechanical)  
1 Pencil pouch  
4 Composition Notebooks  
4 three- pronged folders (solid colors/ no print)  
2 packs of wide ruled notebook paper  
2 Glue sticks  
Big Pink Erasers  
1 pair of PERSONAL headphones/ear buds (\$1 @ Dollar Tree)  
(Please NO Binders, Trapper Keepers, pencil boxes and pencil sharpeners.)

### **Wish List (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade):**

Black only Expo Markers (1 pack)  
Kleenex  
Roll of Paper Towels  
Hand Sanitizer

## Third Grade Supply List 2014-2015

Crayons (24 Count)  
Markers (8 Count – Fine Line/Skinny)  
3- Hole pencil bag or small pencil box  
Pencils – 2 boxes (No Mechanical Pencils)  
Notebook paper – 4 packs wide-ruled  
Pencil top erasers  
4 Mead composition notebooks  
1 Yellow legal pad  
1 inch binder  
1 box Expo Markers ( 4 count)  
1 pair of PERSONAL headphones/ear buds  
(\$1 @ Dollar Tree)  
*Please NO Trapper-Keepers or pencil sharpeners.*  
\*\*Donations of the following items will be appreciated:  
Boxes of Tissue, Baby Wipes, Hand sanitizer

## Fourth Grade Supply List 2014/2015

2 inch 3-Ring Binder (No Trapper-Keepers please)  
1 package of 5 dividers  
5 Mead Composition notebooks  
3 3-prong folders with pockets  
4 pkgs. wide ruled loose notebook paper  
Crayons  
Markers  
Pencils (*no mechanical pencils*)  
*Personal Set of head phones (\$1.00 at dollar Tree)*  
*3 glue sticks*  
*2 hand sanitizer*  
*2 boxes of Kleenex*  
*1 container of baby wipes*  
1 pair of PERSONAL headphones/ear buds (\$1 @ Dollar Tree)  
*Optional: Jump Drive*

## Fifth Grade Supply List 2014-2015

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Item Description</u>
3-5	<i>Composition notebooks</i>
1 -	<i>3-Subject Spiral Notebook</i>
1-2	<i>Single Subject Spiral Notebooks</i>
1 -	<i>1-inch Binder</i>
1 -	<i>Pack of 5 Dividers</i>
3-5	<i>Packs of Notebook Paper</i>
1 -	<i>Yellow Legal Pad (8 ½ X 11)</i>
1-2	<i>Packs of 'Post-It' Notes - standard size</i>
	<i>Personal Headphones / Ear-buds</i>
	<i>Highlighters                  Pencils/Pens (any color)</i>

*Crayons*                      *Colored Pencils*  
*Markers*                      *Glue Sticks*  
*Sharpies (Black and /colors)*

**Additional Classroom Needs:** *Kleenex, Notebook Paper, Paper Towels, Unscented Hand Sanitizer, Dry Erase Markers, Cap Erasers*

Please NO rolling book-bags, or personal pencil sharpeners. Thank you.

July 30, 2014

Dear Families:

Morningside Elementary is set to begin another exciting school year. The faculty and staff of Morningside Elementary wish to welcome you to *"Our School, Where Children and Learning Come First."*

Our theme at Morningside Elementary is ***"Leaders Light the Way."*** Our staff is committed to lighting the way by maintaining a high standard of excellence in instruction and by creating a positive, nurturing environment for our students, parents, families, and community members.

Our students will be lighting the way by committing themselves to the highest standards of academic excellence and by developing the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Kids*.

We respectfully ask that our students' parents, families, and community members join us in developing the Leadership potential in our students by supporting our children and our staff as we all work together to ensure that Morningside Elementary provides a quality education in a nurturing learning environment for its students.

We look forward to an awesome year of teaching and learning in Panther Country. Please do not hesitate to call the school for help or come by to see the great things taking place on our campus. We would love to have you!

Yours in Education,  
*Dr. Pat Witt*  
Dr. Pat Witt  
Principal

## Welcome to Morningside Elementary

You are always welcome in our school! Come any time to visit and have lunch with your child. We need your help and participation! We want you involved in all your child's school activities.

Making good decisions, being responsible, and learning how to get along with others are important facets in your child's education. Within these pages, you will find general school procedures, our discipline policies and guidelines.

### For Your Information:

School Office: 988-6261  
(FAX) 988-6265

**\*Press zero to speak to someone in the office or enter an extension number.**

<u>First Dial:</u>	988-6261
Bus Supervisor	Extension 26125
Counselor	Extension 24146
Lunchroom	Extension 24264
Med. Tech. /Nurse	Extension 24036
Media center	Extension 24035
Parent Volunteer Coordinator	Extension 24034

#### **Morningside Elementary**

“A Small School with a Great Big Heart for Learning”

#### **Morningside Elementary School's Vision:**

Students Today, Leaders Tomorrow

#### **Morningside Elementary School's Mission:**

Nurturing ALL Students to be Leaders

#### **Morningside Elementary School's Values:**

- We believe everyone is a dynamic and integral part of everything we accomplish together.
- We hold educational success as a collaborative effort involving students, teachers, administrators, parents, families, and community.
- We know change is valuable; we embrace change in order to move forward.
- We embed continuous professional development, because it is essential for everyone who affects student learning.
- We expect all students to be successful learners.

## STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

### **MORNINGSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

We, the faculty of Morningside Elementary School, have deep convictions concerning the children with whom we work. We believe our school, along with home, churches, and community must work together in the educational process. Consequently, we strive to provide more than a curriculum. Our aim is to help build the individual child, by providing opportunities for each student to become an independent learner and leader.

We see the school's primary responsibility as helping each individual to achieve his/her highest potential – academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We seek to give the individual a feeling of self-worth. It is expedient in our environment students learn to respect others, so they better adjust in the adolescent and adult years. Special opportunities are offered through organized activities

to develop a strong body, good sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork. With an eye toward building responsible citizens for the future, we emphasize the *7 Habits for Highly Effective Kids* to instill the principles of right and wrong.

### As the Day Begins

- Our instructional day is from 8:30 to 3:30. The first bell of the day rings at 8:25. The Tardy Bell rings at 8:30. **Students are tardy after 8:30 a.m.**
- **Students may enter the building at 7:45.** Please do not drop off your child prior to this time as there is no one to supervise them.  
Students may go to the cafeteria where they will be supervised until 8:00 a.m. If you wish for your child to eat breakfast at school, breakfast is served from 7:45 a.m to 8:25 a.m.
- Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. to report to homerooms. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will report directly to their classes unless they are eating breakfast. From 8:00 to 8:30, our students get their materials and work area ready for the instructional day. Any notes for the teacher should be given to the teacher as soon as the student arrives.
- Students may purchase snack items in the main hall prior to going to class. We will have some school supplies available for sale.
- At 8:25, morning announcements are made and students are given the opportunity to pledge the United States flag. A moment of quiet reflection is observed. After announcements, the instructional day begins. It is very important that our students start each day without being rushed. If your student does not ride the bus, please have them on campus before 8:25 a.m.
- If your child arrives at school after 8:30 a.m., please come to the office with your child and sign he/she in. Your student will be given a tardy slip to admit him/her to the classroom.

### Arrival, Dismissal and Transportation Guidelines

- Buses/Day Care Vans deliver students each morning on the bus ramp at the Kings Chapel Road entrance beginning at 7:45 a.m. In the afternoons, buses /day care vans are called as they arrive and students are dismissed from classrooms to the bus ramp. All buses depart from campus by 4:00 p.m. For the safety of our students, please allow them to ride the bus if they are eligible.
- If you bring your children in the morning, please drop them off at the Morningside Drive (front entrance of the school). Please do not drop children off prior to 7:45 a.m. Teachers are unavailable prior to 8:00 a.m. to supervise students.
- Students who are car riders will be released from their classrooms using the School Car Pool System in the classrooms. This is a secure dismissal system. During the first week of school, you will receive two car rider cards with a unique number assigned to your child. As you arrive, please have this card on the front dashboard of the passenger side of the car or have the card clipped to the sun visor for teachers on duty to see. This helps in calling children quickly and efficiently. It also guarantees your child will only leave campus with people authorized to pick up your student. Should you need additional pick-up cards, please notify the office. In addition, if you lose your card, please notify the office to secure another. Anyone picking up a student must have this secure identification card; otherwise, the person must park in a regular parking space and report to the office for the purpose of releasing a student to an approved person on the student's pick-up list.
- Students will be called as parents arrive for dismissal at 3:30. **For safety, parents should remain in their cars in the pick up line** so teachers on duty can load students quickly and efficiently. We ask that you line your vehicles up in single file in the front driveway and **wait in your vehicle.** Pull as far down in a single file line as the sidewalk permits. A **safety hazard** exists when parents come inside to get their student/s, exit the front of the building, and then proceed to walk between cars endangering themselves and their children.
- Parents will not be allowed to park on the side of the building reserved for buses. Parents will be asked to move their vehicles to the front parking lot. Front porch duty personnel will be instructed not to dismiss students to parents who walk up on the porch. We must keep this area clear for buses and day care vans. It is very difficult for buses to make the turn to the bus ramp with vehicles parked. In addition, a serious safety risk exists with buses moving and students present in the parking lot. We appreciate your help and cooperation in keeping our students safe. We haven't had an accident yet, but we have had several close calls.
- We stand behind the promise that if everyone remains in their vehicle, we can have all students loaded and gone by 3:45 p.m. Teachers on duty call students to the front long before their parents' car reaches the front door.
- If you must come in the building due to time constraints, appointments, family emergencies, etc., please park your vehicle in a parking space, come to the office, and your child will be called. If you come to pick up your child before school ends, please report to the office to sign your child out. However, any child signed out by a parent prior to 3:30 dismissal is counted as an early dismissal for the student and counts against perfect attendance. Please do not go directly to the classroom to get your child. Teachers cannot release students from the classrooms.

- **If your child is to go home by any means other than his/her regular way, please notify the teacher in writing.** All notes received are signed in the office and approved by an administrator. We cannot take your child's word that he/she is to go home a different way. We do this for the safety of your child. They must have a note written signed by a parent/guardian. This is especially true when there is a change in buses. Bus drivers are not allowed to take any student home on a bus other than their assigned bus unless the principal has approved a note from the parent.
- It is essential that all students be picked up from school by 4:00 p.m. each afternoon unless staying after school for an extracurricular activity.
- We will not release your child to anyone that is not on the pick-up list provided by you in writing on the first day of school. Please be understanding when we request identification (i.e. driver's license) to insure the safe release of your student.
- We ask that you do not call the office to change the way your child is going home unless it is an emergency.
- Morningside is assigned one crossing guard. The crossing guard is located at the entrance of the school to direct traffic in the morning and the afternoon. She also assists walkers with crossing the street. Should you live in Kings Villas Apartments or on Keith Drive; you need to be aware that the city does not provide a crossing guard for students crossing the street on Kings Chapel Road. Students living in Kings Villa and Keith Drive will NOW be allowed to ride a bus to and from school. Please do not allow your child to cross Kings Chapel Road as a walker. Allow your child to ride the bus for safety purposes.

### **After School Program**

Morningside Elementary will have an after school program located on campus.

- The After School program is from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. daily.
- You may register your child at any time for participation.
- Weekly and drop-in options are available.
- Please stop by the office to secure the necessary forms or call the office and we will gladly send them home by your child.
- Should you have questions, the After School Coordinator will be more than happy to talk with you.

### **Agendas and Take-Home Folders**

Each student receives a student agenda and weekly folder for signed papers at no cost to our families.

- We ask that the student bring his/her agenda home each day. Homework and other important information will be notated in the agenda. Please read and initial your child's agenda each day. The teacher and/or parent may communicate by writing notes in the agenda. There is a plastic pocket located in the front of the agenda in which notes and important papers can be placed.
- The agenda is a wonderful tool for student organization and for home/school communication. Please encourage your child to use it effectively. **Should a student lose their agenda, the cost to replace the agenda is \$5.00.**
- In addition, students are given a take-home folder. Students will bring home graded papers and any papers needing to be signed each **Thursday**. We ask that you return your child's folder signed on the appropriate week located on the inside cover of your student's folder.  
**Should your child lose their take-home folder, the cost to replace the folder is \$4.00.**

### **Attendance**

The Houston County Board of Education has adopted a strict policy on absences, tardies, early dismissals, and perfect attendance hours. The policy is explained in detail in the Houston County Elementary School Student Handbook. Please pay careful attention to the Houston County Attendance Policy for students listed in the School System Student Handbook. This handbook can be accessed on the school system website as well as the school website.

As part of the Federal Child Protection Act, we are required to know why a child is not in school.

- Students are counted present when they are in attendance at least one-half of the instructional day (11:30 a.m. is the half-day point).
- Student absences are considered excused when:
  - a) Students are personally ill and when attendance would endanger their health or the health of others. At the discretion of the principal, a statement from a doctor may be required to validate extended illnesses/excessive absences.
  - b) A serious illness in student's immediate family
  - c) Death in student's immediate family
  - d) Religious holiday
  - e) Conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to student's health and safety
  - f) Military Deployment
- If your child has to be absent from school, we ask that you provide a personal note or doctor's note explaining why your student missed school. You must provide a note for any absence within 3 days of the absence in order for the absence to be

coded correctly for attendance purposes; otherwise, the absence is coded as an unexcused absence. The written excuse should contain: a) the date and day of the absence; b) the reason for the absence; and, c) the signature of the parent or guardian.

- We respectfully ask that if your child is out for three days consecutively, please call 988-6261 (ext. 24036) and let the school know why your child is absent.
- Otherwise, your child's teacher will phone to check on him/her.
- If your child enters the hospital, please call the school so we can respond in a caring way. The school nurse will be contacted in the event a child is hospitalized.
- Please understand that once a child has reached 10 absences, only a doctor's note will be accepted for an absence. Without a doctor's note, any absence after 10 will be documented as Unexcused.
- When a student is denied bus transportation for discipline reasons and does not attend school, understand this absence is considered unexcused.
- When a student is suspended from school for misconduct, the absence is unexcused.
- To be eligible for "perfect attendance", a student may neither be absent, nor tardy; neither may a student be dismissed before the end of the instructional day for any part of the day even if the child returns to school.

### **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)**

As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, they also provide many new and positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. During the 2013-2014 school year, Bring Your Own Device, BYOD, was piloted 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.

### **Cell Phones**

In compliance with local policy JCDAF, cell phones may not be in use or visible at school during the school day or on the school bus during transportation to and from the school. The school day is defined as the period between the time students are required to be present and their dismissal. Students may have cell phones; however, they must be turned off and concealed. If a cell phone is visible or goes off during the instructional day, the student will surrender the cell phone to a teacher/administrator. The child's parent may retrieve the cell phone from the office. If there is another incident involving the same student and a cell phone, the student will be given In School Suspension (ISS) as a consequence, surrender the cell phone, and the parent will be asked to retrieve the cell phone from the office.

### **Cell Phone Violations**

**1st time:** The device/phone is taken and the parent picks it up: Warning.

**2nd time:** The device/phone is held, parent picks it up: 1 day ISS.

**3rd time:** The device/phone is held, parent picks it up: 2 days ISS; the student loses all device/cell phone privileges for the remainder of that grading period.

**4th time:** The device/phone is held, parent picks it up: 3 days ISS; the student loses all device/cell phone privileges for the remainder of the semester.

**5th time:** Chronic violator: The device/phone is held, parent picks it up; suspension from school for one day; the student loses all device/cell phone privileges for the remainder of the year.

**6th time:** The device/phone is held, parent picks it up:

### **Referral to the Alternative School.**

*The consequences for cell phone/device violations are in line with the school wide progressive discipline plan. We want students to be responsible users of all technology. It is our hope that these consequences won't be necessary.*

## Classroom Observations

At Morningside, we want parents and guests to visit our classrooms. Parents/Guardians who are interested in observing their child may observe in a classroom for no longer than 60 minutes at a time scheduled through the office, teacher, administrator, etc. with 24 hours' notice. Upon arrival, we ask that you check in the front office first. Office personnel will notify the teacher to determine whether students are taking a test. If students are testing, parents/guests will be asked to wait until the test is over or come back at another time. Parents/guests are welcome in our classrooms.

## Clubs and Activities

We offer several extracurricular activities for students. In order for children to participate, parent permission slips are needed and kept on file. The following clubs and activities are offered:

- **Student Council:** to promote the development of leadership skills and service to the school and community. Students develop teamwork, leadership and management skills that benefit them through all areas of life.
- **Chorus:** to enrich the lives of students through music appreciation and performing arts. This is open all fourth and fifth grade students.
- **Drum Club:** The Drum Club will provide instruction on the correct techniques for playing African drum ensembles. Students perform for the school and the public.
- **4-H:** teaches awareness of community and good citizenship. 4-H assists youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that will enable students to become contributing members of society. It is open to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- **Jr. Master Gardeners:** to promote knowledge of gardening and conservation. This is open to fourth and fifth grade students.
- **Shelf Elves Library Helpers:** to help students with library materials and to help organize/shelve books. Students will also assist in the selection and processing of new materials. This is open to some fourth and fifth grade students.
- **Panther Pals:** are ambassadors for the school. Panther Pals introduce new students to the school and escort visitors through the building. One boy and one girl are selected from each homeroom.
- **Mind Bogglers Board Game and Puzzle Club:** students learn how to play various board games to develop higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and strategic thinking skills. It is open to all students.
- **MSES Perpetual Cheer Club:** This club promotes school spirit. Students develop leadership skills, enhance self-esteem, and build confidence.
- **Jumprope Jammers:** promotes physical fitness, sportsmanship and team building skills through jumprope. Students practice and learn jumprope routines by learning basic jumprope skills. Tryouts will be held to select team members from grades 2-5.
- **Morningside Memory Makers:** students will work to create the school's yearbook. This club is open to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- **Morningside Nutrition Club:** the goal of the Morningside Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) is to promote wellness and to teach how good nutrition directly corresponds to positive attitudes, positive self-esteem, and improved test scores.
- **Panther Pals:** Panther Pals act as ambassadors for the school. Club members introduce new students to the school and escort visitors through the building.
- **MSES Postal Service:** Students are encouraged to write letters to teachers, other students and administrators. As students write letters and letters are written back to students, children in this club are responsible for sorting and delivering mail.
- **Running Club:** The purpose of this club is to generate an interest in running as a form of exercise and recreation; to teach students proper form and preparedness for running; and, to use running as a means of exerting energy and improving a healthy lifestyle.
- **MSES Postal Service:** students write letters to other students, teachers, and administrators. Students in this club sort and deliver the mail.

As more clubs and activities become available throughout the school year, students will be given permission slips for parents to sign giving them permission to participate. Students should listen to morning announcements as the beginning of the school year for clubs to begin.

A form is included in the Parent Signature Page Booklet sent home the first day of school and should be completed **ONLY** if there are clubs and/or activities from which you are **PROHIBITING** your child's participation.

## **Communication with Parents and Families**

- TV Channel 10/17 provides a scrolling list of events for each school in the school system.
- The Houston County Board of Education's web site address is hcbe.net. From there, you can link to Morningside Elementary's web page. The School has a general web page and each teacher has a web page also.
- School main lobby monitor displays current events, videos of students in action, and school activities involving students both in the classroom and the community.
- Our school marquee will display important events
- The communication call out system will be used by the principal to announce special events and provide reminders.
- Newsletters will be sent home.
- A monthly calendar of events will be provided.
- Please look for us on Facebook and Twitter.
- Look for more information in your student's weekly take-home folder.

## **Conferences with Teachers/Administrators**

- If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please call and set up a conference concerning your child. Or, you may leave a message, and our staff member will return your call. Please do not drop by unexpectedly during the instructional day for a conference or visit. Our teachers have a specific number of instructional minutes per day they must meet and curriculum objectives they must cover. Instructional time is valued so that all students in the class may succeed; any interruptions are kept to a minimum.
- You are always welcome to visit. Please call the office or your child's teacher in advance. Certain instructional activities, like tests, are not the most appropriate times for visitors. We seek to lessen student distractions as much as possible so that students do their best work.
- Also, please remember the beginning of the day and the end of the day are very hectic. We respectfully request that you do not drop in for an impromptu conference during these times after the first ten days of school. Our students need quiet and consistency at the beginning and at the end of the day. In the afternoons, we are focused in making sure every student gets home the way parents have requested. We appreciate your help and support in this matter.
- When you do come to the school, please report to the office and sign in. This is necessary for safety reasons. When you sign in, you will print a sticker to wear while in the building. This alerts the staff that you have checked in at the office. Please remember to sign out on the computer when you leave.

## **Counselor**

Our counselor's name is Mrs. Holly Torok. She is everyone's best friend. She is a wonderful resource for you and your child. Her office number is: 988-6261 (ext. 24146).

## **Dress Code for Students**

Please refer to the Houston County Elementary Student Handbook for specifics.

## **Homework**

Homework is given for review and practice purposes. Parents are encouraged to look over these assignments and give help when needed. Homework assignments are written by students in their agendas daily. We ask that your students read a minimum of 20 minutes per night. This is an activity highly encouraged for parents to do with their students. We know through the study of test results that students who do their homework each night and read daily will pass the state standardized test.

## **Media Center**

Our Media Center is open each day from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Students may check out books during these hours. Parents are encouraged to visit the media center with their child. We have two book fairs and one half price book fair each year that you and your children will enjoy. Funds raised by the book fairs are used to purchase more books for the Media Center. We ask that any library book lost be paid for so a replacement can be purchased. If the lost book is found after the book has been paid for, parents will be reimbursed the amount paid for the book.

## Medication Given at School

We are happy to administer medicine to your child when needed. Our Med. Tech. /School Nurse must have a written note from the parent giving us permission to do so. Specific information regarding medicine, dosage, and time to be given must be clearly stated. All medications must be in the original container labeled with your child's name.

Non-prescription medicine, such as Tylenol, can be given only for a short-term duration (two consecutive weeks or for a total of 10 times through a single semester). A written note from the parent must be given to the Med. Tech. /School Nurse giving us permission to give this medicine and the directions for giving the medicine.

Herbal medicines **cannot** be given at school without a doctor's specific order.

In cases of prescription medication given long-term (more than two weeks), a medication form filled out by your child's doctor must be given to the Med. Tech. /School Nurse. Medication forms may be requested from the Med. Tech.

Remember: Our greatest concern is your child's health and safety.

## Lost and Found

A Lost and Found is provided in the center hall next to the lunchroom for students to place items found on the playground, gym, hall, etc. In addition, this provides a central location for students to search for lost items.

Each year, we send beautiful jackets, sweaters, and other articles of clothing to Goodwill because no one claims them. Please help us help your child keep up with Jackets and other articles of clothing by **writing your child's name in the label of the garment using a Sharpie Pen or Laundry Marker**. This way, we can be diligent in returning items that are lost to the correct child.

## Lunch

Parents are encouraged to prepay for all meals. The School Nutrition Program will accept payment by check, cash or the on-line prepayment system (mylunchmoney.com). The web site does accept VISA or a Debit Card. This prepayment system will allow you to view the history of transactions that have occurred on your child's account whether or not you opt to make a pre-payment for school meals.

- You are welcome to have lunch with your child any day. You do not need advanced reservations. Parents and guests may sit with their student at the class table or they may sit in the center of the lunchroom at our guest tables.
- The stage is an allergy free zone for students with food allergies.
- We have two lunchroom monitors who supervise students during breakfast and lunch along with administrators.
- We are NOT able to microwave food items brought from home. We will be more than happy to open thermoses containing soups or hot foods. For safety reasons, we will not be able to heat food items up for your child.
- We want students to enjoy lunch with friends each day; but, we also want this time to be orderly. In an effort to get our students to eat, we play music in 5 minute intervals. During the time the music is playing, we ask students to focus on eating their lunch and refrain from talking. During the intervals the music is off, students may talk with their friends. Also, because we believe in eating as a family, students remain standing at their table until all students are served. Once students have arrived at the dining table, students sit in one group and begin their meal together. We encourage the use of good manners during this time also.

## Parent Volunteers

### “Parents and Teachers Teaching Students” (PATTS)

We love Parent Volunteers at Morningside. We hope you will join us as time allows volunteering in your child's classroom. Please contact our Parent Involvement Coordinator, Mrs. Pam Harper, at (478) 988-6261 ext. 24034.

- Morningside Elementary follows the Houston County Board of Education policy for parent and community volunteers. All persons interested in being a school volunteer must attend an orientation session and have a background check.
- The following areas require you to be certified as a parent/community volunteers: test proctoring, tutoring, working in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, working at the book fairs, etc.
- Approved parent volunteer clearance is good during the time your student attends Morningside Elementary; however, when your child goes to Middle School, a new clearance will be needed.

## **Personal Possessions**

- Please write your child's name on all personal items such as coats, jackets, hats, and book bags. We have many lost and unclaimed items throughout the year.
- Please make sure that students leave their valuable possessions at home. Dr. Witt has a saying, "If you love it, leave it at home." We are not responsible for lost electronics, toys, etc. Electronics should not be brought to school except on the days students are allowed to bring their devices for instructional purposes.
- No toys should be brought to school. According to the Houston County Board of Education policy, toy guns and knives are never allowed. Suspension from school and or placement in the alternative school setting could result for bringing items of this nature. Please read carefully the Houston County Elementary Student Handbook. The weapons policy is defined in detail.
- Students are not to bring Pokemon card collections and other card collections of this nature to school. Nor are students allowed to bring inappropriate magazines, books, gameboys, electronic games, etc. if the student chooses to bring items of an inappropriate nature, the principal will take up these materials and wait for parents to personally pick them up in the office.

## **Report Cards**

- Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 receive report cards every nine weeks. Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade receive a Record of Progress each nine weeks. Please refer to the back of your student's take home folder for specific dates.
- Please sign the report card promptly and return the report card to your child's teacher.
- In addition, progress reports are sent home every 4 ½ weeks on Thursday in the Take Home Folder. Again, please refer to the back of your child's take home folder for specific dates.

## **School Closings**

- If school is closed for any reason, you will receive a message through the school messenger call out system.
- School closings will also be announced on television and radio.
- Please refer to the back of your child's take home folder to check vacation and holiday dates.

## **School Parties**

- Each class may have a party to celebrate the winter holidays and the End of the Year. These parties may begin at 2:30 p.m.
- Room Mothers/Dads/Grandparents, etc. help teachers with class parties.
- On Valentine's Day, students may exchange cards if they bring one for every child in the class. Room parents may provide a take home treat or a special snack to be eaten during recess when students read their valentines.
- Houston County Board of Education policy does not permit us to have Birthday parties. However, students are allowed to give out Birthday Party invitations as long as it is done prior to the start of the school day, or recess, during lunch, and/or after school. We cannot provide addresses or telephone numbers for students to attend birthday parties outside of school.
- Balloons and flowers are not allowed to be delivered for students at school for any reason. There are no exceptions.
- A parent may wish to send a special snack/drink to school for the class snack on their child's birthday.

## **School-wide Title I**

Morningside Elementary is a School-wide Title I School which means we receive additional funding from the federal government. These additional monies are used to pay salaries, to provide professional learning opportunities for the staff, to provide after school tutoring for students and to provide instructional materials for the classroom. The staff solicits your support in working together to provide a quality instructional program and a nurturing learning environment for our students.

## **Snack/Break/Recess**

- Each class will have a snack/recess break during the day. We sell snack items in the center hall from 8:00-8:25 a.m. Items, such as chips, large pickles, etc. cost between .50 and \$1.00. Your child may also bring a snack from home.
- In addition, students may buy Fruit Frozen Slushies for \$1.00 at Snack Time. These, too, are purchased in the office.
- Student clubs may sell items from time to time, like Lollipops for Music.
- Students may also purchase bottled water each morning to take to class.

## **Spirit Day**

We will celebrate Spirit Day every Friday. Students are encouraged to wear their Morningside Elementary School Spirit wear or dress in our school colors of burgundy and gold.

## Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities. Our school does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities. Any inquiries concerning Title IX may be referred to our school's Title IX Coordinator Dr. Kasandra King, Assistant Principal at (478) 988-6261.



The *Leader in Me* process teaches basic leadership principles--- the often-neglected skill sets for making good choices, for getting along with others, and for managing time and activities wisely. It provides students with opportunities to apply the principles by giving students leadership roles in the classroom, school, and community. The *Leader in Me* acknowledges the whole person--- the needs of a person to live, to love, to learn, and to leave a legacy.

The Leadership curriculum consists of the concepts and skills that will equip children to lead effective, productive lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students who are taught a leadership curriculum will develop character in their personal lives and the ability to work effectively to achieve meaningful goals with people from various backgrounds.

While at Morningside, your student will be engaged in the *Leader in Me* process. Students will learn the 7 Habits for Highly Effective Kids and People. It is our belief that if children learn these 7 Habits, how different their lives might be and how different our world might be. Read the following 7 Habits and see if you come to the same conclusion:

### **Habit 1: Be Proactive**

I am a responsible person. I take initiative. I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods. I do not blame others for my wrong actions. I do the right thing without being asked, even when no one is looking.

### **Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind**

I plan ahead and set goals. I do things that have meaning and make a difference. I am an important part of my classroom and contribute to my school's mission and vision, and look for ways to be a good citizen.

### **Habit 3: Put First Things First**

I spend my time on things that are most important. This means I say no to things I know I should not do. I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan. I am disciplined and organized.

### **Habit 4: Think Win-Win**

I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. I make deposits into others' Emotional Bank Accounts. When conflicts arise, I look for third alternatives.

### **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood**

I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking.

### **Habit 6: Synergize**

I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different than me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems because I know that by teaming with others we can create better solutions than any one of us alone. I am humble.

### **Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw**

I take care of my body by eating right, exercising, and getting sleep. I spend time with family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I take time to find meaningful ways to help others.

**Morningside Elementary**  
**2014-2015 School-Wide Discipline Plan**

***Vision: Students Today, Leaders Tomorrow*    *Mission: Nurturing ALL Students to be Leaders***

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

Morningside Elementary has developed a school-wide discipline plan. Our goal is to acknowledge the leader in all students. Students will be awarded points at the end of each day for displaying appropriate leadership behaviors. The points will allow students to receive other forms of acknowledgement in the classroom and school-wide.

**School-Wide Leadership Rules:**

- A leader shows respect at all times.
- A leader is prepared to learn.
- A leader follows directions the first time given.
- A leader keeps hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
- A leader shows “Panther Pride” in themselves and their school.

**Panther Pride Points:**

- 5-Student **LEADER** had a Great day!
- 4-Student **LEADER** received a Warning
- 3-Student **LEADER** lost ½ of break and note written in the agenda by teacher
- 2-Student **LEADER** lost all of break and a phone call to parent(s) by the teacher
- 1-Student **LEADER** received a conference and a note to parents from an administrator or the counselor
- **Within a week, if your student leader receives 2 points or less twice, the third time that week will result in an office referral.**

**Classroom Acknowledgements:**

Individual classroom teachers may reward student leadership behaviors on a weekly basis. These acknowledgements are up to the discretion of the teacher.

**School-Wide Acknowledgements:**

School-wide awards will be given at the end of each nine weeks to student leaders who have **earned a minimum of 205 points** for that nine weeks period (rewards subject to change).

- 1<sup>st</sup> Nine Weeks – Freeze Pops
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Nine Weeks – Blow Pops and Board Games
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Nine Weeks – Movie, Popcorn, and Drink
- 4<sup>th</sup> Nine Weeks – Ice Cream Sundaes
- **BONUS ACTIVITY: Students that earn 820 points or more for the entire year will participate in a day of FUN IN THE SUN!!!!**
  
- **NOTE:** Student leaders who receive an office referral during a nine weeks period will not be permitted to attend that celebration.

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**PAWS for Great Behavior**  
**2014-2015**

***“Developing a positive school climate involves the use of natural, logical, and realistic consequences; a simple structure; reasonable rules; as well as the labeling and accepting of feelings. The students themselves play an important role in their own educational programming. In such an atmosphere, the class is neither teacher-dominated nor student controlled; rather, it is a joint effort to learn, relate, and experience”    -Patsy Hutto***

At Morningside Elementary School, we believe the education of our students is a shared responsibility among faculty and staff, parents and community. We also believe students learn best in an orderly and positive climate.

In order for our school to be effective in meeting this responsibility, we will teach every child academic subjects, self-discipline, leadership skills, and respect for themselves, their peers and adults.

The Morningside Elementary Behavior Plan is based upon the concept that reasonable rules and logical consequences applied consistently will motivate students to make good decisions and meet the positive expectations we have for them. In addition, the classroom teacher has certain needs which must be met if the classroom is to have a healthy learning environment. In order for these needs to be adequately met the teacher must implement the following rights:

1. The right to establish a classroom structure and routine that provides for learning.
2. The right to determine and request appropriate behavior from students.
3. The right to ask for help from parents and school administrators when assistance is needed.

With this in mind, Morningside Elementary expects its teachers to be assertive teachers. An assertive teacher is one who clearly and firmly communicates expectations to students. The teacher is prepared to reinforce her/his words with appropriate actions. By being assertive, the teacher establishes what is expected from the child and what the child can expect in return from the teacher.

In this plan, students are taught to examine their actions, solve problems and assume responsibility. We stress to students they make choices daily; each child decides how to behave and no one else causes a student to do anything.

Each child is taught breaking a rule means accepting a consequence. We expect when school and classroom procedures are taught at the beginning of the year, students will choose to make good decisions that will result in a successful school year for everyone.

Each grade or class will send home a classroom discipline plan. This plan is designed to help students learn classroom rules through discussion, through practice, and through modeling. It is our wish with the help of parents, this plan will be taught so positively that it will not be necessary to refer a single child to the office. If a referral is needed, parents will be contacted so we can work together to be successful in teaching self-discipline.

### **Morningside Elementary School-Wide Norms and Guidelines:**

A rule has a stated and specific consequence. Norms and guidelines are ideas or behaviors we consider to be normal choices that should occur daily. We will help our students work to achieve success in these areas by applying logical results.

#### **School Property:**

1. Students will use all school property and teaching materials appropriately at all times.  
**Guideline: Teachers will model appropriate use of property and teaching materials.**

#### **Hallways:**

1. Students will move through the halls quietly. Be quiet and courteous. Students in other classrooms are working and need to concentrate. Noisy hallways will not allow the best learning to take place.  
**Guideline: A student may need to stand by an adult to ensure the hallways remain a quiet place for learning.**
2. Students will walk in single file on the right side of the hall. This prevents others from being hurt.  
**Guideline: Go back and walk.**
3. Respect work displayed in the hallway.  
**Guideline: Restitution or repair work.**

#### **Manners:**

1. Always use your best manners, remembering to say: Yes sir, Yes Ma'am, or yes; No Ma'am, No Sir, or no; Thank you; Excuse Me.  
**Guideline: Reminder to use manners. Teachers consistently model manners.**

#### **Media Center:**

1. Use materials properly.  
**Guideline: Lose privilege of using media center or checking out materials that day.**
2. Use quiet voices.  
**Guideline: Move to a time out area in the media center.**
3. Turn in materials on time and in good order.  
**Guideline: Could lose the privilege of checking out additional materials until materials are returned or materials are paid for.**

#### **Restrooms:**

1. Students will use inside voices while in the restroom. Use restroom, flush toilets, and keep area clean.  
**Guideline: Last one to use restroom; or use restroom alone.**
2. Students will place paper in proper containers.  
**Guideline: Help Custodians clean up the restrooms.**

3. Students will not play in the bathrooms.  
**Guideline: Miss equal amount of time from break.**
4. One person in the stall at a time.  
**Guideline: Move to another stall.**
5. Keep writing utensils out of the restroom.  
**Guideline: Assist custodians in cleaning writing off the walls.**

**Lunchroom:**

1. Students will select all needed items while going through the line.  
**Guideline: Remind student and have student practice.**
2. Students will remain standing until all students have arrived at the lunch table. Students will be seated at one time. This shows good manners in ensuring all students have been served prior to the start of eating a meal.  
**Guideline: Student will be asked to stand until everyone has gotten to the table.**
3. Students will remain seated until the class is given permission to empty trays and line up.  
**Guideline: Student will sit at an individual table.**
4. Keep the lunchroom and your area neat and clean.  
**Guideline: Clean up area before leaving or go back to clean area.**
5. Students will use manners as they would at home. Students will use appropriate conversation, using inside voices, chewing their food with their mouths closed.  
**Guideline: Reminder to use manners; possible silent lunch at an individual table.**
6. Students will eat only the food on their tray and will refrain from putting their hands on other people's food.  
**Guideline: Students will pick up dropped or thrown food. Students will be expected to sweep the lunchroom area around their class table, or throw away food gotten from the trays of others, possible silent lunch at an individual table.**
7. Students will eat quietly---No talking while music is playing. Students may talk when music is not playing. Music plays for 5 minutes at a time. This allows students time to focus on eating their meal.  
**Guideline: Talking during music may require student to eat at an individual table.**
8. Walk at all times in the lunchroom.  
**Guideline: Go back and walk.**
9. Students will not carry food items out of the lunchroom.  
**Guideline: Students will be asked to throw the food away.**

**Breakfast/Early Morning in the Gym:**

1. Stay in designated area; keep hands and objects to yourself. Come in quietly and be seated.  
**Guideline: Warning, isolation, dismissed from the office.**
2. Lunchroom rules apply.
3. Bring something to read.

**Playground:**

1. Students will use playground equipment in a safe and respectful manner. Use playground equipment properly. Get off swings, walls, or equipment properly, without jumping.  
**Guideline: Walk the track for remainder of recess.**
2. Students refrain from rough play. This includes pushing, shoving, wrestling, tackling, karate kicking, jumping on others, hitting, etc. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself to keep others safe.  
**Guideline: Go to time out area or walk the track for remainder of recess.**
3. All trash will be placed in trash cans.  
**Guidelines: Pick up litter during recess as directed by the teacher.**

**Assemblies:**

1. Students will enter quietly.
2. Students will look, listen, and follow directives of supervising adults.
3. Students will display attentive and courteous behavior at all times. Students will be expected to be a courteous audience during the performance, sitting on bottoms, quietly observing program. Signal for quiet—Five Fingers raised.  
**Guideline: Students will sit by teacher or miss the assembly.**
4. Students will exit quietly by classes as their teachers' names are called.

**Field Trips:**

1. All school rules apply.  
**Guideline: Consequences will be enforced for breaking school rules. If severe misbehavior occurs, students will be required to have a parent accompany them on future trips or they will not be allowed to go on other field trips for the remainder of the school year.**
2. Radios, tape players, MP3's, cell phones and game boys are prohibited by Houston County Board Policy.  
**Guideline: Taken up and given to an administrator. A Parent must pick up items from an administrator.**

**Consequences:**

Minor disciplinary offenses will be handled by the classroom teacher using the school-wide discipline plan. Students are taught school and classroom rules at the beginning of the year. The school-wide plan is reviewed throughout the year especially when students return from school breaks.

Minor Consequences include but are not limited to the following:

1. Warning/Inform Parents; and/or Parent Conference
2. Break Detention
3. Individual Behavior Plan in the classroom
4. Counselor Referral
5. Student Conference with Principal, Assistant Principal
6. Silent Lunch
7. Missing School Activities and functions
8. Time out in another classroom

For students referred to the office, the following consequences will be used. **Please understand the Principal and Assistant Principal reserve the right to increase the level of consequence or decrease the level of consequence depending on the infraction.**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Warning: Conference with Principal/ Assistant Principal  
Parents will be called
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** Parents called  
One Day In-School Suspension (ISS)

In School Suspension (ISS) is a full day away from the regular classroom setting. Students are picked up by the ISS Teacher in their homerooms at the start of the day. Students carry all books and materials needed to complete the same assignments other students are completing in the classroom for the day/days assigned to ISS. Students are supervised by an ISS Teacher and are expected to complete all work assigned by the teacher. Students who do not use their time in ISS to complete assignments could be assigned additional time in the ISS room. Furthermore, students will not report to the lunchroom for lunch. A sack lunch is provided by the Lunchroom Staff for students assigned to ISS.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** Parents called  
Two Days In-School Suspension (ISS)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Parents called  
Three Days ISS
- 5<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Parents called  
One day suspension  
Parent Conference with Administrator, Counselor, and Teacher to discuss Individual Behavior Plan.

When a student is suspended, parents must accompany the student back to school at which time a conference will be held with the Principal, Counselor, and child's Teacher to develop an individual behavior plan and set a behavior goal for improvement.

- 6<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Parents called  
Two days suspension  
Parent Conference with Administrator, Counselor, and Teacher to discuss Individual Behavior Plan.  
Visit to the Alternative School/ or Conference concerning Alternative School Placement
- 7<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Parents called  
Three days suspension  
Parent Conference to discuss Alternative School Program; Completion of Referral to Alternative School Setting.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Automatic Suspension until In-Take meeting is held for placement in Alternative School Setting.  
Placement at the Alternative School lasts in duration from 15-45 days depending upon the severity of discipline infractions.

### **Serious School Offenses:**

Students may be referred to the office for the following reasons:

1. Fighting
2. Blatant Disrespect
3. Refusing to obey direct commands from an adult
4. Continuous disruption to classroom instruction
5. Vandalism to school property
6. Extreme Anger; leaving class without permission

Consequences: Parents will be informed  
In School Suspension for up to 5 days  
Suspension from school for up to 3 days  
Removal from school immediately

### **Major School Offenses:**

Breaking these rules will result in parent notification and consequences as stated:

1. The use, possession or sale of substances that is harmful to self and/or others.  
Consequence: Immediate suspension from school. Police will be notified if illegal substances are involved.
2. Use, possession of dangerous devices with intent to hurt.  
Consequence: Immediate suspension from school. Juvenile authorities may be notified.
3. Fighting, failure to stop/thereby endangering another child or teacher.  
Consequence: Immediate suspension from school for 1 to 5 days and possible placement in the Alternative School.
4. Gross disrespect or anger.  
Consequence: In School Suspension (ISS) and possible suspension from school.
5. Forging Parents', Teachers' or Principal's Name.  
Consequence: ISS, 1 to 3 days.
6. Inappropriate touching with underlying intent.  
Consequence: Referral to Counselor, ISS, and/or Suspension, Possible placement at the Alternative School.
7. Toys are not allowed at school, unless permission is granted by the teacher for a special occasion. This includes electronic toys such as Game Boys, MP3 Players, etc.  
Consequence: The teacher will keep the toy until a parent picks it up. If the toy is not picked up, teachers may return the toy on the last day of school. If the teacher chooses, an electronic device may be turned into the office for safe keeping.
8. Biting and spitting at or on another student or adult will **NOT** be tolerated at Morningside.  
Consequence: 1<sup>st</sup> offense, parents will be called and the student will serve up to three days ISS.  
2nd offense: the parents will be called and the student will be suspended for one to three days.
9. Stealing or attempting to steal any item from school/teacher/other students.  
Consequence: ISS and then Suspension.
10. Violation of Houston County Weapons Policy  
Consequence: Punished according to policy outlined in the Student Handbook. Automatic suspension pending Student Review Meeting and/or assignment to the Alternative School.

## **BUS CONDUCT**

The parents or guardians of students have the responsibility of supervision until such time as the student boards the bus in the morning and after the student leaves 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. The bus driver shall report improper student behavior to the principal or appropriate person.

A student who cannot conduct him/herself properly on a bus may have the 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 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 any other unruly behavior. A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district 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 the bus, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, radios, tape or compact disc players; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication 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.

#### **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 unboarding
5. Inappropriate physical contact (Minor)
6. Excessive noise
7. Unsafe items
8. Eating/drinking on the bus
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.

Disrespect of driver/monitor/administrator

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

The student will 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 a Houston County school system taken away completely. Ultimately, all discipline procedures are at the discretion of the principal and depends 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 at any time.

**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 on the first report if the principal determines the incident warrants suspension.

#### **Suspension Guidelines:**

The Georgia Legislature bases these procedures upon Senate Bill 31. In this bill, where the term “chronic discipline problem” is included, Morningside will define a chronic discipline problem student as one who has been to the office five times.

In cases where student behavior appears to lead toward suspending the student home, Morningside will use the following guidelines:

1<sup>st</sup>, once the student has been identified as a chronic discipline problem, the school will notify the parents either through mail or by telephone that the student’s behavior can no longer be handled through means outlined in this discipline handbook without suspension from school.

2<sup>nd</sup>, the parent may be asked to observe their child in the classroom.

3<sup>rd</sup>, the school may request that at least one parent attends a conference with the teacher and principal/assistant principal to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

For any student returning from any suspension the school will:

1. Request a conference with the parent upon the student’s return to school.
2. Complete a discipline and behavioral correction plan with the parent.
3. Place a notification of the conference in the student’s permanent record and discipline file.
4. Make up all class work and/or tests within one week after the last day of suspension.
5. Refer student to school counselor for individual or small group counseling.

Morningside is a Bully Free Zone. We have no tolerance for bullying. Once we have been notified of a bullying situation, we take swift action. The matter will be investigated. The parents of the child that is being bullied will be notified and the parents of the child who is accused of bullying will be notified. Please read the definition of bullying below:

**As defined in Georgia law, bullying 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**

# HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS System Handbook



## 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 2014-2015

July 31	Thursday	First Day of School
September 1	Monday	HOLIDAY - Labor Day
October 6-9	Monday-Thursday	HOLIDAY - Fall Break
October 10	Friday	HOLIDAY- Columbus Day
October 13	Monday	HOLIDAY-Students/In-service for Staff
November 11	Tuesday	HOLIDAY - Veterans Day
November 24-28	Monday-Friday	HOLIDAY - Thanksgiving
December 19	Friday	Last day before Holidays
December 22- January 2		HOLIDAY - Christmas Holiday
January 5	Monday	HOLIDAY - Students/Staff Work Day
January 6	Tuesday	Second Semester Begins
January 19	Monday	HOLIDAY - Martin Luther King
February 16	Monday	HOLIDAY - President's Day
February 17	Tuesday	HOLIDAY - Students/In-service for Staff
March 30 - April 3	Monday-Friday	SPRING BREAK
May 22	Friday	Last Day of School/Report Cards

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT CARD DATES

Nine Weeks Period	End Date	Date Report Issued
Progress Report, Day 22	August 29	September 3
1 <sup>st</sup> 9 weeks, Day 45	October 2	October 16
Progress report, Day 67	November 12	November 14
2 <sup>nd</sup> 9 weeks, Day 89	December 19	January 9
Progress report, Day 111	February 5	February 9
3 <sup>rd</sup> 9 weeks, Day 135	March 13	March 20
Progress Report, Day 157	April 21	April 23
4 <sup>th</sup> 9 weeks, Day 180	May 22	May 22

## 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. If a child shows signs of illness, he/she should not be sent to school. When a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be notified just as in the case of an accident. Also, if a child comes to school with an unidentified rash, the parent may be requested to seek medical approval for the child to attend school. Parents will also be contacted in cases of children soiling their clothes at school through accidents such as vomiting, urinating, or defecation.

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

### When to Keep Your Child Home

The goal of the Houston County School System's Health Related Services program is to appraise, protect, and promote the health of students. Preventive and emergency school-based health services are provided to public school children in grades Pre- Kindergarten through Twelfth. The nursing team provides "Best Practice" strategies that strive to identify health related concerns that influence learning, eliminate barriers and increase attendance.

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.

KEEP A CHILD HOME, if she/he:

1. Has had a fever\* in the past 24 hours
2. Has a fever\* of 100 degrees or higher
3. Is nauseous and/or vomiting and/or has diarrhea
4. Has been exposed to a contagious disease and is exhibiting signs/symptoms of the disease
5. Has skin conditions or rashes, such as scabies or viral illness such as chicken pox. Poison oak, ivy or sumac also can cause a rash with severe itching or pain. 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.

*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. Do NOT give your child aspirin or any aspirin product. A high occurrence of Reyes syndrome has been 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. School personnel must be informed by a written note from the parent directing that medication be given to the student at school. Specific information regarding medicine, dosage, and time to be given must be clearly stated.
2. Medication forms (HRS 29) are available to be filled out by the physician and parent in cases of long-term medication (more than two weeks).
3. All medication must be presented to the school office in a prescription labeled bottle, which will include student's name, date, instructions for administering, name of drug, and name of issuing physician.

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 and accompanied by written parental request and directions for administering. (Form HRS 29C)

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), 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.

### 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.**

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.

**How do I know if we have head lice?**

- A few people will get an itchy scalp. Nits or eggs may be found close to the scalp and are hard to remove. Live crawling lice can be found throughout the scalp.
- The scalp will itch for many reasons AND for weeks after detection.
- Black specks may be found on the pillowcase (this is called the droppings).
- Some people have no symptoms at all
- Once lice are found on a student's head the child has had lice infestation for at least 7-10 days.

If your child is found to have active crawling head lice, you will be called to pick him/her up.

A letter will be sent home with these directions:

1. Inspect each member of your family daily for 3 weeks (then routinely once a week). Look closely at the scalp and you will see small, yellowish-tan nits (eggs) firmly attached to the hair shaft. They are not easily removed.
2. Treat each member infested (DO NOT treat unless there are live, crawling lice or eggs present; treatment WILL NOT prevent head lice). Several safe products are on the market. When used as directed, these products will kill the lice. REMOVAL of ALL nits (eggs) is the only way to stop the repeated problem.
3. ALL personal clothing, bed linen, towels, combs, and brushes must be washed in hot water with a strong detergent.

4. Items unable to be washed should be vacuumed (mattresses, furniture, carpets, stuffed animals).
5. A repeat shampoo treatment with the medicated product should be done 7-10 days after the first shampooing was done. This will kill any hatched eggs that were not killed or removed during the first treatment.

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 have a medically diagnosed physical condition which restricts them to their home or a hospital for a period of time which will significantly interfere with their education. A medical referral form shall be completed by a licensed medical physician. 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.

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, etc...

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.**

Only students who have excused absences may make up work or tests missed. 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.

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 for approval. The principal will send the form to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services for processing. You will then receive a confirmation letter from the Student Services office.

### 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 who move from one attendance zone to another during the school year may delay withdrawal until the end of the school year. Parents must provide transportation to and from the new school. It is very important that students arrive on time and are picked up on time. If tardiness becomes an issue, the out-of-zone permission will be revoked and the students will be required to transfer to their zoned school. In such cases, the parents must complete an out-of-zone application at the time of the address change. However, if school personnel determine that a parent or guardian has 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 day of the grading period. The child shall be required to attend the school in the attendance zone in which the parent resides.

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

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. The bus driver shall report improper student behavior to the principal or appropriate person.

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 the bus, including but not limited to cell phones, MP 3 players, pagers, radios, tape or compact disc players; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication 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.

Minor Offenses

12. Failure to remain seated
13. Refusing to obey driver/monitor
14. Throwing objects on the bus
15. Improper/dangerous conduct boarding or unboarding
16. Inappropriate physical contact (Minor)
17. Excessive noise
18. Unsafe items
19. Eating/drinking
20. Discarding trash
21. Extending objects outside window
22. 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.

5. Disrespect of driver/monitor/administrator
6. Fighting
7. Severe vandalism - restitution required
8. Possession of tobacco
9. Inappropriate physical contact (Major)

The student will 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 a Houston County 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 anytime 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. During the 2013-2014 school year, Bring Your Own Device, BYOD, was piloted 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.

### **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*

Any parent that moves (changes address) within Houston County during the school year must go to the Central Registration Office and show two proofs of address for the new residence (**one must be a mortgage statement or lease agreement**).

### **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.

### 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.

## 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 {Code of Conduct, Policy JCD}. Please take time to read the Code of Conduct and discuss it with your children.

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.

### *Weapons Policy - 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.

In a case of simple possession without intent to harm or threat, the student is 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).

Any instance involving the possession of a weapon must be reported to the Executive Director for Elementary School Operations.

The term "weapon" means and includes:

- Any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind
- Any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, or other knife (2 inch blade or longer)
- Straight-edge razor or razor blade
- Spring stick, metal knucks, blackjack or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way as to allow them to swing freely which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku shuriker or fighting chain
- Any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or Oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind
- Any stun gun or taser
- Toy weapons that are considered by the principal to be realistic
- Ammunition, bullets, or any objects which may explode upon impact
- Any objects that are considered by the school administration as weapons
- Any objects used as a weapon to cause injury or cause harm to another.

### *Possession/Use of Drugs/Alcohol/Weapons*

- a. Sale of drugs or alcohol on school property or at school related activities: The appropriate law enforcement agency is notified. The parent or guardian is notified. The student is to be immediately suspended and disciplined accordingly.

- b. **Possession or use of drugs or alcohol:** notify law enforcement and parents or guardian; suspension to home and refer to Student Review Committee.
- c. **Possession or use of weapons:** Notify parents or guardians; suspension to home and refer to Student Review Committee.

### 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 will 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.

Our system has a no tolerance policy regarding weapons on school campuses. Students in possession of a weapon at school or other dangerous objects as determined by the principal will 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 is 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 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, once in September and again in March.) When schools have been placed on a true 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
Hepatitis B Vaccination	30 days
Ear, Eye, Dental Screening (Georgia Form 3300)	At enrollment
Guardianship Papers (if student does not live with natural parents)	At enrollment
Records from Previous School (attendance, transcript, behavior) (Central Registration will make a direct request to the previous school, but the responsibility rests with the parent)	30 days
Proof of Residence (A completed mortgage/closing statement or lease agreement AND Utility start services at new address: electric/gas/water Stop services at prior address: (from in State or in-county only)	At enrollment
Social Security Number or Waiver or an Application for Social Security Number	At enrollment
Medical Information which will impact instruction	At enrollment

NOTE: Parents who object to the state immunization policy for religious reasons may complete a notarized waiver.

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 Human Resources. 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.

### Sixth Grade Requirement

All currently enrolled children entering sixth grade on or after July 1, 2007, must meet the following requirements:

1. Two doses of Measles vaccine, two doses of Mumps vaccine, one dose of Rubella vaccine, or laboratory proof of immunity against each of these three diseases.
2. Two doses of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or documentation of disease or laboratory proof of immunity. At the time your child entered school, only one dose of this vaccine was required.

For more information about Georgia's immunization program or the immunization requirements for school entry and attendance, please click on the following link to the Georgia Department of Human Resources:  
[health.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/index.asp](http://health.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/index.asp).

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 one 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.

### 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** - a student 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) (GA BOE160-4-2-.38).

**Differentiated Curriculum** - courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students. (GA BOE)

#### 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.

#### Initial 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 standardized test of mental ability and score  $\geq$  the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a standardized achievement test 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 nationally normed test and either have observational data collected on his or her performance, or produce a superior product.

Information shall be collected in each of the four data categories for all students who are referred for gifted program evaluation. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category.

3. Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be current within two-calendar years.
4. Students who are eligible for placement may enter gifted classes at the beginning of the next school year.

#### 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, and 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 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 ACHIEVEMENT

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 SKILLS AND BEHAVIOR

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 anytime 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.

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.

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 Card

Nine Weeks Period	End Date	Date Report Issued
Progress Report, Day 22	August 29	September 3
1 <sup>st</sup> 9 weeks, Day 45	October 2	October 16
Progress report, Day 67	November 12	November 14
2 <sup>nd</sup> 9 weeks, Day 89	December 19	January 9
Progress report, Day 111	February 5	February 9
3 <sup>rd</sup> 9 weeks, Day 135	March 13	March 20
Progress Report, Day 157	April 21	April 23
4 <sup>th</sup> 9 weeks, Day 180	May 22	May 22

## 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. Information sheets will be sent home through the students. 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 PROCEDURES**

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 found in the front of this handbook. 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/media materials could also result in the withholding of report cards, etc, at the end of school year 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 each semester, all articles remaining in the lost and found collection 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

All students are encouraged to eat a well-balanced meal each day at school. Lunch and breakfast will be served daily at each school. The cost to students is \$2.25 per day for lunch and \$1.50 per day for breakfast. Free and/or reduced meals are available to qualifying students. Reduced prices are \$.40 per day for lunch and \$.30 per day for breakfast. All students will be given information regarding free and/or reduced meals during the first days of school. To apply for free and/or reduced meals, parents must complete an application for each child immediately after receiving the application. A new application must be completed at the beginning of each school year. To see if your family qualifies for free or reduced priced meals apply online at [www.schoollunchapp.com](http://www.schoollunchapp.com).

Parents are encouraged to pay for student meals by the week or month. Money will be collected in the lunchroom daily by the lunchroom staff but credit will be given for advance payment. **All checks should be made payable to HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL NUTRITION.** Students may not "charge" for breakfast. . Please write your child's

assigned number on the check or write it on the envelope if cash is sent. You can also pay online at [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com). Students may bring a lunch and purchase milk. (Price for milk is 50 cents)

Students will be given milk to drink as part of their lunch in the lunchroom unless a doctor's statement is provided. Juice and *Juicy Juice* will be available for an additional charge. No carbonated drinks or drinks in glass bottles shall be brought to school.

*School Breakfast and Lunch Information*

PRICES	REDUCED	STUDENT	ADULT	ADULT (VISITOR)
BREAKFAST	\$.30	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75
LUNCH	\$.40	\$2.25	\$3.00	\$3.00

**Ala Carte Items:** Cannot be pre-paid or charged. This item must be paid for during lunch. (Schools have a price list for ala carte items).

*Pre-payment Schedule*

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.

MONTH	BREAKFAST		LUNCH	
	REDUCED	FULL-PAID	REDUCED	FULL-PAID
July (1 day)	\$.30	\$1.50	\$.40	\$2.25
August (21 days)	\$6.30	\$31.50	\$8.40	\$47.25
September (21days)	\$6.30	\$31.50	\$8.40	\$47.25
October (17 days)	\$5.10	\$25.50	\$6.80	\$38.25
November (14 days)	\$4.20	\$21.00	\$5.60	\$31.50
December (15 days)	\$4.50	\$22.50	\$6.00	\$33.75
January (18 days)	\$5.40	\$27.00	\$7.20	\$40.50
February (18 days)	\$5.40	\$27.00	\$7.20	\$40.50
March (20 days)	\$6.00	\$30.00	\$8.00	\$45.00
April (19 days)	\$5.70	\$28.50	\$7.60	\$42.75
May (16 days)	\$4.80	\$24.00	\$6.40	\$36.00
<b>TOTAL (180 days)</b>	<u>\$54.00</u>	<u>\$270.00</u>	<u>\$72.00</u>	<u>\$405.00</u>

*Policy on Charging Lunch*

Charges will be limited to \$10 per student. 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 or other arrangements are made.

If you choose to send your child with a packed lunch from home, please do not send in foods that need to be warmed up. We do not have the personnel to help with the numbers of children who would need assistance. **Only send in foods that are ready to eat.**

## **MONEY**

It is recommended that students only bring enough money to school for daily purchases. For example, breakfast and lunch monies, school pictures, etc.

## **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 promotion/retention decision. The request must be in writing and submitted to the principal within five (5) calendar days of the last day of the school year. A Promotion/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.

### **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. 10605  
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.

## **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.

## **SECTION 504/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 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, Director of Student Services  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069-1850  
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 31069-1850  
(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.

## **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.

## **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 478-929-7801 Ext. 48803.

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 written 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://archives.gadoe.org/\\_documents/ci\\_exceptional/New%20Sp%20Ed%20Sample%20Forms/Quick\\_Guide\\_to\\_IEP.pdf](http://archives.gadoe.org/_documents/ci_exceptional/New%20Sp%20Ed%20Sample%20Forms/Quick_Guide_to_IEP.pdf)

If you would like a further explanation of any of this information, you may contact, Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Director of Student Services, at the Houston County School System, at (478) 988-6216, or by email at [zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net](mailto:zabrina.cannady@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.glrs.org](http://www.glrs.org).

#### **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 only 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 via email, 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.

## **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 Superintendent of Schools by filing a written request to meet with the Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee. The complaint should be mailed to:

*Dr. Mark Scott, Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069-1850*

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 SUPPORT TEAM (SST)**

All public school systems in Georgia must have a Student Team Process. The Student Support Team is a building level-problem solving committee consisting of three or more individuals working together to address the needs of students. Our Student Support Team Process is consistent with Response to Intervention (RTI): Georgia's Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions.

The Pyramid of Intervention represents the process of continually monitoring student learning and using evaluation results to guide instruction. Georgia's Pyramid of Intervention currently utilizes a 4 Tier model with SST being the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tier of the Pyramid. SST is open to all students (K-12) who have learning and/or behavior problems, and are not making sufficient progress through the Pyramid of Interventions. Monitoring student progress enables educators to determine if interventions are increasing their skills as expected, or if they need additional instructional interventions to enable them to maximize academic success. Parents should be invited to participate in all SST meetings and in the development of intervention strategies. SST is a regular education function and strategies are implemented by the classroom teacher or by other individuals identified by the Student Support Team. Referrals to other system services can also be the result of the SST Process.

## 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).

A testing schedule for the 2014-2015 school year is printed below. Parents who have questions about the testing program are encouraged to arrange a conference with the homeroom teacher or the school test coordinator.

### TESTING SCHEDULE FOR 2014-2015

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TEST</u>	<u>GRADE</u>
August	Student Learning Objective Pre-Assessments	
August 4 - May 8	GKIDS	K
Sept. 2 - March 27	GAA Main Administration	
October 20 - 22	ITBS	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Jan. 20 - March 3	ACCESS for ELs	
April 13 - 17	Georgia Milestones Main Administration	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 20-23	Georgia Milestones	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> Make-up
May	Student Learning Objective Post-Assessments	

## 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 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.<sup>1</sup> At his/her discretion, the principal may confer with persons having knowledge of the incident that precipitated the grievance. (\*1)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. (\*4) 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 (\*3) 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. (\*2) 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:

Assistant Superintendent of School Operations, Title IX Coordinator  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069-1850  
Phone: (478) 988-6200  
Fax: (478) 218-7517

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.

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<sup>1</sup> Parties have the right to end the informal process and begin a formal process at any time.

### 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 31069-1850  
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. Such 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

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: JCD

STUDENTS - CODE OF CONDUCT

Adopted: 06/13/06

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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 school property 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. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

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
- Isolation or Time Out
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Probation
- 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 may result in suspension up to two full semesters.**
- **Possession, distribution, attempted sale or sale of substances represented as drugs or alcohol shall be subject to a minimum suspension of one full semester.**
- **Possession, sale, attempted sale, distribution, or being under the influence of a prescription or over the counter drug.**
- **Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous instrument as provided for in Code Section 16-11-127.1: A student shall not possess, use, handle, or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon. Students who possess firearms on campus will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year suspension and will be referred to law enforcement officials.**
- **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 an 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: Expulsion for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public schools for acts of physical violence found by a tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact which causes physical harm to another unless such physical contact or physical harm was in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Code Section 16-3-21; or the Board may authorize the student to attend alternative school for the period of the expulsion; provided, however, that if such student is in kindergarten through grade six, then the Board upon the recommendation of the tribunal may permit the student to re-enroll in regular programs for grades 9 through 12; and provided further that if the Board does not operate an alternative education program for grades kindergarten through grade six, then the Board may permit the student in kindergarten through grade six who commits such an act to re-enroll in the public school system. The student shall be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior.

(2) Possible punishments may include expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension for students found by a tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another.

- 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: First Offense-3 days ISS; Second Offense-5 days ISS; Third Offense-Long-term Suspension.
- 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 shall at a minimum be suspended with the opportunity to apply to an alternative school.
- 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 during the instructional day of cell phone or electronic communication device, except for health or other reasons approved by an administrator.
- Inappropriate public displays of affection
- Gambling or possession of gambling devices
- Moving and non-moving driving 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.

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

**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.

**Probation:** That period of time during which a student is allowed to continue or resume his education in the Houston County School District under the terms and conditions imposed by an administrator, disciplinary tribunal or Board of Education; or during a period of enrollment immediately following long-term suspension or expulsion or confinement in an institutional facility such as jail, detention facility, and Youth Detention Center. Any student on probation shall not violate school rules during the period of probation and shall be placed on a behavior contract with his or her school.

Any student on probation who violates school rules shall be subject to discipline for the offense of “violation of probation” and be subject to discipline with consequences ranging from In-School Suspension up to and including expulsion at the discretion of the building principal.

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

**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, 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/sexual harassment; 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, including but not limited to cell phones; pagers; audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device 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. These resources include Student Support Teams, school counselors, chronic disciplinary problem student plans.

## **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 communication 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 email, 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.

REVISED: 7/22/02; 8/10/04; 6/13/06



DR. MARK SCOTT  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

BOARD MEMBERS  
DR. MARIANNE MELNICK, CHAIRMAN

FRED WILSON, VICE CHAIRMAN  
DR. RICK UNRUH  
JIM MADDOX

SKIP DAWKINS  
HELEN HUGHES

## 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 31, 2014

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 Jennifer Birdsong, Director of Federal Programs, at the Houston County Board of Education at (478)988-6200 ext. 10396 or at email [jennifer.birdsong@hcbe.net](mailto:jennifer.birdsong@hcbe.net).

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

Sincerely,

Jennifer J. Birdsong  
Director of Federal Programs

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



DR. MARK SCOTT  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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## ANNUAL PARENT NOTICE Highly Qualified Status

July 31, 2014

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 child's school or Jennifer Birdsong, Director of Federal Programs, at the Houston County Board of Education, (478)988-6200 ext. 10396, or by e-mail at [jennifer.birdsong@hcbe.net](mailto:jennifer.birdsong@hcbe.net).

Sincerely,

Jennifer J. Birdsong  
Director of Federal Programs

**P.O. Box 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069**  
**(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259**  
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## **FITNESSGRAM ASSESSMENT**

July 31, 2014

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,

Ronald Wilson  
Director, Special Programs

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

# SCHOOL CLUB LISTING

## Morningside Elementary 2014-2015

Morningside Elementary has a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs for students to participate in throughout the school year. We encourage our students to find activities they are interested in and become involved in extra-curricular activities. What we know is, students who participate in extracurricular activities achieve and perform better in school. These clubs provide an opportunity for students to experience learning beyond the regular school day. Clubs also develop strong Leadership skills.

Parents must provide transportation home after club meetings/activities and students must have parent permission to participate in all clubs. Students will receive club applications to include parent permission; club meeting times and information from the individual club sponsors during the first weeks of school.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Art Club  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Brittney Allen  
**Membership Requirement:** Must be a 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade student in good academic/behavioral standing in accordance with student handbook - Student must keep a C average in all school subjects and have no office referrals (this will result in probation or suspension from club)  
**Financial Obligations/Dues:** To be Determined  
**Mission/Purpose:** To introduce and develop more complex art skills from different cultures. To find expand their area of expertise.  
**Planned Activities:** Students will collaborate and help with designing interior aesthetics for the school, participate in art competitions, and host art shows.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Girls Etiquette Club  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Brittney Allen  
**Membership Requirement:** Must be 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade/ Invitation by faculty  
**Financial Obligations/Dues:** To be Determined  
**Mission/Purpose:** Girls will be provided with an enriched environment of sisterhood to help them embrace self-confidence, leadership roles, and etiquette to build skills to last a lifetime.  
**Planned Activities:** Girls will develop a hospitality committee to connect themselves to the school and community. Practice public speaking, learning practical life skills, develop healthy relationships, learn to resolve conflicts, and inspire younger girls the school.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Drum Club  
**Club Descriptions:** Students will be given instruction on the correct techniques for playing African drum ensembles. Students will perform for the school and for the public.  
**Faculty Sponsor/ Contact:** Music Teacher  
**Grade Level:** 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Only the first 24 students who return their permission forms will be accepted due to limited instruments.  
**When:** TBA  
**Where:** The Music Room  
Students will remain in their classrooms after school until they are dismissed to come to the music room.  
Students are to be picked up behind the school, near the gym, exactly at 5:00.  
**Financial Obligations:** Students will be required to buy a Drum Club t-shirt and to participate in various fund raising events (car washes) to help buy the drums.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Morningside Melody Chorus  
**Club Description:** This chorus is designed to help students appreciate music and develop choral abilities. It is open to all fourth and fifth graders.  
**Club Sponsor:** Music Teacher  
**Club Criteria:** Maintain passing grades; C or above in all Academic Subjects; superior school- wide behavior; No ISS

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

**Number of Students:** Not limited

**Financial Obligations/dues, if any:** \$6.00 for Chorus T-shirt

**Planned Activities:** Chorus members may participate in a variety of activities, such as singing at the mall, performing for the school, Christmas Concert, Christmas Performance at Warner Robins Mall and Perry Hospital; and a Spring Concert.

**Name of Club/Organization:** **Morningside Memory Makers**

**Club Description:** This club's mission & purpose is to create the school's yearbook each year.

**Club Sponsors:** TBA

**Club Criteria:** Maintain "B" Average each 9 weeks; Citizenship in good standing; No ISS.

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students

**Number of Students:** 12 students; 6 4th Grade Students; 6 5th Grade Students

**Financial Obligations/dues, if any:** \$10.00 for T-Shirt and End of Year Celebration.

**Planned Activities:** Students will take pictures of school life, create yearbook pages, and sell yearbooks to students and faculty.

**Name of Club/Organization:** **Game Board Club**

**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Erika Boone and Crystal Howard

**Membership Requirement:** 1st – 5<sup>th</sup> grades, maintain a "C" average, no discipline issues

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** \$5

**Mission/Purpose:** Students learn how to play various board games to develop higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and strategic thinking skills.

**Planned Activities:** Students meet bi-weekly to participate in classic board games, challenging brain teasers, and puzzles.

**Name of Club/Organization:** **Panther Pals**

**Club Description:** Panther Pals act as ambassadors for the school. Club members introduce new students to the school and escort visitors through the building.

**Club Sponsor:** Holly Havard, Counselor

**Club Criteria:** Good Behavior; No ISS; Leadership Qualities

**Grade Level:** 2 students from each Homeroom; One boy and one girl

**Financial Obligations/dues, if any:** None

**Planned Activities:** New student orientation; possible selling of Shamrocks for the March of Dimes; Support Relay for Life.

**Name of Club/Organization:** **Junior Master Gardeners**

**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Kay Miller

**Membership Requirement:** 4th and 5th grade students (5th grade students are given priority over 4th. Total membership will be 12 students)

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** \$20.00; one-time fee

**Mission/Purpose:** To promote knowledge of gardening and conservation. Students will work on the gardens and landscaping around the school.

**Planned Activities:** TBA

**Name of Club/Organization:** **4-H**

**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Kay Miller

**Membership Requirement:** 4th and 5th grade student (no limit on members)

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** None

**Mission/Purpose:** Teaches awareness of community and good citizenship. 4-H assists youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable students to become contributing members of society.

**Planned Activities:** Students are eligible to participate in a number of activities through the 4-H office/annex outside of school. Students experience hands on learning experiences focused on agricultural & environmental issues, leadership, communication skills, food & nutrition, health, energy conservation & citizenship.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Shelf Elves  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Brooke Herndon (Media Specialist)

**Membership Requirement:** Students must be in the fifth grade. Students must have passing grades and good behavior (no discipline referrals resulting in ISS).

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** T-shirt Money if shirt is desired

**Mission/Purpose:** Students will assist the Media Specialist in re-shelving books and resources in the Media Center. Students will also assist with processing of new materials.

**Planned Activities:** Students will meet in the library each morning between 8 and 8:10. They will assist the media specialist with daily library duties.

**Name of Club/Organization:** MSES TV  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Brooke Herndon

**Membership Requirement:** Students must be in the fifth grade. Students must have passing grades and good behavior. Students must also have strong writing and public speaking skills.

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** \$15

**Mission/Purpose:** Students will write and produce a weekly school news broadcast.

**Planned Activities:** 2 possibly 3 meetings per week to produce and record the newscast. Meetings may be a combination of before and after school meetings.

**Name of Club/Organization:** MSES Perpetual Cheer Club  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** April Burrough and Katrina West

**Membership Requirement:** Perpetual Cheer Squad is for grades 3-5th. Perpetual Members must maintain a "B" or better in all academics and satisfactory behavior. Perpetual Members must attend all practices and performances unless absences are approved by one of the sponsors.

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** There are no dues requirements; however, each member is expected to participate along with their parents in fundraisers. In addition, parents are responsible for the cost of the uniforms, which are chosen by coaches, cheer members and parents. Uniforms are not ordered until a survey is sent home and all parties are in agreement with the uniform choice.

**Purpose:** It is the purpose of the Perpetual Cheer Squad to become ambassadors for Morningside Elementary School. These students are proactive leaders who think win-win and begin with the end in mind at public appearances and in a school setting.

**Planned Activities:** Perpetual members must be responsible for coming to performances prepared with assigned costumes, props, and accessories. Planned activities include performing for school functions as well as after school and community planned activities.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Jump Rope Club  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Amy Hutchinson

**Membership Requirement:** Must be a 2nd-5th grade student in good academic/behavioral standing in accordance with student handbook - Student must keep a C average in all school subjects and have no office referrals (this will result in probation or suspension from club)

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** \$25 per student for uniform, etc.

**Mission/Purpose:** To promote health of our students through cardio activity and build teamwork skills by working together on routines that are exciting and fun!

**Planned Activities:** Participation in Fall Festival, 3-4 performances throughout the school year at school-wide events (concerts, awards assemblies, pep rallies) and performances/appearances at community festivals such as the Dogwood Festival, Sacred Heart Fall Festival, and the Christmas parade.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Morningside Postal Service  
**Faculty Sponsor/Contac:** Stephanie Rosato

**Grades:** 4th and 5th Grade Students

**Meetings:** TBA

**Mission/ Purpose:** Students are encouraged to write letters to other students, teachers, and administrators. Members of this club will sort and deliver mail.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Nutrition Advisory Council

**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Keysha King and Donna Stewart

**Grades:** 2nd through 5th Grade Students

**Meetings:** Twice monthly from 3:30-5:00

**Mission/Purpose:** the goal of the Morningside Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) is to promote wellness and to teach how good nutrition directly corresponds to positive attitudes, positive self-esteem, and improved test scores.

**Planned Activities:** Through various activities, the members of the team will have the opportunity to participate in various workouts, plan/sample nutrition meals, and learn to be in control of their own eating habits.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Panther Pals

**Club Description:** Panther Pals act as ambassadors for the school. Club members introduce new students to the school and escort visitors through the building.

**Club Sponsor:** Holly Torok, Counselor

**Club Criteria:** Good Behavior; No ISS; Leadership Qualities

**Grade Level:** 2 students from each Homeroom; One boy and one girl

**Financial Obligations/dues, if any:** None

**Planned Activities:** New student orientation; possible selling of Shamrocks for the March of Dimes; Support Relay for Life.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Panthers Pounding the Pavement: Running Club

**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** T. Sowell

**Grades:** 2nd through 5th grades

**Membership Requirement:** Passing Grades and No Office Referrals for Behavior

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** None

**Mission/Purpose:** To generate an interest in running as a form of exercise and recreation; to teach students proper form and preparedness for running; to use running as a means of exerting energy and improving a healthy lifestyle.

**Planned Activities:** Weekly morning (before school) work-outs and runs; participation in local run/walk events; sponsorship of fund-raising run for students, parents, and community.

**Name of Club/Organization:** Student Council

**Club Description:** Student Council promotes school and community involvement. Members develop teamwork, leadership and management skills that benefit them through all areas of life.

**Club Sponsors:** Holly Torok, Counselor; Madonna Birdsell, 3rd Grade Teacher

**Club Criteria:** Must maintain a B Average, good behavior, No ISS, exhibit leadership qualities at all times.

**Grade Level:** 4th and 5th Grade Students

**Number of Students:** 25-30 students

**Financial Obligations/dues, if any:** None

**Planned Activities:** Fall Social, Valentine Social Spring Social (Grades 2-3), Car washes, Fundraising Activities, Animal Shelter Food Drive.

**Name of Club/Organization:** S.W.A.T. – Students Working to Advance Technology

**Faculty Sponsor/Contact:** Brooke Herndon

**Membership Requirement:** 4th or 5th graders. Members must maintain a “B” or better average in all academics and satisfactory behavior while in attendance at Morningside Elementary School.

**Financial Obligations/Dues:** Money to purchase a t-shirt to be determined.

**Mission/Purpose:** To advance technology at MSES through service and projects.

**Planned Activities:** Members will become tech trainers, troubleshooters, work with graphic design, video production, and presentation.