



2008-2009 Middle School Handbook

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HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT



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

***David Carpenter
Superintendent of Schools***

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THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Students between the ages of 12-15 are undergoing many changes -- physical changes, social changes, emotional changes, and mental changes. The middle school recognizes these changes and provides a curriculum and a climate for students to move more easily from the elementary school to the high school. The subjects students learn are divided into two categories -- basic academic subjects and exploratory subjects.

The basic academic subjects are language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. These subjects are taught in an academic block of time by a team of teachers. Students are assigned to a team for the school year. The teachers know the students and their capabilities and provide learning activities to meet the needs of the students on the team.

Students also take two exploratory subjects/connection blocks each nine weeks. The exploratory connection blocks give students an introduction to subjects they may wish to take in high school, help students begin looking at careers, or assist students in developing life and learning skills. Students will explore foreign languages, health and physical education, career/technology education, fine arts, and personal learning skills.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Students should not arrive on campus more than 30 minutes before the first bell and should leave campus not later than 30 minutes after the last bell unless participating in a school-supervised activity approved by the principal or designee of the principal.

ATTENDANCE

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR PROMOTION TO THE NEXT GRADE, STUDENTS IN GRADES K-8 ARE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE 95 PERCENT ATTENDANCE. STUDENTS WHO ACHIEVE 90-94 PERCENT ATTENDANCE MAY BE PROMOTED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL IF:

- All absences are justified and validated as set forth in policy JBD
- Circumstances warrant
- All work is completed satisfactorily in a timely manner
- Academic achievement meets requirements for promotion

Students who achieve less than 90 percent attendance will not be promoted to the next grade. Parents of students affected by this rule may request a review of the circumstances. THIS REQUEST MUST BE MADE IN WRITING TO THE PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL NOT LATER THAN FIVE (5) DAYS AFTER THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR. APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION SHOULD ACCOMPANY THE REQUEST. THE MATTER WILL BE ADJUDICATED AS OUTLINED IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROCEDURES MANUAL.

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 including unexcused tardies and early dismissals. School staff will contact parents and document the contact. Contacts may consist of e-mail, phone call, or teacher notification form.

Level II

Five (5) unexcused absences including unexcused tardies and early dismissals. 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 including unexcused tardies and early dismissals. School staff notifies Social Services Department; Social Services provides data to the court for judicial proceedings to begin.

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia having control or charge of a child or children and 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.

Non-Compliant Student - Driver License Suspension

A minor's permit or driver's license will be suspended or application for a permit or license will be denied for ONE FULL YEAR or until age 18 if the minor:

- (a) Has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for 10 consecutive school days;
- (b) Has more than ten (10) school days of **unexcused** absences in the current academic year or ten (10) or more school days of **unexcused** absences in the previous academic year;
- (c) Has been suspended from school for:
 - 1. Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel.
 - 2. Possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school sponsored event.
 - 3. Possession or use of a weapon on school property or at a school sponsored event.
 - 4. Any sexual offense prohibited under Chapter 6 of Title 16 or
 - 5. Causing substantial physical or visible bodily harm to or seriously disfiguring another person, including another student.

The Department of Driver Services (DDS) will notify the licensee (student) by certified mail, return receipt requested, that a *Certificate of Non-Compliance* has been received, and that his or her instruction permit or driver's license is suspended.

Upon receiving the *Certificate of Non-Compliance*, the minor may request in writing a hearing within ten business days from the date of receipt. Within 30 days after receiving a written request for a hearing the Department of Driver Services (DDS) shall hold a hearing as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 50, the 'Georgia Administrative Procurement Act.'"

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
3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including preinduction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, 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 following 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 the absence
4. Signature of parent or guardian

Upon returning to school, students should make up work missed within five (5) school days.

It is expected that each student will be regular in school attendance and be on time each day to class. Students who are absent from school may not participate in any extracurricular activity the day or night of the absence.

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

To receive an award for Perfect Attendance, a student may not be absent nor tardy, nor may he/she be dismissed before the end of the instructional day.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

For reporting daily attendance, a student must attend for at least one-half of the instructional day before the student can be counted as present. At the high school level, attendance shall be counted on a class-by-class basis. **Three (3) unexcused tardies and/or three (3) unexcused early dismissals shall be counted as an unexcused absence.**

1. When a pupil is denied bus transportation due to misconduct, his absence from school is not excused. The parent or guardian shall be expected to provide transportation during the time the pupil is excluded from the bus.
2. No pupil shall be allowed to be absent from school during the regular session to take private music, drawing, dancing, or other lessons.
3. A pupil shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during school hours, other than for illness or other providential cause, without written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official, nor shall any student encourage, urge, or counsel other students to violate this rule.
4. According to law, students under 16 years of age must be admitted at any time, but with the understanding that credit is not automatic. Students residing in Houston County, but who fail to enroll during the first 15 days of a semester will not be admitted until the next semester begins if they are 16 years of age or older.

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 must be given to the principal for approval.

ATTENDANCE ZONES

Students must attend the school in the attendance zone in which they live. The school may request proof of residence. If either of the natural parents lives in Houston County, the student must attend the school in which the residence of the natural parent is located without regard to whether the student lives with the parent or guardian.

Unsafe School Choice Option

If a student is a victim of a Violent Criminal Offense (as stated in 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 made adequate yearly progress and 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.

BEGINNING AND ENDING SCHOOL TIMES

School begins at **7:30 a.m.**

School ends at **2:45 p.m.**

Any student arriving after 7:30 a.m. will be considered tardy to school. Leaving school before 2:45 p.m. will be considered an early dismissal.

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 BAGS

A student's book bag must be placed in the locker upon arrival at school. It is not to be taken out until the end of the day. It must be small enough to fit in the locker. There should be no writing on book bags except the student's name.

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 bring students who do not conduct themselves properly on a bus to the attention of the principal. 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, 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 must be held to form a school bus behavior contract whenever:

1. A student is found to have engaged in bullying; 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
6. Excessive noise
7. Unsafe items
8. No eating/drinking
9. Discarding trash
10. Extending objects outside window
11. Other disruptive behavior

Consequences for Infractions of Bus Conduct

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 with the school official, parent, and driver. Suspension from the bus for a minimum of 3 days will follow if the parent fails to attend the conference. A contract will be executed between student, parents, and school.

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

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

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

A student may be suspended from the bus for 1-10 days on the first report if the principal determines the incident warrants suspension.

Major Offenses

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

1. Disrespect of driver/monitor/administrator
2. Fighting
3. Severe vandalism - restitution required
4. Possession of tobacco

For the following offenses, Houston County Board of Education policy will be followed:

1. Possession/Use of Tobacco

- a. 1st referral = 3 days ISS
- b. 2nd referral = 5 days ISS
- c. 3rd referral = Student Review Committee

2. 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 recommended for expulsion.
- 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 law enforcement and parents or guardian; suspension to home and refer to Student Review Committee.

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.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The Houston County School System has an automated, emergency calling system 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. The Crisis Communication System 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.**

DISCIPLINE

Code of Conduct

It is the purpose of the Houston County School District to operate each school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education 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 requires 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 and referred to in this Code of Conduct.

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, 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.

The Houston County Board of Education believes that all students should recognize the consequences of their conduct. This refers to their actions toward each other, to their language, to their dress, and to their manners. All student behavior shall be based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students need to see that they benefit from an orderly school operation and that they, as members of the school community, have a responsibility and interest in promoting a good learning environment.

Disobedience or open defiance of the teacher's authority shall constitute sufficient cause for disciplinary action and may result in suspension or expulsion from school. When in the judgment of a teacher an individual or group effectively challenges his authority to conduct meaningful instruction in a classroom through disruptive acts, abusive language, or threats of bodily harm, the teacher shall report such activity at once to the principal who is empowered to institute appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action.

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.

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, O.C.G.A. 20-2-737.

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 designated to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program.

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with 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 home 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.

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 expressly 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 home 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. Student vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors 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. (See Houston County Board of Education Policy JCAB.)

Behavior Which Will Result in Disciplinary Procedures Following Progressive Discipline Procedures Unless Otherwise Stated

1. **Drugs** - 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 shall be subject to a minimum suspension of two semesters.
2. **Look-a-like Drugs** - Possession, distribution, attempted sale or sale of substances represented as drugs or alcohol shall be subject to a minimum suspension of one full semester.
3. **Prescription or Over the Counter Drugs** - Possession, sale, attempted sale, distribution, or being under the influence of a prescription or over the counter drug when not dispensed by a parent or school administration.
4. **Weapon or Dangerous Instrument** - Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous instrument: 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.
5. **Verbal Assault** - 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; alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.
6. **Physical Assault** - 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.
7. **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.
8. **Terroristic Threats and Acts** - Any student who commits a terroristic threat or act shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion.
9. **Physical Violence Against a Teacher, School Bus Driver, or Other School Personnel:** Immediate suspension and automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher or other school personnel: 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.

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 another person.

10. **Disrespectful Conduct** - Disrespectful conduct including use of vulgar or profane language, toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.
11. **Harassment** - 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.
12. **Possession or Use of Tobacco in Any Form** - Use and/or possession of tobacco products: (Policy JCDA/B/C)

First Offense	Three (3) days ISS
Second Offense	Five (5) days ISS
Third Offense	Long-term suspension
13. **Damage/Vandalism** - 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.
14. **Theft**
15. **Extortion** - Extortion or attempted extortion shall at a minimum be suspended with the opportunity to apply to an alternative school.
16. **Possession and/or Use of Fireworks or any Explosive**
17. **Fire Alarm/Bomb Threat** - Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat shall at a minimum result in suspension for one full semester.
18. **Insubordination** - Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives; disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff or refusal to talk with any school administrator.
19. **Classroom and School Disturbances**
20. **Violation of School Dress Code** - (See Houston County Board of Education Policy JCDB)
21. **Profanity or Obscene Conduct** - Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words or indecent exposure.
22. **Electronic Device** - Possession or use of pocket pagers/electronic communication devices/portable telephones on school campus or at a school-sponsored activity: Minimum punishment - In-School Suspension.
23. **Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection**
24. **Gambling or Possession of Gambling Devices**
25. **Moving and Non-Moving Driving Violations upon School Property and at School Events**
26. **Giving False Information to School Officials**
27. **Cheating on School Assignments**
28. **Absences** - Unexcused absence, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission, failure to comply with compulsory attendance law.
29. **Bullying** - Georgia law mandates that upon a finding 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.
30. **Inciting, Advising, or Counseling of Others to Engage in Prohibited Acts**
31. **Willful and Persistent Violation of the Student Code of Conduct**
32. **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.

33. **Misbehavior on School Bus** - All provisions of the Student Code of Conduct apply to behavior on the school bus. Students are prohibited from acts of physical violence, bullying, physical assault or battery of 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.
- 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.
- 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.
34. **Gang-Related Activity**
35. **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

1. **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 or fight.)
2. **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.
3. **Bullying:** In accordance with Georgia law, bullying is defined as (a) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; (b) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.
4. **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.
5. **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 day's warning so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.
6. **Disciplinary Tribunal:** School officials appointed by the Board of Education to set as fact finder and judge with respect to student disciplinary matters.
7. **Dress Code:** The current dress code is explained in the student handbook.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **Extortion:** Obtaining money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **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.

14. **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.
15. **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.
16. **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 home 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.
17. **Suspension**: Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed ten (10) days (short-term) or for a period greater than ten (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.
18. **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:
 - a) To commit any crime of violence, or
 - b) To burn or damage property for the purpose of terrorizing another, or
 - c) By causing the evacuation of a school building, place of assembly for school-related events or school bus transportation, or
 - d) Causing serious school inconvenience in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience, or
 - e) 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.
19. **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.
20. **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.
21. **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 knuckles, 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 nunchaku, or fighting chain, throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind.
22. **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.

Procedure and Penalties for Physical Violence against School Personnel

When physical violence against school personnel is alleged:

- The Houston County Board of Education shall appoint a tribunal to hold a disciplinary hearing regarding the alleged act of physical violence and penalty. Any student alleged to have committed an act of physical violence shall be suspended home pending the hearing by the tribunal.

- A student found by a tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee shall be expelled from the public school system. The expulsion shall be for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school pursuant to Georgia law.
- The Houston County Board of Education in its discretion may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for the period of the student's expulsion. If the student who commits an act of physical violence is in kindergarten through grade eight, then the local school board at its discretion and on the recommendation of the tribunal may permit such a student to re-enroll in the regular public school program for grades nine through 12.
- Any student who is found by a tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher, a school bus driver, school official, or school employee shall be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior.
- Any student who is found by a tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee may be disciplined by expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension.

Student Support Processes

The Houston County Board of Education provides a variety of resources which 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 a 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.

Behavior Not Covered Above

The school system reserves the right to punish behavior, which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools, even though such behavior is not specified in the preceding written rules.

Commission of a Crime

1. Any student who commits a crime on school grounds or during a school activity whether on campus or not shall be subject to discipline including expulsion. Any student who commits a crime away from the school grounds and not during a school activity may be subject to discipline including expulsion if it is determined by the school system that the student's presence at school could endanger the lives or property of others or if the student's presence at school would be disruptive to the orderly conduct of school. (Policy JCD)
2. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-1184, administrators are required to report students committing certain prohibited acts to the Superintendent of Schools, police authority, and the district attorney.

Other Suspension/Expulsion Information

1. Students under suspension (home or long-term) or expulsion are not allowed to make up any academic work at home or at school unless they are in attendance at the Crossroads Center.
2. Students under suspension or expulsion are **not allowed** on school campus or at school functions; **they may not participate in extracurricular activities or practice of any kind.** This applies to ISS, home, or long-term suspension and expulsion.
3. School administrators may not delay suspension or expulsion so students may participate in extracurricular activities.
4. School administrators and/or designated representatives **possess the authority to conduct a reasonable search of students, their possessions, their lockers, and their automobiles when on school property or on property being used by the school.**
5. In some instances, students who have been suspended who are enrolled at the alternative school may return to the home school at the end of a semester upon recommendation by the alternative school principal and approval by the home school principal.

Definitions of Disciplinary Actions

1. **Expulsion:** Suspension of a student beyond the current school semester, up to and including permanent removal from the school system.
2. **Suspension (Short-Term):** A temporary termination of attendance, not to exceed ten days.
3. **Suspension (Long-Term):** A temporary termination of attendance that exceeds ten school days.
4. **Probation:** A conditional attendance during a trial period.
5. **Student Review Committee (SRC):** A committee appointed by the Board of Education to hear cases of recommended long-term suspension or expulsion.
6. **Detention:** A requirement that the student remain after school for a disciplinary offense. All students must be given an advance notice of one day.
7. **Alternative School:** An alternative educational environment for suspended students, affording the student the opportunity to continue his/her regular class work. Students must apply for admission.
8. **In-School Suspension (ISS):** An alternative education environment located in the school but isolated from other normal school activities and supervised by a teacher. A student may be assigned to in-school suspension for up to 10 days by the principal or designee.

- 9. Bullying:** Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or, any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Due Process for Students

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

Suspension

1. Parents are given oral notice and opportunity to discuss the matter with the principal.
2. Parents are given written notice stating the reasons for the suspension.

Expulsion or Long-Term Suspension

1. Parents are given oral notice and opportunity to discuss the matter with the principal.
2. Parents are given written notice stating the reasons for the recommendation for expulsion/long-term suspension.
3. Parents are given written notice of a right to a hearing before Student Review Committee.
4. Parents have a right to a hearing within ten (10) school days by the Houston County Board of Education Tribunal.
5. Students with disabilities will be reviewed by the Special Education Educational Management/Placement Committee hearing.

In-School Suspension (ISS): General Regulations

1. Students assigned to in-school suspension must be isolated in the designated room from the time they report to school until school dismissal time. At that time they will either leave school or move to the bus loading area.
2. Suspended students' parents or guardians must receive written notification of the suspension. In addition, every effort should be made to contact the parents by telephone before the student is placed in in-school suspension.
3. Teachers should prepare realistic assignments for each student assigned to ISS. These assignments should be specific to each day of the student's suspension and should relate directly to the curriculum.
4. The ISS supervisor should return each assignment for each day to the corresponding teacher at the end of each school day. The teacher should then examine the student's assignment and give feedback to the ISS supervisor the next morning. If problems are detected, the teacher should work with the ISS supervisor and the student to correct misunderstandings or problems. No contact with the teacher indicates that no problems exist.
5. No student may be assigned to ISS for more than ten (10) consecutive days. Care should be taken to avoid excessive accumulated assignments to ISS for any student. Referral to the Student Support Team (SST) should be considered for repeat offenders.
6. Middle school students must devote at least 45 minutes per subject in ISS.
7. Students in ISS are to have no contact with other students during the school day, especially at lunch and bathroom breaks.
8. Students in ISS are to be provided with regular counseling services.
9. ISS must be used in lieu of suspending students from school except in cases of clear and present threat to the safety of other students or in case of other extenuating circumstances.
10. A maximum of eighteen (18) students may be served in ISS at any one time.
11. Limited use may be made of ISS as a "time out" room. However, if a student is assigned for the same class period from two or more consecutive days, the assignment must be considered a suspension and the proper procedures, including parent notification, should be followed.
12. Each school should develop clearly defined expectations, rules, and procedures for ISS and distribute them to parents, students, and teachers.

Student Rules for In-School Suspension

The following will apply to all students assigned to ISS.

I understand that I must:

1. Go immediately to ISS upon arrival at school.
2. Remain in ISS until dismissed.
3. Attend ISS for the number of days assigned before being admitted to regular class.
4. Bring an excuse from my parent/guardian explaining reasons for any absence.
5. Complete to the best of my ability all assigned work.
6. Furnish or bring to class all required materials to complete the assignments.
7. Refrain from talking except as specifically authorized.
8. Remain in the assigned seat while in class.
9. Refrain from chewing gum, eating, bringing book bags in class.
10. Refrain from all communications with other students.
11. Not compete or engage in any extra-curricular activities as a spectator or participant while assigned to ISS.
12. Abide by all school rules as explained in this handbook.

Encouraging Parents To Inform Their Children Of The Circumstances Of Certain Conduct

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

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.

DRESS CODE

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

Students must learn that different circumstances influence the type of dress appropriate for particular occasions. 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. Modestly dressed students will generally have no problems concerning student dress codes.

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. Male students are not permitted to wear earrings.
- 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.

Dress Code Enforcement

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

- Counseling the student
- Warning the student
- Calling parents to bring a change of clothes
- Assigning detention
- 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. For example, a shirt designed to be tucked in the trousers or skirt should be worn with the shirttail tucked in. Belts should be buckled. The school reserves the right to establish rules during the school year regarding new fashions in dress.

Dress Code Specifics

General Rules

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

Specific Rules

- Blouses/shirts should be constructed so that the top of the shoulder is covered and is fitted under the arms (no halter-tops, tank tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, or bare-shouldered tops of any type will be allowed). Blouses/shirts which expose any portion of the waist, hips, or midriff are not allowed. Blouses/shirts which are not appropriate for school include those which are low-cut, see-through, backless, or tube tops.
- Clothing which is cut, slashed or has holes, is prohibited.

- In accordance with board policy governing student conduct with regard to bullying, weapons, gangs, and drugs: clothing shall be free of inflammatory, suggestive, racial, or other inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork. This includes offensive words and designs, violence (blood, death, weapons), sex, playboy symbols, hate groups, tobacco products, drugs, and alcohol.
- No clothing or other article may be worn or displayed which may indicate membership in a gang at school or any school function.
- Pants, skirts, and dresses must be knee-length or longer, and must have a hem.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Nylon windsuits that fit appropriately are permitted.
- Mesh, nylon, or athletic shorts are not permitted in the classroom. These type shorts may be worn during P.E. classes only.

Accessories

- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times. Cleated shoes are prohibited inside the building. House/bedroom slippers are not acceptable.
- Male students may not wear earrings; female students may wear earrings. Neither male nor female students may wear ornaments (jewelry) which pierce the skin such as the nose, lips, tongue, eyelid, etc.
- Students may not wear hats, caps, bandanas, sunglasses, combs, picks, etc., inside the building.

Hair & Grooming

- Hair must be well groomed. Only conventional hair coloring will be permitted. Extreme hairstyles and fads that would interfere with the learning process, cause a disruption of the educational environment, or be a health or safety hazard are prohibited.
- Well-groomed mustaches are permitted; goatees and beards are prohibited.

Coats

- Due to variances in physical design of schools, principal's discretion will apply to wearing of outer garments, coats, and jackets. Students may wear coats/winter garments to school, but may be asked to store them in their lockers during the school day. Students are encouraged to bring lightweight jackets to wear in the building as changes in weather dictate.

NOTE: Principal discretion applies to all of the above.

DRILLS: FIRE/TORNADO/EMERGENCIES

Students, teachers, and other school system employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or marshals quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

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.

DRUG FREE SCHOOLS

Sale or use of illegal drugs or alcohol by a student at any time or place may result in the following disciplinary action:

The principal may recommend expulsion or require that the student undergo a drug evaluation administered by HODAC or require the student to undergo treatment if the drug evaluation indicates the student is dependent on illegal drugs. (Other action may be required based on other Houston County Board of Education Policies.)

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students who must leave school early should bring a note signed by parents or guardians stating the time and reason for the early dismissal. Students who leave before 11:00 AM (and do not return) will be counted absent for that day. 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 (grandparent or other relative, childcare provider, etc.), the person who enrolled the student in school must notify the school of such in writing. **A picture identification must be presented before the student will be released.**

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION/POCKET PAGERS/CELLULAR TELEPHONES

No student is permitted to carry a pocket pager, an electronic communication device, or a portable telephone on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

CD players, electronic games, tape players, radios, and other electronic sound devices, are not permitted on campus during the regular school day.

Any request for an exception must be made in writing to the Superintendent of Schools and approved by the Board of Education.

Any student found in violation of the above shall be subject to the disciplinary policies of the school and shall, at a minimum, be subject to in-school suspension.

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

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

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

Birth Certificate (Grades K and 1)	At enrollment
Immunization Record (Georgia Form 3032)	30 days
Hepatitis B Vaccination	30 days
Ear, Eye, Dental Screening (Georgia Form 3300)	120 days
Guardianship Papers (if student does not live with natural parents)	At enrollment
Records from Previous School (school will make a direct request to the previous school, but the responsibility rests with the parent)	30 days
Proof of Residence	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.

Immunizations and Health Certificates (Forms 3300 and 3231)

Form 3300 (Certificate of Eye, Ear, Dental Exam)

A student, regardless of grade level, who has never been in a Georgia public school must provide certification of eye, ear and dental examinations on the Georgia Department of Human Resources Form 3300. Any child admitted to school without a certificate must present one within 120 calendar days. Forms may be obtained and completed at the local public health departments or physician offices.

Form 3231 (Certificate of Immunization)

Georgia Law requires children attending school (Kindergarten - 12th grade) to be age appropriately immunized with all the required vaccines at the time of first entry in school. A new entrant is a child entering a school in Georgia for the first time or entering after having been absent from a Georgia school for more than 12 months or one school year. All students, regardless of grade and including foreign exchange students, must have the Georgia Department of Human Resources Form 3231 immunization certificate marked "Complete for School" unless any of the following situations exist:

1. Medical exemption: in this case the 3231 has an expiration date no more than 12 months from date of issue. There must be an annual review of the medical exemption and the certificate must be reissued with or without indication of the medical exemption.
2. Religious exemption: For a child to be exempt from immunization on religious grounds, the parent or guardian must furnish the school with a notarized statement and it must meet the following criteria: (A) State that their religious beliefs conflict with immunization requirements; (B) the statement must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian; (C) The statement must be notarized, dated, and signed by a Notary Public; (D) The statement should be submitted to the school in lieu of an immunization certificate (form 3231); (E) The statement does not expire.
3. Waiver of 30 calendar days granted to new entrants by the superintendent or designee.
4. Waiver of 90 calendar days may be granted by the superintendent or designee to students entering Georgia public schools from out of state, if documentation is on file from the county health department or a medical doctor stating that an immunization sequence has been started and can be completed within the 90 day waiver period.
5. Immunizations are required for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chicken pox). Protection against each of these diseases must be addressed on the form 3231. The form can be computer generated and if the child attends more than one school, an original or a photocopy of the form must be submitted to the second school.

Sixth Grade Requirements

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.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Conduct

Students participating in or attending any school sponsored activities whether on or off school grounds or on the grounds of another school are under the authority of the system discipline policies. Students are expected to practice proper decorum and sportsmanship at all school events.

Student Pick-Up

Students should be picked up promptly following extracurricular activities. Activities must conclude four (4) hours after the end of the school day (on school nights). Appropriate authorities may be called if students are left at a school-sponsored event more than thirty minutes after the conclusion of the event. Efforts to contact a parent or guardian will be made prior to contacting authorities.

Eligibility

Students must pass five subjects the previous semester and be enrolled in five subjects the current semester to be eligible for competitive extracurricular activities. Playing on sports teams or cheerleading in the seventh or eighth grade requires a physical examination and there are age limits. Proof of insurance is also required for participation in sports activities.

Students suspended for disciplinary reasons may not participate in extracurricular activities during the time of suspension. Students who have been “placed” in a grade must earn eligibility the semester prior to participating in extracurricular activities.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

❖ 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. 20202-4605

❖ 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.

FEE COLLECTION

No fees may be required from students or parents to purchase basic learning materials necessary to accomplish the objectives of the curriculum (such as textbooks). Students may be required to furnish personal items such as paper, pencils, notebooks, etc. Parents will receive a letter whenever voluntary contributions are requested.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are provided in order to enhance educational objectives. Students must provide written parental permission to teachers in order to participate in a field trip activity.

GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that *Houston County Board of Education* does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. The sports equity coordinator for this school system is:

Executive Director for Secondary School Operations
HCBOE, P.O. Box 1850
Perry, Georgia 31069
Phone: 478/988-6223
Fax: 478/218-7517

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

A gifted-identified student, as defined by the Georgia Board of Education, is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual, creative, and/or artistic ability(ies); possesses exceptional leadership skills or excels in specific academic fields/ and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with the student's abilities. Students, grades kindergarten through twelve, in the Houston County School System who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual, academic, creative and/or artistic ability shall be provided special services by the Program for Gifted Students.

Identified gifted sixth, seventh, and eighth- grade students are served daily in Honors Language Arts and Honors Science with the option of a third class, AC (Accelerated Content) Math. Students must participate in both Honors Language Arts and Honors Science for enrollment in the middle school Gifted Program.

The primary goal of the program is to provide a stimulating and challenging course of study with emphasis on independent learning and critical thinking. The curriculum is supplemented with independent research/science projects and required outside readings. The Honors Language Arts courses are designed to prepare students for the high school gifted and AP English courses. Traditional instruction in grammar, composition, vocabulary, and literature is supplemented with various interdisciplinary units. The Honors Science courses provide a foundation for an advanced Science curriculum in the high school program. Seventh and eighth grade students are required to complete science projects which they enter in an annual county-wide science fair. Winners advance to the State Science and Engineering Fair, Junior Division.

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 school's eligibility team for consideration for formal evaluation. Parent permission will be obtained before any formal evaluation is begun, and parents will be notified in writing regarding their child's eligibility for the gifted program.

Gifted eligible students can enter gifted classes at the beginning of the following semester. Gifted students who were enrolled in a gifted program from another state will be evaluated immediately upon receipt of records. New students who were in a gifted program in Georgia will be placed upon written confirmation of eligibility. Students in grades six and eight will be automatically referred based on county-wide standardized test scores. Gifted eligible students who are automatically referred may enter gifted classes at the beginning of the following semester.

For further information, contact the Gifted Lead Teacher, a counselor at your child's school, or the Director of Gifted Education.

Gifted Program Continuation Criteria

All students placed in the Houston County Gifted Program must meet eligibility criteria established by the Georgia Department of Education. According to state regulations, criteria for continued placement shall include satisfactory performance in both gifted and regular education classes, as well as provisions for a probationary period. The following Gifted Program Continuation Criteria for students in Houston County Schools are as follows:

Grades - The student shall pass all gifted and regular education classes as well as maintain an 80.00 average each grading period. In elementary and middle school, this average is computed using grades from the four core subject areas only. For the purposes of this policy, grading period shall be defined as each nine-week grading period in elementary and middle schools and each semester in high school.

Probation/Withdrawal - Any student failing to meet the criteria for grades shall be placed on probation for one grading period. Students not performing satisfactorily during the probation period shall be removed from the program at the conclusion of that grading period.

Re-Entry - Re-entry is available at the parent's request under the following conditions:

- a. Re-entry may be considered only at the beginning of an academic year.
- b. The student must have met continuation criteria each grading period from the time of withdrawal to the time of requested re-entry.
- c. A student may re-enter without being retested if and only if re-entry is requested and granted at the first possible opportunity.
- d. Gifted students who are suspended long-term or expelled from school are not eligible for gifted services. However, those students who apply for admission to a system alternative school and who attend for the duration of their suspension or expulsion are eligible for re-entry into the Gifted Program upon returning to their home school. Additional testing/evaluation is not necessary in this instance.

GRADES

All grades will be reported using the following numerical system:

90 - 100	=	A
80 - 89	=	B
70 - 79	=	C
Below 70	=	F (no credit)

Conduct will be graded using S-satisfactory, N-needs improvement, U-unsatisfactory. Conduct grades do not reflect progress in a subject area, but are a status report concerning a student's behavior.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The guidance office is open to any student at any time. It is best to stop by in the morning to make an appointment. Through guidance, a student can achieve greater awareness of who he/she is, what he/she is capable of, and what he/she can become. The guidance counselor collects information about each student in order to help the student understand himself/herself. Tests, autobiographies, and interviews are some of the ways counselors collect information. Counselors treat information about individual students with confidentiality. The counselor is available to help students with any problems. The problems listed below are only a few of the types of problems one may experience in middle school.

1. Why are all my friends mad at me?
2. What good are those standardized tests we take?
3. My parents don't seem to understand me.
4. I don't know how to study. Can you help?
5. Why is homework necessary?
6. Is it necessary to follow the crowd?

HEALTH SERVICES

Medication At School

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, 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 direction 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.

All medication will be kept in the school office.

Head Lice

Head lice can infect anyone, not just children.

Head lice are spread only through head-to-head contact.

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 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.

HOUSTON COUNTY CROSSROADS CENTER

Students suspended from their home schools for discipline reasons may apply for admission to the *Houston County Crossroads Center*.

Any students entering the Houston County School System from YDC, residential treatment facilities or other appropriate facilities must contact the Executive Director of Secondary Operations for admission. The student may be referred to a tribunal hearing for appropriate placement.

Admission Procedures

To register, a student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and complete an application for admission. An interview with an administrator will also be required when application is made. At the time of registration, students must bring the following to the Crossroads Center:

1. A copy of previous school records;
2. A complete withdrawal packet from the last school attended;

3. Health certificates: immunization record, (Georgia 3231), and EED (ear/eye/dental screening record - Georgia 3300);
4. Copy of Social Security card.

Registration is held on Monday thru Thursday from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM. No new student registrations on Friday.

The Crossroads Center will not admit: (a) any student who does not sign the contract and agree to abide by all policies and rules or (b) anyone who owes fees/fines to their regular school.

Crossroads Center Mandatory Uniform Dress Code Policy

The main purpose of the dress code at Crossroads is to minimize problems caused by giving at-risk students the responsibility to dress themselves within the norms set by the Board and society in general. Our desire is to impress upon our students that appropriate dress of some sort will be required of them once out of school in almost any work they do. The main element of the proposed code is to avoid anything that would cause undue attention to the student and may cause disruptions in the classroom.

Crossroads Dress Code will be enforced from the moment students enter the building each morning and will continue until the students exit the building for dismissal each afternoon.

Clothing

Shirt

Type: golf/tennis/polo-style shirt with collar, long enough to be tucked in securely. Pockets are allowed.

Colors: solid green, white, or yellow, **NO LOGOS**

How worn: tucked in while on campus, with a plain white undershirt (long or short sleeved) if worn.

Pants

Type: “dockers” style slacks with belt loops, measured to fit appropriately (not too tight or too baggy), **no extra or outside pockets, no slits, no rivets**, must be hemmed, **no alterations**; (females may wear a khaki knee-length or longer skirt).

Colors: khaki (tan)

How worn: worn at the waist, belt must be worn through loops, visible and with **small open face buckle** (no western or oversized buckles).

Shoes

Type: athletic/tennis shoes (**no straps**) or fully closed dress shoes (**no boots, sandals, or backless shoes**)

Colors: no requirements

How worn: shoes must be **properly laced (thru every eyelet)** and tied (**a bow at the top**), athletic shoes with **plain white laces**, and white socks will be worn. **Brown or black dress socks may be worn with dress shoes.**

Students may wear only one pair of pants and one collared shirt.

Accessories

- Belts: Black or brown. **No western or oversized buckles. No metal rivets or studs.**
- Military issue clothing is not permitted.
- A single wristwatch may be worn.
- Coats or jackets must zip/button/snap from top to bottom (no pullovers) and must be left undone during the school day. **No trenchcoats. No handmade writing or drawing allowed. No metal rivets or studs.**
- **Makeup may not be brought on campus, but may be worn (if not a distraction).**
- Females may carry necessary feminine items in small purses.

- Items not necessary to school (photos, magazines, jewelry, markers, color pencils, etc.) will be confiscated.
- **No Bookbags/backpacks.** Purses big enough to carry textbooks and folders may not be brought to school.
- Students must be prepared for school when they arrive. Paper/notebook, pen/pencil, etc.
- No baseball caps, knit or stocking caps (do rags included) may be worn or brought to school.
- Students are allowed one lip care product. No grooming items (brushes, lotions, etc) are allowed.
- Sweaters and sweatshirts are not allowed. **No hooded outer garments of any kind are allowed.**

Physical Appearance

Males

- **Afros not to exceed 2 inches of bulk**
- No jewelry
- No unnatural hair coloring
- **Hair length-top of ears, collar, eyebrows**
- No extreme hair styles - spikes, braids, cornrows, etc.
- **Clean shaven - earlobe to earlobe (well-groomed moustaches are allowed)**
- **Tattoos or other permanent body markings must be covered at all times.**

Females

- No unnatural hair coloring
- No extreme hair styles - spikes, etc.
- One pair of earrings (one earring per ear), no other jewelry
- Fingernails must not extend ¼” past fingertips
- Tattoos or other permanent body markings must be covered at all times.

Violation of dress code: 1st - 1 day ISS; 2nd - 2 days ISS; 3rd - 3 days home; 4th - 5 days home: 5th - withdrawal from the Crossroads Center.

HONOR ROLL

Two honor rolls will be published each nine weeks.

1. “A” honor roll - “A’s” in every subject
2. “B” honor roll - one “B”; all others “A’s”

Conduct grades will not be considered when determining honor roll.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school be immunized according to the rules and regulations established by the Department of Human Resources (DHR). 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. The following are now required at the DATE OF ENTRY:**

- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Two doses of measles-containing vaccine
- Varicella vaccine (chicken pox) {or date of immunity}

INSURANCE

School insurance may be purchased on a voluntary basis for school day coverage or 24-hour coverage. The insurance covers accidents only. Injuries received in extracurricular activities are covered. Parents should read the insurance information carefully and call the school if there are questions.

INTERNET POLICY

The Houston County Board of Education recognizes the importance of making advanced technology and increased access to learning opportunities available to students and staff. As resources permit, INTERNET services shall be made available in schools. The board of education realizes that with access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. Houston County School System personnel shall take available precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. The following procedures must be followed by Houston County employees and students in INTERNET use:

1. All student access to the Internet will be under the direct supervision of a teacher or designated professional staff member.
2. The Houston County School System shall employ Internet filtering technology, which will restrict access by minors to inappropriate materials on the Internet.
3. The Houston County School System will use appropriate measures, including Internet filtering solutions and network security devices, which will insure the safety of minors when using Internet mail, chat rooms, and other forms of communication.
4. The Houston County School System will use appropriate tracking methods to insure that minors do not participate in unauthorized or illegal measures while online.
5. The Houston County School System will employ adequate network firewall and server security measures as to insure against the unauthorized use or disclosure of personal information regarding students and faculty.
6. The Houston County School System shall employ Internet filtering and network firewall facilities, which will restrict access by minors to harmful matters.
7. All students who are granted access privileges to the Internet must first read and sign the Student Agreement form. Furthermore, their parents and guardians must read the acceptable use policy and sign the Parent Agreement form and return it to a designated person at the student's school.

Penalties for Improper Internet Use

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.

LEAVING CAMPUS

After arrival at school - whether by walking, by car, or by bus, students may not leave the campus for any reason in the morning or during the school day without the permission of the principal or designee.

LOCKERS

Lockers are issued to students on an availability basis. Students may not share lockers with other students. Lockers are the property of the school and may be checked or searched at any time without notice to the student.

LUNCHROOM

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.**

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.**

**SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH INFORMATION
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

PRICES	REDUCED	STUDENT	ADULT	ADULT (VISITORS)
BREAKFAST	\$.30	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75
LUNCH	\$.40	\$2.25	\$3.00	\$3.25

ALA CARTE ITEMS: Cannot be pre-paid or charged. This item must be paid for during lunch.

*******PRE PAYMENT*******

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 to Houston County School Nutrition.

		BREAKFAST		LUNCH	
MONTH		REDUCED	FULL-PAID	REDUCED	FULL-PAID
August	(20 days)	\$6.00	\$30.00	\$8.00	\$45.00
September	(21 days)	\$6.30	\$31.50	\$8.40	\$47.25
October	(19 days)	\$5.70	\$28.50	\$7.60	\$42.75
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	(14 days)	\$4.20	\$21.00	\$5.60	\$31.50
March	(22 days)	\$6.60	\$33.00	\$8.80	\$49.50
April	(17 days)	\$5.10	\$25.50	\$6.80	\$38.25
May	(20 days)	\$6.00	\$30.00	\$8.00	\$45.00
TOTAL	(180 days)	\$54.00	\$270.00	\$72.00	\$405.00

MEDIA CENTER

All students are encouraged to use the learning resources of the media center. The media center is open in the morning before school and in the afternoon after school. During the school day, students who enter the media center must have a pass signed by the classroom teacher. Students are expected to follow the established procedures for checking books out and returning them. Lost or damaged library books are the responsibility of the student who checked them out. Students are expected to exhibit the proper behavior in the media center and respect the other students using the library. The library is accessible to all students throughout the school day during the entire school year. A fine of ten cents per day will be charged for each overdue book, excluding weekends and holidays. A fine should not exceed five dollars. Twenty-five cents per day will be charged for overdue reference books, periodicals, and other reference materials.

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.

PARENT PERMISSION TO DROP OUT

When a sixteen or seventeen year-old student desires to withdraw from school, he/she must have the written permission of his/her parent or guardian prior to withdrawing. Prior to accepting such permission, a school administrator will have a conference with the student and parent/legal guardian within two school days of receiving notice of the intent of the student to withdraw. The purpose of the conference is to share with the student and parent/guardian educational options available and the consequences of not earning a high school diploma.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

To receive an award for PERFECT ATTENDANCE, a student may not be absent nor tardy, nor may he/she be dismissed before the end of the instructional day.

PROMOTION POLICY

Students must pass five (5) subjects for the year with a seventy (70) average. Four (4) of the subjects must be from the academic block (language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics). One may be from the exploratory series.

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. **A PICTURE ID MUST BE PRESENTED BEFORE THE STUDENT WILL BE RELEASED.** 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 school or causes a problem the school should contact the appropriate law enforcement agency. (This provision shall apply with respect to State or local law enforcement officers.)

REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be issued at the end of each nine-week period, with progress reports issued at the end of 4 1/2 weeks.

Report Card Schedule 2008-2009

Progress Report Friday	September 5, 2008
1st Nine Weeks Friday	October 16, 2008
Progress Report Friday	November 14, 2008
2nd Nine Weeks Wednesday	January 9, 2009
Progress Report Tuesday	February 10, 2009
3rd Nine Weeks Tuesday	March 24, 2009
Progress Report Wednesday	April 29, 2009
4th Nine Weeks Wednesday	June 3, 2009

SAFE & DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS NEEDS ASSESSMENT PARENT INFORMATION

The Houston County Board of Education has approved for the Statewide & Local Needs Assessment to be administered to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 (Georgia Student Health Survey II). These surveys require 20 minutes to complete, are totally anonymous and pertain to school safety and student involvement in substance abuse and violent situations.

Our main goals in the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program:

- 1) To assist in maintaining a school environment that is free of drugs and violence;
- 2) To promote an atmosphere that allows teachers to teach and students to learn; and
- 3) To offer experiences that involve students in applying the concepts of decision-making and accepting responsibility for their behavior.

Sample Questions of the State Needs Assessment are as follows:

- * I feel successful at school.
- * I know what to do if there is an emergency at my school.
- * I have been bullied by other students in the past 30 days.
- *Perception Statement: I think alcohol is harmful to my health.

SCHOOL DAY

For daily reporting purposes, students must be present at least one-half of the instructional day to be considered present (students must be present by 11:00 a.m./or dismissed after 11:00 a.m.). To receive **Perfect Attendance**, a student may be **neither absent, tardy, or dismissed** before the end of the school day at 2:45 p.m.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

Accident insurance may be obtained on an optional basis. The insurance covers the student in route to and from school and while attending school. Insurance is mandatory for each student participating in athletics, certain trade and industry courses and work-study courses. A certification from parent or guardian of private insurance coverage for the student will be acceptable. The homeroom teacher will provide information about insurance.

SELLING AT SCHOOL

Students are prohibited from selling items to other students at school.

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 report the same as provided for in the Student or Parent grievance policy.

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 Superintendent or his/her designee, be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated by the Superintendent. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge.

SMARTWEB

In addition to receiving printed progress reports and report cards, parents can access their student's grades at any time via the Internet. You will be required to go through the parent registration in order to view information by going to the Houston County Board of Education website, www.hcbe.net.

Directions for accessing SmartWeb: At the Houston County Board of Education website on the left side of the page, you will need to select the star "Parents," then scroll down the page to SmartWeb System and select "SmartWeb Access." If you are a first time user, you will need to select "Register me." You will be prompted to enter Student ID which is located on past report cards, picture ID, etc., social security number, and birthdate of the student's records you are accessing. To complete the process, you will be asked to give an e-mail address and password. This password will be required for future log-ins.

You might be asked to download the latest version of JAVA - (which is required for viewing). If you are asked about JAVA security, choose "Grand Always."

SmartWeb will assign a "User Number" to you. It will be something like FN_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (with the FN being part of the number that you will have to enter. These steps are in place to ensure security and to protect your child's privacy. After the initial log-in, you will be required to enter the User Number and Password.

It is a good idea to save the "Registered Parent/Guardians" site to your Favorites list for easier future access. If you have any questions or problems accessing SmartWeb, please call the school's office for assistance.

SmartWeb will be closed to parents/guardians the week before finals through the time report cards are received. You will not be able to access your student's information during this time.

STUDENT OR PARENT GRIEVANCE

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 complaint should be mailed to:

*David Carpenter, 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 will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

Level III

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent 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.

TARDY POLICY

A student who is not in class by the beginning of homeroom is tardy and must present a note from home. **Three (3) unexcused tardies and/or three (3) unexcused early dismissals shall be counted as an unexcused absence, grades kindergarten - 12.** Excessive tardies will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

TEST SCHEDULE

Norm-Referenced Test (ITBS)	September 8 - 12, 2008	8 th grade
CogAT	October 21 - 23, 2008	6 th grade
Writing Test	January 16, 2008	8 th grade
CRCT *	April 20 - 24, 2009	6 th /7 th /8 th grades
Make-Up Test (CRCT)	April 27 - 30, 2009	

*Eighth-grade students must pass the Reading and Mathematics portions of the CRCT to be promoted.

TEXTBOOKS

Every student enrolled in a course which requires a textbook must be issued a text. 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. Depreciate 10% each year thereafter, but in no case will the student's cost be less than 50% of the purchase price of the book.
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, progress reports, etc.

Replacement textbooks will not be issued until payment has been made. A textbook price list is available in the school office. Book bags and other personal belongings should not be left unattended

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 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) 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. Please call the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, HCBOE, at 988-6200 or contact by mail at P.O. Box 1850, Perry, Georgia, 31069, for questions or concerns about Title VI/IX or Section 504 or ADA.

VOLUNTEERS AT SCHOOL

The Houston County School System welcomes the involvement of parents and other members of the community as volunteer helpers in the school. Because student welfare and safety are primary concerns, volunteers who provide direct services to students and staff are required to obtain security clearance. Additional information about this process may be obtained from school personnel.

VISITORS AT SCHOOL

Parents and other adults who have legitimate reasons for being at school are always welcome. However, students may not bring school age relatives or friends from other schools or from out of town to school as guests. Persons unauthorized to be on campus are subject to arrest for trespassing. All visitors must report to the office and secure a visitor's badge before entering the school.

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.

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 or grounds without written permission or who causes disturbances may be prosecuted according to law.

WEATHER

In the event of school cancellation, parents will be notified by telephone through the **Crisis Communication 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, and will be posted on the HCBOE TV stations, channel 17 for Cox customers and channel 10 for ComSouth customers. A Public Service Announcement request will also be sent to the local media, to include 13WMAZ TV, FOX24 TV, WMGT41 TV, WNNG 1350 AM, 100.9FM, Clear Channel radio stations and Cumulus radio stations.

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.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Parents should notify the school if for any reason it becomes necessary for their child to be withdrawn from school. Students should secure a withdrawal slip from a counselor. The form must be signed by each teacher, the media specialist, lunchroom manager, attendance clerk and returned to the counselor. 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 CALENDAR 2008-2009

August 4	Monday	First Day of School
September 1	Monday	HOLIDAY - Labor Day
October 9-10	Thursday - Friday	HOLIDAY - Fall Break
October 13	Monday	HOLIDAY - Columbus Day
October 14	Tuesday	HOLIDAY - Students
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 - Mid-Year Holiday
January 5	Monday	HOLIDAY - Students
January 6	Tuesday	Second Semester Begins
January 19	Monday	HOLIDAY - Martin Luther King
February 16	Monday	HOLIDAY - President's Day
February 23	Monday	HOLIDAY - Students
February 17 - 20	Tuesday-Friday	WINTER BREAK / Intercession
April 6 - 10	Monday-Friday	SPRING BREAK
May 25	Monday	HOLIDAY - Memorial Day
May 29	Friday	Last Day of School

Report Card Schedule 2008-2009

Progress Report Friday	September 5, 2008
1st Nine Weeks Friday	October 16, 2008
Progress Report Friday	November 14, 2008
2nd Nine Weeks Wednesday	January 9, 2009
Progress Report Tuesday	February 10, 2009
3rd Nine Weeks Tuesday	March 24, 2009
Progress Report Wednesday	April 29, 2009
4th Nine Weeks Wednesday	June 3, 2009

PARENT'S SIGNATURE PAGE

Homeroom Teacher

Dear Parents:

Please sign the statement below and tear out this page, and return it to your child's homeroom teacher. **Your child will not be assigned a permanent locker until this form is returned, signed by both student and parent.**

Yes, I have read the terms and conditions of the **Attendance Policy**.

Yes, I have read the terms and conditions of the **Internet Policy**.

Yes, I have read the terms and conditions of the **Bus Conduct Policy**.

I have read the information in the **Student-Parent Handbook** and understand that the school must operate in accordance with the stated policies and procedures.

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in the Safe & Drug-Free Schools Assessment.

_____ My child may not participate in the Safe & Drug-Free Schools Assessment.

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

Date

Houston County Schools
1100 Main Street, Perry, Georgia 31069
478-988-6200
www.hcbe.net

STUDENT PROHIBITION FROM EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Note to Parent/Guardian: Please complete this form ONLY if there are school clubs and/or organizations from which you are PROHIBITING your child to participate.

Name of Student _____

School _____

Grade _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

My child (named above) is prohibited from participating in the following school clubs and organizations:

1 _____

6 _____

2 _____

7 _____

3 _____

8 _____

4 _____

9 _____

5 _____

10 _____

Signature of Student _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

Please return this form to the Principal at your child's school