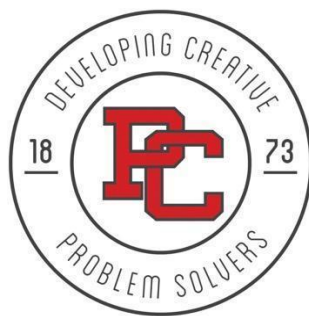




PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
Handbook and Code of Conduct
Sixth Grade through Twelfth Grade
2026-2027

VISION: Providing an educational experience of excellence that values the needs, interests and talents of all students.

MISSION: Developing engaged citizens ready for higher education or the workforce through rigorous learning experiences balanced with creative problem solving opportunities.

Experiencing Educational Excellence
ONE TOWN - ONE SCHOOL - ONE FAMILY
Seek Excellence • Take Ownership • Invest in Others

Judge Stephen D. Ott
Presiding Judge
sott@fayettecountyga.gov



Judge Natalie Ashman
Judge
nashman@fayettecountyga.gov

Serving Fayette, Pike, Spalding, Upson Counties

July 10, 2026

Dear Parent or Guardian:

On behalf of the Juvenile Court of Pike County, I wish to welcome you to a new school year and confirm that school attendance is mandatory in the State of Georgia. Regular student attendance is a basic requirement for academic progress. Attendance is closely related to lifelong learning and productivity. It is well established that frequent or chronic absences, late arrivals and truancy place a child at a severe disadvantage, both in school and later in life.

With these considerations in mind, you should know that your child's school is legally required to report students with excessive absences or late arrivals to your school's social worker for follow up and possible legal action.

Should such a referral occur, efforts will be made to help the family resolve attendance problems. If such efforts are unsuccessful, it is the school's obligation to file proceedings in court or take other legal steps to ensure compliance with Georgia's compulsory attendance laws.

Your child's school realizes that occasional absences or tardies are necessary or even unavoidable because of illness or family emergencies, however, your student will be responsible for all assignments and homework covered during the absence. If a student needs the teacher's assistance to understand missed material, the teacher will usually be glad to assist the student at a prearranged time. It will not be possible for the teacher to stop class or interrupt instruction to accommodate students who are absent or tardy as this would be unfair to other students.

I hope that you and your student have a great academic year. Feel free to call upon your school with any questions or concerns.

With best regards,

Stephen D. Ott

Stephen D. Ott
Presiding Judge, Pike County Juvenile Court

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this manual is to provide students in the Pike County School System an effective and safe learning environment. This manual has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines and discipline procedures of the Pike County School System and the requirements of Georgia law and the State Board of Education. It contains information for school personnel, students, and parents. Included in this manual are expected behaviors and potential consequences relating to various behavior infractions.

Expected behavior promotes learning and encourages maturity during the school day as well as during all school-related activities and at all off-campus events. Students are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

- Participate fully in the learning process - Students need to report to school and class on time, attend all regularly scheduled classes, remain in class until excused or dismissed, actively participate in the learning process, complete assignments to the best of their ability, and ask for help when needed.
- Avoid behavior that impairs educational achievement - Students shall know and avoid behaviors prohibited by this code; take care of books, equipment, and other instructional materials; and cooperate with others.
- Show respect for the knowledge and authority of teachers, administrators, and other school employees - Students must obey reasonable directions, use acceptable and courteous language, avoid being rude, and follow school rules and procedures.
- Recognize and respect rights of other students and adults - All students should show concern for, and encouragement of, the educational achievements and active participation of others.

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 the rules set forth in this Code of Conduct. Disciplinary action for violations of expected behaviors will include appropriate hearings and reviews. In all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected. The Pike County School System will make every reasonable effort to administer the discipline code consistently in all schools. When applicable, individualized plans (i.e., IEP, 504, and SST/MTSS) will be reviewed for appropriate consequences.

JURISDICTION

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 activity, function, or while traveling to and from such events; on vehicles for student transportation operated by the school system; and on school buses and at school bus stops. Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus which could result in a student being criminally charged, actions which make the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school, or actions which disrupt the educational process.

ASBESTOS

The Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires that all buildings be inspected for asbestos-containing building materials. This is to notify all parties that a copy of the asbestos plan is on file in the school administrative offices and is available for public inspection upon reasonable notice. A copy is also on file in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL AND OF THE TEACHER

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 principal and teacher shall follow the procedures set forth in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. 20-2-737 and 738. The Superintendent fully supports the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to provisions of state law.

Each teacher shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737 which requires the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach or the student's classmates to learn and where such behavior is in violation of the Code of Conduct. Such

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

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

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the representation by a student of another's ideas or writing as his own. Basically, two types of plagiarism are common. The first, which is more serious, involves a deliberate attempt on the part of a student to pass off as his own the writing or ideas of another person (student, parent/guardian, published or unpublished author, et al.). This type of plagiarism generally consists of the straight copying or slight paraphrasing of a source that the student attempts to conceal. The second, which results from the student's lack of attention to proper procedures for source acknowledgements and use, involves one or more technical errors. The student in this case fails to acknowledge indebtedness to outside material. Both types of plagiarism are serious violations of the principles of academic integrity. Penalties, especially for those involved in deliberate plagiarism, may be quite severe. This also includes using generative artificial intelligence as a substitute for a student's own work.

BULLYING POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for the prevention, identification, and response to bullying in Pike County Schools. This policy is designed to promote a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4.

Definition of Bullying:

For the purposes of this policy, "bullying" is defined as any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or any intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that: causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-523.1; has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education or otherwise substantially infringing upon the rights of a student; is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. Bullying also includes acts of cyberbullying that originate on school property or involve the use of school equipment, including, but not limited to, acts that occur within a school-sponsored online activity.

Prohibited Behavior:

Bullying of a student by another student, school employee, or third party is strictly prohibited. This includes acts occurring on school property, at school-related functions or activities, at designated school bus stops, on school buses and vehicles or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

Reporting Procedures:

1. Any student, parent, guardian, or school employee who witnesses or has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall report the incident to a school administrator or designated staff member as soon as possible.
2. Reports may be made verbally or in writing. Anonymous reports will be accepted and investigated to the extent possible.
3. School administrators must document all reported incidents of bullying and promptly initiate an investigation to determine whether bullying has occurred.

Investigation Procedures:

1. Upon receiving a report of alleged bullying, the administrator or designee must begin an investigation within one school day.
2. All involved parties will be interviewed and relevant evidence collected.
3. The investigation should be completed within five school days, and findings will be documented.
4. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken based on the findings, consistent with the school's code of conduct.

Disciplinary Action:

Students found to have engaged in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action ranging from counseling or behavioral interventions to suspension or expulsion, in accordance with the severity and frequency of the behavior and the school's code of conduct.

Notification:

1. Parents or guardians of both the victim and the perpetrator must be notified of any incident of bullying and the outcome of the investigation.
2. Where appropriate, law enforcement or other agencies will be notified in accordance with state law and school policy.

Prevention and Training:

The school district shall provide age-appropriate bullying prevention programs and training for students and staff. Training will include recognition of bullying behaviors, reporting procedures, and strategies to foster a positive school climate.

Retaliation Prohibited:

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Policy Review and Publication:

1. This policy shall be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to comply with state law and best practices.
2. The policy shall be published in student and employee handbooks, posted on the school's website, and distributed to all parents and guardians at the beginning of each school year.

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member by using the school district's complaint procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline.

*Incidents of Battery, Fighting, and Disorderly Conduct related to physical altercations will be compiled together when considering disciplinary consequences.

CHRONIC DISCIPLINARY STUDENT ACT (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-764)

A chronic disciplinary problem student is 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 (repeat offender). 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 in writing the student's parent/guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite the parent/guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent/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 in writing, at least one parent/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/guardian to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent/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/guardian to participate in such programs and/or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent/guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

Probationary Status

Students returning to their home school following an assignment to PCAP shall be on Probationary Status. Discipline Offenses will be assigned 3 days OSS on first Section 1 or Section 2 offense, 5 days OSS on second Section 1 or Section 2 offense, and 10 days + Disciplinary Tribunal on the third offense. Students on probationary status will remain on that status for two consecutive semesters once they have returned to their home school.

CLUBS/ORGANIZATIONS

School-sponsored clubs/organizations (excluding competitive interscholastic activities or events) are those under the sponsorship, direction, and control of the school that organize and meet for common goals, objectives, and purposes. State law requires that parents have the right to withhold permission for their students to participate in any school-sponsored club or organization designated by them. A list of all clubs and student organizations is available on the website for each school. Parents/guardians have the right to prohibit student's participation in any club or organization. For your convenience, an opt-out link is available on the website of each school. If you do not wish for your student to participate in a particular club/organization, that desire should be designated through the use of this link. Parents/guardians may also prohibit their children from participation in a particular organization by providing that information in writing to the principal of the school. If a club is added during the school year, parents/guardians will be provided with information on the club, and written permission will be required prior to each student's participation.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Pike County School District will work with homeless children and youths and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths not currently attending school in a manner that will not stigmatize or segregate them on the basis of their status as homeless. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, similar state programs, educational programs for students with disabilities or Limited English Proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.

A "homeless child" is defined as provided in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as children and youth who:

- Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Live in emergency or transitional shelters
- Are abandoned in hospitals
- Await foster care placement
- Live in public or private places not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples
- Unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Every child of a homeless individual and every homeless child are entitled to equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students. The district will assign and admit a child who is homeless to a District school regardless of residency or whether the homeless child is able to produce records normally required for enrollment.

The Superintendent will appoint a liaison for homeless children.

Student Services

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the District's Liaison for homeless students and their parents. School personnel will be trained to inquire about homelessness upon enrollment and withdrawal of students. School personnel will notify the Homeless Liaison regarding possible students in transition.

The Pike County School System liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with:

- Local social services agencies that provide services to homeless children and their families;
- Other school districts on issues of transportation and record transfers; and
- State and local housing agencies.

This coordination shall include providing public notice of educational rights of the homeless in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens. The Pike County School System liaison for homeless students and their families shall also review and recommend amendments to system policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

The Superintendent/homeless liaison will review and revise, as necessary, rules or procedures that may be barriers to enrollment of homeless children and youth. In reviewing and revising such procedures, the Superintendent/homeless liaison will consider issues of transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, and other documentation.

Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. Transportation shall be provided for the duration of the transition. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student or will divide the costs equally. Transportation services may be provided through district transportation, gas vouchers, or public means. If transportation is requested by the parent or guardian, a Transportation Request Form should be filled out by school staff and forwarded to the District Liaison and Transportation Director.

Disputes of Homeless Children and Youth

Anyone having a concern or complaint regarding placement or education of a homeless child will first present it orally and informally to the District Homeless Liaison who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as defined in the state plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for enrolled students whose medical needs—either physical or psychiatric—do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction is by design a temporary service and is not intended to supplant regular school services. Any student who has a medically diagnosed physical condition certified by a licensed physician, or a psychiatric condition certified by a licensed psychiatrist currently treating the student, may be eligible for services.

Criteria for an Eligible Student:

- Anticipated to be absent from school for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive school days, or for intermittent periods of time anticipated to exceed ten (10) school days during the school year due to a documented medical or psychiatric condition. (*Note: If the high school utilizes an approved block schedule, the minimum requirement is reduced to five [5] consecutive or intermittent days*).
- Confined to the hospital or home due to the illness or injury.
- Chronically ill experiencing qualifying intermittent absences.
- Pregnancy that is medically documented as high-risk.

Criteria for a Non-Eligible Student:

- Absences totaling less than the minimum state-required consecutive or intermittent threshold days.
- Illness or condition does not confine the student to home or hospital.
- Normal pregnancy.
- Attending school for a half day (unless explicitly structured within an approved, partial Educational Service Plan).
- Instruction actively provided by other private or institutional sources.
- *Note on Communicable Diseases:* Students with airborne contagious or communicable diseases are temporarily restricted from direct instruction until a licensed physician certifies that the student is no longer infectious.

Referral Process A Hospital/Homebound referral packet—including a signed HIPAA compliant release form—must be submitted to the school administration. An Educational Service Plan (ESP) conference will be held with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine approval and structure within ten (10) school days of receiving the completed medical referral. If services are approved, certified instruction will be coordinated based on the ESP. To comply with State Board Rule 160-4-2-.31, a minimum of three (3) hours of instruction per week must be provided to meet student attendance requirements. If a student does not return to school as originally projected by the medical provider, an official medical extension form completed by the treating physician/psychiatrist is required to continue services.

Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian A responsible adult (at least 21 years of age) must be present in the home during the entire instructional period. If an adult is not present, the session will be cancelled, and the student may be marked absent for that week. The parent must provide a clean, quiet, well-ventilated workspace free from distractions (e.g., television, pets, visitors). The parent is responsible for securing the student's textbooks and initial materials from the school site. The parent must ensure the student is ready for instruction at the scheduled time and must notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance if a session must be cancelled due to a medical emergency.

Responsibilities of the Student The student must dedicate scheduled instructional blocks entirely to schoolwork. The student must complete all given classroom and homebound assignments between instruction dates. The student must remain cooperative and attentive during the instruction period. While actively receiving hospital/homebound services due to medical confinement, the student must not be employed, participate in any extracurricular or athletic activities, or be present on a school campus unless attending an approved partial transition placement specified in the ESP.

PARENT RIGHT TO KNOW

In compliance with the requirements of Every Students Succeeds Act, Pike County Schools would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student's teacher—
 - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's and/or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact the Human Resources Director or the Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs at 770-567-8489.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

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

The 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 two-way communications through personal contacts are extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as on-going opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

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

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

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

Definition of Terms Used in PPRA: “Instructional Materials” - Instructional materials that are provided to a student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats, such as material accessible through the Internet (The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.)

“Invasive Physical Examination” - Any medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts, or any act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening

“Personal Information” - Individually identifiable information including (1) a student or parent’s first and last name; (2) home address; (3) telephone number; or (4) social security number

Requirements: No student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family
3. Sex behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student

A parent of a student may, upon request, inspect any survey created by a third party containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8) above before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student and may choose to opt the student out of participation in the survey by providing the principal a request to “opt out,” identifying one of the eight criteria listed above. The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

A parent of a student may, upon request, inspect any instructional or training material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student. The request shall be made in writing to the school principal. The principal shall schedule a conference with the parent within five business days and make the instructional materials available. Parents shall be notified prior to the administration of physical examinations or screenings that the school may administer to students. This notice shall offer the parent the opportunity to opt the student out of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is (1) required as a condition of attendance; (2) administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and (3) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or of other students.

The parent of a student shall be notified prior to the commencement of activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose). Such notice shall offer the parent the opportunity to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of such information before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and to opt the student out of such activities. The principal shall provide the parents notice within five business days before the request/activity commences with the option to opt out. Additionally, the parents shall be given the opportunity to preview the request or activity prior to the commencement of the request. Posting the request or activity on the school’s web page or making the request or activity available at the school’s administrative office shall meet the requirement set forth in this procedure. Every effort shall be made to protect student privacy, and parents are encouraged to review the request or activity to ensure that the level of disclosure is acceptable.

REPORTING AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES



Sandy Hook Promise “Say Something” is a platform for students and parents to anonymously express their concerns about their students, friends, or classmates with people who can help. Reports can be made at Say Something Tips — Sandy Hook Promise online or through the Say Something mobile app, both of which are completely anonymous. Further information regarding Sandy Hook Promise “Say Something” is available in the High School, NGA, and Middle School Handbooks, as

well as on the website for each school and that of the District. To report a tip, you can use the QR code below, call 1-844-572-9669, text TIP to 79775, or visit online at saysomething.net.

Title IX

In accordance with the provisions of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Pike County School System does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities that it operates. No student shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, any educational program or activity operated by this School System.

The Board of Education believes that all students should be able to enjoy an educational environment free from all forms of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment undermines the integrity of the educational environment. Therefore, Board Policy prohibits even acts of sexual harassment that may not rise to the level of a violation of federal law.

The Assistant Superintendent shall serve as the Compliance Coordinator for ensuring compliance with this policy and federal laws prohibiting gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The Compliance Coordinator may be contacted through the Central Office at 7454 Hwy 19 South, Zebulon, GA, 30295, Telephone (770) 567-8489.

Gender Equity in Sports

In compliance with the Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315, no student in the Pike County School System shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another student, or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic or intramural athletics offered by the school system, nor shall the school system provide any such athletics separately on such basis, except as specifically authorized by the Act itself. The Equity in Sports Coordinator and Athletic Director may be reached at (770) 567-8770.

A grievance procedure will be developed by the Superintendent, consistent with the requirements of state law and designed to implement the purposes of this policy. The grievance procedure will provide for prompt and equitable resolution of written student complaints, including those brought by a parent or guardian on behalf of his or her minor child who is a student, alleging any action which would be a violation of the Act.

The school system shall comply with all the requirements of state board rules concerning gender equity in sports, including records retention and the filing of any and all reports. All donations of services or items, including booster club support to any athletic program, shall be accepted or rejected in accordance with the Board of Education's policy concerning donations to the school system.

Discrimination Complaint Procedure

Complaints made to the School System regarding alleged discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin in violation of Title VI, on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX, or on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act will be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent, or other person with a complaint alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify, in writing or orally, either the principal for his/her school or the appropriate coordinator designated by the Board of Education. If the complaint is oral, either the coordinator or school principal to whom the complaint is made shall promptly prepare a memorandum or written statement of the complaint as made to him/her by the complainant and shall have the complainant read and sign the memorandum or statement if it accurately reflects the complaint made. If the complaint is made to a school principal, he/she shall be responsible for notifying the appropriate coordinator of the complaint.
2. If the alleged offending individual is the coordinator designated by the Board of Education, the complaint shall either be made by the complainant to the Superintendent or, if the complaint is initially made to the school principal, reported by the principal to the Superintendent.
3. The coordinator or his/her designee shall have fifteen workdays to gather all information relevant to the complaint made, review the information, determine the facts relating to the complaint, review the action requested by the complainant, and attempt to resolve the complaint with the complainant and any other persons involved. The coordinator or designee shall prepare a written response to the complaint detailing any action to be taken in response to the complaint and the time frame in which such action will be taken, and copies of this response shall be furnished to the complainant, the appropriate coordinator, and the Superintendent or his/her designee.

4. If the complaint is not resolved at the conclusion of this fifteen-day period, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the complainant shall have the right, within five workdays of receiving a copy of the written response, to have the complaint referred to the Superintendent of Schools. If the alleged offending individual is the Superintendent, the complainant may have the complaint referred to the Board of Education rather than the Superintendent.
5. The Superintendent shall have fifteen workdays to review the complaint and the response of the coordinator or designee and attempt to resolve the complaint. The Superintendent shall furnish to the complainant a written response setting forth either his/her approval of the action recommended by the coordinator or designee or the action to be taken by the system in response to the complaint in lieu of that recommended by the coordinator or designee and the time frame in which such action shall be taken.
6. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the Superintendent, then the complainant shall have the right, within fifteen workdays of the receipt of the written response of the Superintendent, to have the complaint referred to the Board of Education. In order to have the Board review the Superintendent's decision, the complainant must file with the Superintendent a written statement setting forth the reasons he/she disagrees with the response of the Superintendent and the action the complainant is requesting the system to take. The complainant shall also include in the written response a request that his/her complaint be referred to the Board of Education.
7. Within thirty workdays of receipt of the written request of the complainant, the Superintendent shall present the matter to the Board of Education at its regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The Board shall review the original complaint, the response of the coordinator or designee, the response of the Superintendent, and the response of the complainant. In addition, the Board may, but is not required to, hear directly from any individuals with knowledge of any relevant facts relating to the complaint.
8. The Board of Education will either uphold the recommendation of the Superintendent or require the system to take some other action in response to the complaint. A copy of the action of the Board will be furnished to the complainant, either as a part of the minutes of the Board of Education or as a separate written statement. The Board shall be the final reviewing authority within the system.
9. This policy is not intended to deprive any employee of any right they may have to file a grievance pursuant to any other policy of the local Board of Education, specifically the policy designed to implement Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-2-989.5, where appropriate. This policy is not intended to provide an alternative process for resolving evaluation and employment disputes where there already exists a due process procedure mandated by state law or State Department of Education regulations, specifically including, but not limited to, hearings to be conducted pursuant to the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia. The complainant retains at all times the right to contact the Office of Civil Rights or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with regard to any allegations that the system has violated the statutes described above.
10. The school system shall be responsible for distributing and disseminating information relevant to this policy and procedure to students, applicants for employment, and employees through appropriate procedures.
11. No reprisal shall occur as a result of reporting unlawful harassment under this policy, and any attempt to retaliate against a complainant shall be disciplined as is appropriate.
12. The confidentiality of any individual making a complaint or report in accordance with this policy, to the extent it is reasonably possible, shall be protected, although the discovery of the truth and the elimination of unlawful harassment shall be the overriding consideration.

Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

1. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her school.
2. Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of sexual abuse or

sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

3. Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report as soon as possible, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services as designated by the Department of Human Resources or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the Superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

SCHOOL BUS RULES AND PROCEDURES

Anything that jeopardizes the safety of the individuals on the bus is viewed as serious. The behavior expected on the school bus revolves around the safety and individual rights of every person on the bus, including the driver.

School Bus and Bus Stop Conduct

Students are prohibited from acts of physical violence as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6, bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4(a), physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior. Students are 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 communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. Students are 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.

Note: All discipline will reflect each individual school's guidelines as it is stated in their handbook.

Student Expectations while on a school bus:

- Always use the handrail.
- Animals should not be brought onto a school bus (whether or not they are alive).
- Cell Phones should only be used when they do not interfere with the safe operation of the bus.
- During dismissal, students should board the bus immediately. When buses are directed to depart, buses cannot stop for late students.
- Follow school system procedures to obtain signed permission for a change of stop location.
- Glass objects (vases, containers, etc.) create safety hazards and should not be transported on the school bus.
- Balloons or any other items that would take up a seat or impede the driver's vision are prohibited.
- Go directly to an available or assigned seat when entering the bus.
- Hold your books and other things in your lap so the bus aisles and exits are clear.
- Keep your head and arms inside the window at all times.
- Look both ways for all moving traffic to stop before crossing the road and while boarding from the door side of the bus.
- Make sure you get on the right bus at school. If you get on the wrong bus by mistake, tell the driver.
- Obey the directions/instructions of the school bus driver.
- Once the student has boarded the bus, students may only get off the bus at their school or their designated bus stop.
- Other school rules and procedures not listed may also apply.
- Remain absolutely quiet at railroad gate crossings so the bus driver will be able to hear an approaching train.
- Remain seated until the bus is stopped, and the door is opened; look both ways for moving traffic before stepping off the bus.
- Remain seated, facing forward with your back against the seat.
- Respect the rights and safety of others.

- Talk in a quiet voice on the bus.
- Tell your bus driver if someone is picking on you or making you feel uncomfortable.
- Wait at least 12 feet away from the edge of the road.
- Wait until the bus driver gives the all-clear signal before boarding the bus.
- Wait your turn to get off. Avoid pushing or shoving other students while entering or exiting the bus.

Prohibited Behavior on a School Bus:

- Any behavior which might obscure the driver's vision while the bus is in motion.
- Bringing large or bulky items on the bus. Anything larger than a book bag is considered too large and poses a safety issue.
- Chewing gum, eating, or drinking.
- Earphones, earbuds, etc. while boarding or getting off the bus.
- Horseplay, pushing, or shoving.
- Moving around or standing up while the bus is in motion.
- Opening any emergency doors, windows, or hatches unless instructed to do so by your bus driver.
- Possession of tobacco, vaping devices, drugs, or weapons.
- The possession of bottles/cans/other beverage containers except for plastic water bottles.
- Throwing objects.
- Throwing objects out of the windows.
- Use of obscene language or gestures.
- Vandalism and/or damaging the bus in any manner.

Failure by the student to abide by these guidelines may lead to disciplinary action by the school administration and/or Transportation Director. Consequences may include seat reassignment, detention, in-school suspension, bus suspension, suspension, or action by a disciplinary tribunal or the Board of Education.

Additional Bus System Guidelines

Bus Routes: All students, K-12, using the school transportation services shall ride their assigned bus that is provided to the student. Each student must adhere to all times and designated stops for AM and PM routes. Parents are responsible for providing transportation for students suspended from riding the bus. Parents with concerns or complaints that need to be addressed with the bus driver should schedule a conference with the driver through the Transportation Director. By law 20-2-1181, parents should not distract the driver by boarding the bus or complaining at the bus stop.

If your child is returned to school a total of 3 times, one month of transportation privileges will be lost. On the 4th offense, a meeting with the parents or guardians of the student and appropriate school district officials must be held. Department of Family and Children Services may also be notified. On the 5th offense, transportation privileges will be lost for the remainder of the school year.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

Student and Faculty Accounts

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to deposit money (checks are best) into their meal accounts at the beginning of the month, whereby a draft of the account may be made daily as the meal is purchased.

End-of-year balances roll up with the account owner. Payments can be made online at www.schoolpaymentportal.com.

Meal Charge Policy

Customer service is the number one priority of Pike County School Nutrition. We have the option to offer an alternative meal to students who have exhausted the funds in their account. We believe that attempting to offer an alternative meal to a student who has already chosen a meal is disruptive to the student and an undesirable form of service that we want to avoid. We prefer to feed students in good faith that parents and guardians will honor the debts created.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to reinforce responsible purchasing restraint with the student and to set expectations of what spending is appropriate to the household.

As a valuable service to our customers, Pike County School Nutrition will make reasonable effort to communicate account

balances to parents or guardians. However, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to maintain awareness of student account balances and to provide adequate funds to match the spending of the student.

Account balances may be checked at no additional cost at any time by visiting www.schoolpaymentportal.com and setting up an account with your student's lunch ID.

Pike County School Nutrition will attempt to communicate with the parent or guardian through any means at our disposal. This includes notices sent home with students, letters by postal service, email, phone, text, or private message. It will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to check for written notices sent home with their children. Please check to see if your child has information from the school for you to review or sign, just as you would check for graded papers, etc. from their teacher(s).

Please note the following points concerning staff and student accounts:

- No adult meal charges are allowed if the account has a zero balance or below.
- Staff, parents, and visitors may not charge for purchases to a student's account.
- Extra purchases, such as a la carte items, may be made on account if the student has money remaining in the account.
- Snacks and drinks may only be purchased with cash.
- The School Nutrition Director will attempt to provide a courtesy notice to the parent by automated phone service and/or email when the student balance falls below **\$0.00**.
- Additional collection efforts will be made weekly if the balance is allowed to remain negative.
- If the past due account is not brought current before reaching **-\$15.00**, school administration will be notified, and a referral may be made to the Pupil Services Director. Collection attempts will be made continuously until the balance is made current.
- Students in grades 6-12 who repeatedly abuse the charge policy may be placed on a "cash only" status.
- Only students in grades 6-12 will be placed on "cash only" status if they do not qualify and/or desire free and reduced benefits and understand that the student will not be allowed to charge meals.
- Accounts currently below **-\$15.00** at the publishing of this policy will be allowed to sign a promissory note indicating a plan to make payments on the account to bring the account to a positive balance. Failure to meet the agreed conditions indicated in the promissory note will place the account on a "cash only" status until the account can be brought to a positive balance.
- As with other outstanding bills, receipt of student report cards, access to tickets for extracurricular activities, or participation in extracurricular activities and/or graduation ceremonies may be affected by negative account balances.
- Once we have exhausted all our internal options for collecting delinquent accounts, we may contact a collection agency or the magistrate court for assistance with collection. Collection and court costs will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.
- You will be notified of returned checks by email or mail, and the amount of the returned check will be deducted from the student's account.
- Habitual returned checks may result in a "cash only" payment status after required documentation has been signed.
- Current Meal Prices and Menus are located on the district website.
- If you have any questions or need further assistance, call the School Nutrition Department.

Free & Reduced Applications:

A new application must be completed each school year. Federal regulations require every student to have an application available to them at the start of their school year, whether eligible or not. Parents should complete the online application to receive an immediate response to their application. Apply online at <https://mealapp.lunchtimesoftware.net>. If you prefer a paper application, they will be available at the Director of School Nutrition's office located at the District Office. Federal regulations allow ten (10) working days to process the paper application once it is received by the School Nutrition Program. Applications can be submitted directly to the SNP office or sent to school with your child. Applications cannot be transferred from county to county. A Pike County application is necessary to determine eligibility. Your taxes are not affected by free and reduced applications. Federal funds are set aside and distributed to systems throughout the nation based on eligibility numbers. Even non-qualifying returned applications benefit several departments in the system. Applications are available year-round at the Director of School Nutrition's office located at the District Office. At any time during the school year, if a family's income decreases, an application for a Free or Reduced Price

Meal may be completed to determine eligibility.

Free and Reduced meal eligibility numbers allow for federal grants to be obtained. Departments like Technology, Title I, and Special Education receive funding based on eligibility numbers. Our communications bills are reduced (e-rates); parents are assisted by providing free or reduced priced meals for their children; children are provided hot, nutritious meals; and family funds are freed up for other necessary needs.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Pike County Board of Education recognizes the importance of regular school attendance in making academic progress; therefore, students shall be in attendance as required by Georgia's compulsory school attendance law for the number of full-length days as prescribed by law.

A. Attendance Requirement: The parent or guardian shall provide a signed and dated explanation of the student's absence within five school-days of the student's return to school. The student's record shall reflect an unexcused absence if a note is not submitted within the five school-day allowance. Notes excusing student absences will be accepted from parents/guardians/healthcare professionals or other governmental agencies (DDS, DFCS, etc.). Absences will be excused with the parent/guardian note for up to five (5) days per year. Absences may only be considered excused if they align with the state-approved school absences listed in Board Policy JB Section B. Parents/Guardians of students with five (5) unexcused absences in a year will be required to attend an attendance conference with the school, at which time possible attendance barriers, solution-focused problem solving, and potential interventions will be discussed. Court intervention will be reserved as a last resort; however, if **unexcused** absences persist after the required 5-day meeting, the parent/guardian of a student (Kindergarten–16 years of age) subject to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 may be referred for prosecution in State Court (where available) or Superior Court. Penalties may include misdemeanor charges, fines, and up to 30 days in jail. Parents/Guardians of students with ten (10) unexcused absences in a year will have a complaint filed with the school social worker. If the matter is not resolved and if prior school-based interventions have not been effective, Parents/Guardians of students with (10) ten unexcused absences in a year will be referred to the Child/Family in Need of Service (CHINS) committee for consideration of other community service-focused interventions.

B. Absences:

1. Parents/guardians are required to provide appropriate documentation for each absence within five (5) school days of the student's return to school.
2. Students who participate in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H, serve as a page with the General Assembly, or are taking tests or physical exams for military service must be counted present at school and cannot be counted absent, either excused or unexcused, for time missed from the school while participating. (State Board of Ed Rule 160-5-1-.10/O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692.3)
3. Students in foster care shall be counted present when they attend court proceedings relating to their foster care.
4. Students' grades shall not be penalized because of absences if the absences are considered excused and make-up work is completed satisfactorily. Students in grades 6-12 must schedule all make-up work with their teacher(s) within three days of returning to school.
5. Students should not return to school following an illness until they have been without a fever, temperature of 100.0 or higher, without fever medication and have not vomited for 24 hours.
6. A student's absence shall be considered excused if the absence meets one of the following requirements:
 - a. The student's personal illness endangers the student's health or the health of others;
 - b. A serious illness or death occurs in the student's immediate family;
 - c. A court order or an order by a government agency including pre-induction, physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school;
 - d. The student is observing an established religious holiday;
 - e. A medical, dental, or eye examination of the student is scheduled;
 - f. Weather or other conditions exist which make school attendance impossible or hazardous;
 - g. The student is categorized as an on-track twelfth grade student and participates in not more than two college visits and returns an official document from the post-secondary institution verifying participation in a visitation program;
 - h. The student registers to vote and provides evidence of such activity;
 - i. The student participates in a trip or event having significant educational value, provided permission is granted by the principal in advance and the principal determines the trip has significant educational value.

j. The student's parents/guardian is deployed or returning from military duty. The total number of days that are allowed is five (5) excused days per school year.

k. Other absences may be counted as excused at the discretion of the principal.

C. Disciplinary Expulsion or Suspension:

1. In accordance with Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, school days missed as a result of out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

2. Students who miss school as a result of suspension or expulsion will be allowed to make up work on graded assignments and final semester exams according to the timelines set forth in the student handbook.

No student shall be expelled or suspended from the Pike County School District solely due to absenteeism, tardiness, or truancy. Attendance-related issues shall be addressed through intervention and support services rather than exclusionary discipline.

Students who stop attending without notice (O.C.G.A. 20-2-785): If a student misses 30 consecutive days with no withdrawal or enrollment notice, the school must refer the case to Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) student affairs officer and, as appropriate, consider a wellness visit and law enforcement notification.

D. Early Release and Late Arrival:

1. Students must be present for the majority of the day to be counted present. Reference State Board Rule (160.5.1.02).

2. Students shall be released from school only to the student's parent(s) or guardian, a person properly identified by school authorities with authority or permission to check-out the student, or upon request by letter or telephone from the parent(s) or guardian

3. Excused early release and late arrivals are defined using the criteria set forth in Section B.

4. Tardiness disrupts the learning environment and subjects the student to progressive discipline as outlined in the student code of conduct.

E. Truancy:

Chronic absenteeism is considered a metric alongside *truancy by the state of Georgia*. The state defines chronic absence as missing 10% or more of the school year for **any** reason (excused or unexcused).

1. In accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, a student is defined as **truant** if they are subject to compulsory school attendance and accumulate **more than five (5) days of unexcused absences** during the current school calendar year.

2. The Pike County Student Attendance Protocol provides parental notification, identification of root cause attendance barriers, proactive strategies with the school attendance review team along with a parental involvement process before referring students and/or parents/guardians to the appropriate court of jurisdiction.

For the purpose of accurately measuring the academic performance of students continuously enrolled in public schools, the Board adopts the following State Board of Education uniform criteria for withdrawing students.

1. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who:

a. Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences; and

b. Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and

c. Is not receiving instructional services through home-bound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

d. The Superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance.

2. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the superintendent or superintendent's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

3. Appropriate school personnel shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

F. Uniform Withdrawal Criteria:

For the purpose of accurately measuring the academic performance of students continuously enrolled in public schools, the Board adopts the following State Board of Education uniform criteria for withdrawing students.

1. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who:
 - a. Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences; and
 - b. Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and
 - c. Is not receiving instructional services through home-bound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 - d. The Superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance.
2. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the superintendent or superintendent's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.
3. Appropriate school personnel shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

Parent Permission to Drop Out

In accordance with state law, an unemancipated minor who wishes to withdraw must have the written permission of his/her parents or guardian if under the age of eighteen prior to withdrawing. Prior to accepting such permission, a school administrator will have a conference with the student and parent/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.

G. Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences: Notification

1. The school system requires its schools to provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school-days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student will be asked to sign a statement indicating receipt of such a written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students aged ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of a written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance with the local board policy; and
2. The school system will notify the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who is in charge of the student, the school system will send a written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Students shall dress in a manner that is reasonable and not distracting to other students and teachers. The dress of students must be in good taste and appropriate for school activities. Students must adhere to the following dress code**. The following are not permitted:

- Tops: Shirts that show cleavage, midriff, or undergarments, including strapless, halter, racer back or spaghetti straps (while sitting, standing, or bending).
- Bottoms: Shorts, dresses, or skirts shorter than mid-thigh; Holes or rips that show skin higher than mid-thigh are also not permitted (applies to males and females)
- Jeggings and leggings/tights without a top that covers the private areas, front and back
- Any clothing that defines a student's genital area
- Exposed undergarments (male and female)
- Clothing containing inappropriate theming or language: depiction or reference of drugs, tobacco, or sex; suggestive lettering or pictures, violence, signs, symbols, or language which have the effect of disrupting the school's atmosphere
- Transparent or mesh clothing without an allowable top or bottom

- Head coverings that obscure the face or ears (hoods cannot be pulled up on the head)
- Pajamas and/or house shoes (except on designated school dress up days); blankets; every student must wear appropriate undergarments and shoes
- Heelys or comparable footwear

School administrators have final authority in all judgments related to dress. The Superintendent or school Principals are responsible for implementing this policy and may disseminate additional regulations, procedures, or directives as necessary to enforce the policy. ****School Administrators reserve the right to enforce more stringent expectations for student participation at special events such as (but not limited to) college and career fairs.**

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is the belief of the Pike County Board of Education that students have the right and responsibility to express related concerns and grievances to the faculty and administration. Therefore, students shall be assured the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of grievances. For the discussion and consideration of a grievance, any student or group of students should request a meeting time and place which will not interfere with regularly scheduled classes or school-related activities. The faculty and administration shall make an honest effort to resolve student grievances as quickly as possible and at the most immediate level of supervision. With the ultimate concern and consideration for the educational welfare of children and youth, this grievance procedure is designed to accomplish an equitable and expeditious resolution of student grievances.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide an orderly and systematic method whereby students can resolve differences that might develop between them and professional employees of the Board of Education in an equitable and expeditious manner.

Definitions

- **Grievance**—Grievance shall mean a claim submitted by a student or group of students of a violation of human or citizenship rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution, federal or state law, or a misinterpretation of the Board of Education policy by professional staff members.
- **Student** – Student shall mean any person currently enrolled in a school operated under the authority of the Pike County Board of Education.
- **Days** – Days shall mean school days exclusive of Saturday, Sunday, or an official holiday, as established by the school calendar.
- **Parties of Interest** – Parties of Interest shall mean any persons involved in the processing of a grievance.

Informal Procedure

The District believes most grievances can be resolved informally and at the most immediate level of supervision. With this objective in mind, simple and honest communication is encouraged between students, teachers, and/or administrators. Parents or guardians should feel free to communicate with teachers and principals at any point in the procedure. A student who feels he/she has a grievance should present the matter to his/her teacher if the teacher is able to resolve the grievance. If the teacher is not able to resolve the grievance, the matter should be presented to an assistant principal. If not resolved by the assistant principal, the grievance should be presented to the principal. The principal shall attempt to resolve the grievance and to notify the grievant of the decision within two days thereafter. If the grievance is resolved, or if no further action is needed, the matter is closed.

Formal Procedure

Level One – Principal

The grievant must present the grievance but may be accompanied by a parent or guardian, classmate, or faculty member of the student's choice. The aggrieved party shall file the grievance in writing with the principal, and the grievance shall be signed by the aggrieved party. The principal shall set a time to discuss the grievance that is mutually convenient for the parties and shall seek an amicable solution to the problem. Within five days after receipt of the grievance, the principal shall hear the grievance and within two days after hearing the grievance, shall notify the aggrieved party in writing of the final decision. If the grievance is not resolved by the principal to the satisfaction of the aggrieved at Level One, the grievant may appeal within ten days to the Superintendent.

Level Two – Superintendent

The grievant must present the grievance initially but may be represented by anyone of his/her choosing. Within ten days after receipt of the decision at Level One, the aggrieved party and/or his/her parent or guardian may appeal to the

Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall, within a ten-day period following the appeal, do one or more of the following as he/she may deem appropriate:

- Review written decisions at Level One together with any and all other documentary evidence that may be submitted
- Conduct a hearing with all persons whom he/she may choose to invite, including the principal parties
- Designate such person or persons as he/she deems appropriate to investigate the grievance and to offer recommendations prior to making a final decision

After the Superintendent initiates one or more of the options listed above, he/she shall, within seven days, make a final decision. A copy of such written notification shall be mailed to the principal.

Level Three – Board of Education

The grievant and his/her parent or a representative may, within ten days of the Level Two decisions, appeal to the Board of Education. The Board may choose one or more of the following options:

1. Conduct a review of the records
2. Call for limited testimony
3. Conduct a full hearing
4. Refuse to consider the appeal

The Board shall reach a decision concerning the grievance within ten days after the hearing and shall convey the decision to the grievant and his/her parent or guardian within two days after reaching the decision. The decision of the Board of Education shall be final unless the grievant and his/her parent or guardian decides to utilize any other duly recognized procedure established by law.

STUDENT RECORDS

It is the policy of the Board of Education that all employees shall comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Pupil Protection Rights Amendment (PPRA). The Board has developed and adopted student privacy policies in consultation with parents in accordance with federal law. Additionally, parents will be directly notified of these policies at least annually via the Student/Parent Handbook issued to students at the beginning of the school year or at the student's time of enrollment.

Directory Information

The Pike County School System lists the following as directory information which may be disclosed upon request:

- Student's name, address, and telephone number
- Student's date and place of birth
- Students participating in official school clubs and sports
- Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team
- Dates of attendance at schools within the school district
- Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the district's schools
- Video, audio, or film images; recordings; or photograph(s)
- Grade level

Student records shall be provided to schools within or outside the school district upon request of the school where a student is enrolling in accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.14, Transfer of Student Records.

“Opt Out” - Parent(s)/guardian(s) or students can submit a request to the principal for such information to be confidential, and such information will not be disclosed to outside individuals. All requests must be made in writing and addressed to the principal in a timely manner.

Procedures for Obtaining Access to Student Records

Any parent whose parental rights have not been specifically revoked by court order, any guardian, or any individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian may inspect the education records of his/her child. Generally, a parent will be permitted to obtain a copy of education records of his/her child upon reasonable notice and payment of reasonable copying costs.

With the exception of directory information as defined above, personally-identifiable information will not be released by

the school system from an education record without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student except where authorized by federal law. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Disclosures will be made to school administrators, teachers, or other professionals employed by or associated with the school system who have some role in evaluating or educating the student.
- Records will be sent to a school where the student has enrolled upon request of the institution.
- Disclosures will be made to federal or state officials in connection with the audit of Educational Programs.
- Disclosures will be made in connection with financial aid applications of the student to determine the eligibility for and amount of aid, as well as enforcement of the terms and conditions of financial aid.
- Disclosures will be made to comply with state law, Internal Revenue Service laws and regulations, judicial orders, or lawfully-issued subpoenas. Unless otherwise required by a judicial order or federal grand jury subpoena, a reasonable effort will be made to notify parents or students in advance of such disclosures.
- Disclosures will be made to organizations conducting studies on behalf of or by educational institutions for the purpose of developing, validating, or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, and improving instruction.
- Disclosures will be made to accrediting institutions to carry out their accrediting function.
- Disclosures will be made in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- Disclosures will be made to the Attorney General of the United States or to his/her designee in response to an ex parte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes specified in 18 U.S.C. 2332(b) (5(B) and 2331.

Each records custodian in the school district shall maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the educational records of a student in accordance with regulations governing the Act.

A parent or eligible student who believes his/her record contains an error may request its correction by submitting a written explanation of the error and the basis for believing it to be in error to the principal or his/her designee, who shall investigate and determine whether or not to amend the record. If the matter cannot be thus resolved, a parent or eligible student may request a hearing pursuant to federal regulations at 34 C.F.R. 99.21-99.22, as well as applicable state regulations. If the hearing results in a determination that the record contained erroneous information, it shall be corrected, and the parent or eligible student shall be informed in writing of the correction; if the information contained in the record is determined not to be erroneous, the parent may place a statement in the record commenting upon the contested information and stating the basis for disagreement. The statement shall thereafter be disclosed whenever the portion to which it relates is disclosed.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESSES

The Pike County Board of Education provides a variety of resources that are available at every school within the District to help address student behavior 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 student plans, mentoring programs, peer mentors, and student leadership class support.

Note: Additional information concerning support services can be found in the County Resource Manual located in the counselor's office.

Additionally, under new Georgia law (HB 268), all students in grades 6–12 shall receive an annual minimum of one hour of evidence-based suicide awareness training and one hour of youth violence prevention training.

TECHNOLOGY AND NETWORK RESOURCES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose

Pike County Board of Education provides Network and Internet access for the purpose of promoting the use of telecommunication and networking technology as a tool to enhance classroom teaching and learning. All employees and students have access to all network resources, which includes the Internet. Parents may specifically request that their child(ren) not be provided Internet access by notifying the school and Pike County Board of Education in writing. All use of the Network must be consistent with this purpose and be in accordance with this policy in an appropriate and responsible manner. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

Pike County Board of Education encourages the use of these media and associated services as a tool to enhance classroom teaching and learning. However, all computer users in Pike County School System should remember that electronic media and services provided by Pike County Board of Education are property of the Pike County Board of Education, and their purpose is to facilitate and support teaching and learning. All computer users have the responsibility to use these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

To ensure that all computer users are responsible, the following guidelines have been established for using E-mail, the Internet, personal communication devices, and network resources. No policy can provide rules to cover every possible situation. Instead, it is designed to express Pike County School System's philosophy and set forth general principles when using electronic media and services. All students and employees are required to sign an acknowledgement and acceptance of the Pike County School System acceptable use policy before being allowed access to computers and the Network within Pike County School System.

Access to Communications

Generally, electronic information created and/or communicated by a computer user using e-mail, word processing, utility programs, spreadsheets, voicemail, telephones, Internet, bulletin board system access, and similar electronic media is not reviewed by the Pike County Board of Education. Pike County Board of Education reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any user's electronic files and messages to the extent necessary to ensure electronic media and services are being used in compliance with the law, this policy, and other board policies. Users should not assume electronic communications are completely private. Accordingly, if they have sensitive information to transmit, they should use other means. Pike County Board of Education reserves the right to block any or all communication that cannot be filtered.

Artificial Intelligence

The Pike County School District recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a valuable educational tool when used responsibly. AI technologies may be used to enhance teaching, learning, creativity, productivity, and accessibility while supporting the District's educational mission.

Approved student use includes using AI to brainstorm ideas, receive tutoring or explanations, practice skills, assist with research, improve grammar and writing, generate study materials, and support creativity when permitted by the teacher

Prohibited student use includes using AI to complete assignments when prohibited by the teacher, submit AI-generated work as their own, impersonate another individual, create misleading or deceptive content, create inappropriate, threatening, discriminatory, or explicit material, generate deepfakes, bypass district security or monitoring, upload confidential student or employee information into unauthorized AI systems, and attempt to circumvent district content filtering or monitoring

Student responsibility

Students remain responsible for all work submitted under their name, regardless of whether AI tools were used. AI-generated content may contain inaccuracies, bias, or outdated information. Students are expected to verify information, exercise critical thinking, and comply with teacher expectations regarding AI use.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology and best practices.

Board of Education Limitation of Liability

The Pike County Board of Education makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the Board of Education will be error-free or without defect. The Board of Education and Pike County School System will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The Board of Education and Pike County School System are not responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system. Users will indemnify and hold the Pike County Board of Education and the school system harmless from any losses sustained as the result of intentional misuse of the system by users. The District is not responsible for the loss, corruption, interruption, or unavailability of data stored in third-party cloud services beyond its control.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

1. Digital Citizenship and Online Behavior Education

Pike County School District shall provide annual instruction to all students on responsible and appropriate online behavior. This instruction will include, but is not limited to:

- Safe and respectful communication on social networking platforms and in online forums;
- Recognition and prevention of cyberbullying;
- Protection of personal information and digital privacy;
- Identifying and avoiding online threats and inappropriate materials.

Instruction will be age-appropriate and integrated into the district's instructional programs.

2. Technology Use and Safety Training for Students and Staff

The district shall implement annual training for students and staff to ensure the safe, ethical, and effective use of technology. This training shall cover:

- Proper use of Internet resources and district-issued devices;
- Overview of the district's filtering and monitoring practices, including the use of ContentKeeper as a content filtering and web security solution;
- Procedures for reporting inappropriate content or misuse;
- Best practices for online safety and digital responsibility.

All training materials will be reviewed periodically to remain current with technological advancements and evolving threats.

3. Parental Notification and Access

Pike County School District recognizes the vital role parents and guardians play in supporting safe technology use. Therefore, the district shall:

- Provide annual notification of the district's Internet safety and acceptable use policies;
- Offer access to this policy and filtering guidelines upon request;
- Supply parents with resources and tools for supporting safe technology practices at home;
- Honor reasonable requests from parents to review or adjust their child's access to online content within district guidelines.

The district uses Securly to enforce its content filtering and monitoring policies in accordance with federal and state regulations, ensuring student protection and CIPA compliance at all times.

Extracurricular Organizations' Web and Social Media Pages

With the approval of the building principal, extracurricular organizations may establish pages on the school dist website.

All Acceptable Use Policy provisions will govern material placed on the web site.

Web and social media pages shall not:

- Contain address or phone numbers of students.
- Contain copyrighted or trademarked material without written permission.

Web pages must contain the following:

- Material must meet academic standards of proper spelling, grammar, and accuracy of information.
- Students and employees may retain the copyright on the material they create.
- All Web pages should carry a stamp indicating when it was last updated and the e-mail address of the person responsible for the page.
- All Web pages should have a link to the home page.

Network Access Statement

USERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SIGN AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SHEET THAT INCLUDES A STATEMENT THAT THEY HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND WILL ABIDE BY THE ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP). FAILURE TO SIGN THE STATEMENT WILL RESULT IN NO ACCESS TO PIKE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION NETWORK RESOURCES. Students are only allowed to utilize the computers and network to retrieve information and run specific software applications as directed by their instructor. Students are not permitted to go into the operating system to look around, run programs, or attempt to do anything they are not specifically authorized to do. It is the user's responsibility to avoid initiating access to such areas and to online material deemed inappropriate.

Privileges

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges. Any user not complying with the Pike County School System Computers and Network Resources Acceptable Use Agreement shall lose privileges. Infractions may result in appropriate disciplinary action in addition to suspension or termination of access privileges. Unauthorized use of the network, intentional deletion or damage to files and data belonging to other users, or copyright violations may be termed as theft. Before using the Internet, each student will participate in an orientation conducted by a faculty member. The orientation will be on the Pike County School System Computers and Network Resources Student Acceptable Use Guidelines. The proper use of the network and network etiquette is based upon the acceptable use guidelines in this document. The Pike County School System administrator for the Internet and the local school administrator will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decisions are final. Also, the system administrators may deny access at any time. The administration, faculty, and staff members of Pike County School System may request that a system administrator deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges.

PROHIBITED TECHNOLOGY CONDUCT INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

- Accessing, creating, transmitting, displaying, or distributing material or communications that are abusive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, obscene, sexually explicit, defamatory, disruptive to the educational environment, or otherwise prohibited by law or Board policy.
- Altering or attempting to alter the configuration of any district-owned device, operating system, browser, software, security settings, or network resource without authorization.
- Attempting to access, read, copy, alter, delete, or interfere with another user's files, email, accounts, or electronic communications without authorization.
- Damaging, vandalizing, disconnecting, disassembling, or otherwise interfering with district technology equipment, infrastructure, or network resources.
- Connecting or installing unauthorized hardware, software, browser extensions, applications, or peripheral devices on district-owned technology without prior approval from the Technology Department.
- Accessing or attempting to access unauthorized, restricted, or confidential network resources, systems, or data.
- Sharing or disclosing personal information or the personal information of others, including addresses, phone numbers, passwords, student records, financial information, Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, or other personally identifiable information, except as authorized for educational purposes.
- Downloading, installing, or using unauthorized software, games, utilities, applications, or executable files on district-owned devices or networks.
- Sending anonymous messages, impersonating another individual, forging electronic communications, or misrepresenting one's identity online.
- Plagiarizing or submitting another person's work, including content generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI), as one's own when prohibited by the teacher or school.
- Sharing passwords, QR login badges, authentication codes, multi-factor authentication approvals, or allowing another individual to use an assigned account or district-issued device without authorization.
- Creating, distributing, or using malware, viruses, ransomware, or any software or code designed to damage, disrupt, alter, destroy, monitor, or gain unauthorized access to devices, systems, or data.
- Using or attempting to use another person's account, credentials, or authenticated session.
- Using district technology resources for commercial activities, personal financial gain, political campaigning, or unauthorized advertising.
- Using district technology resources to violate any local, state, or federal law.
- Attempting to bypass or disable district security measures, Internet filtering, monitoring systems, authentication systems, or network protections through the use of VPNs, proxy services, personal hotspots, browser-based proxies, or other circumvention methods.
- Using district technology resources to scan networks, exploit vulnerabilities, capture network traffic, perform password cracking, or engage in hacking or cybersecurity testing without written authorization from the Technology Department.
- Creating, possessing, or distributing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated images, audio, video, or other content intended to impersonate, harass, intimidate, deceive, or otherwise harm another individual.
- Using district technology resources while technology privileges have been suspended or revoked.
- Using district technology resources in any manner inconsistent with instructional objectives, Board policy, administrative regulations, or directions provided by school personnel.
- Using district computers, networks, or Internet resources to retrieve information or run software applications that

have not been authorized by the teacher or are inconsistent with generally accepted standards of digital citizenship and network etiquette.

Social Media Communications

We are proud to embrace the power of social media as a tool to communicate and engage with our parents, students, and community. Negative behavior or attacks on any student or employee by a student, employee, parent, or any member of the public is disruptive to our positive learning environment. Use of social media for learning, informing, and engaging students, parents, community members, and employees in the educational process is embraced and encouraged.

Software

To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the district's computer system, unauthorized downloading of any unauthorized software is strictly prohibited. Only software registered through Pike County School System may be downloaded. Software Installation Packages from outside the school must be scanned for viruses by an authorized staff member prior to use on a district computer or the network.

Vandalism

Vandalism will result in cancellation of a user's computer privileges and/or other punishment under school policy. The Parent/Guardian is responsible for repair or replacement costs associated with intentional damage of district equipment and property.

Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Devices

Each user is responsible for his/her own digital property and should treat it and use it responsibly and appropriately. Pike County School System takes no responsibility for stolen, lost, or damaged devices, including lost or corrupted data on those devices while on Pike County School System property and will not be liable for the replacement or repair of any personal device. Students are responsible for securing their personal devices. Please check with your homeowner's policy regarding coverage of personal electronic devices, as many insurance policies can cover loss or damage.

Network Considerations

Users are expected to use Pike County School District's network resources responsibly and primarily for educational purposes. The District's network is provided to support teaching, learning, research, communication, and school operations. Students are prohibited from connecting personally owned devices to the District's wired or wireless networks unless specifically authorized by the Technology Department or school administration for an approved educational purpose. Users may not attempt to bypass or interfere with the District's network security, Internet filtering, monitoring systems, or other technology protection measures through the use of unauthorized devices, personal hotspots, virtual private networks (VPNs), proxy services, or any other circumvention methods. The District does not guarantee uninterrupted access to network resources and reserves the right to manage network traffic, restrict access, or limit the use of network resources as necessary to maintain the security, integrity, and performance of the District's technology systems.

Students and Parents/Guardians acknowledge the following:

- District-issued devices and user accounts are provided for educational purposes and remain the property of Pike County School District.
- District Internet filtering, monitoring, and other technology protection measures apply to district-issued devices and accounts as required by law and Board policy. Any attempt to bypass or disable these protections is prohibited.
- Students may not introduce malware, viruses, ransomware, unauthorized software, or any program or device intended to damage, disrupt, or gain unauthorized access to district technology resources.
- The District reserves the right to inspect, collect, examine, or restrict the use of district-issued devices and accounts when there is reasonable suspicion of misuse, damage, security concerns, or violations of Board policy or law.
- The building principal and the Director of Technology, or their designees, shall make the final determination regarding inappropriate use of District technology resources. Technology access or account privileges may be suspended or revoked pending investigation of suspected violations. School administrators, teachers, and staff may request that a student's technology use or account activity be reviewed when inappropriate use is suspected.

USE OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Georgia's Distraction-Free Education O.C.G.A. § 20-2-324.8

By creating environments free from the distractions of cell phones and personal electronic communication devices, Pike County Schools is committed to ensuring that students are provided with every opportunity to focus on learning and engage in positive interactions to support their well-being.

All K-12 students' cell phones and personal electronic devices must be turned off and stored away, not on person, during the bell-to-bell school day. A personal electronic device is defined in law as any portable electronic device capable of transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media. This includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, E-readers, headphones, personal computers, gaming devices, or other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission.

The restrictions required by law do not apply to school buses, bus stops, or school grounds before and after the bell-to-bell day. Cell phone use during these times is at the discretion of the driver, sponsor, or supervisor of the students.

Expectations:

Students must comply with staff directives and the provisions of this policy to avoid disruption of the educational environment, or they may be subject to disciplinary actions in compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Taking photos or videos of classmates, peers, and staff without the prior approval of an administrator or staff member is strictly prohibited on school property, including school buses, or while involved in school-related activities.

Disability and Other Accommodations:

Exceptions may be granted **only** when a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or individualized medical plan explicitly requires the use of a personal electronic device as an assistive technology or medical necessity.

The device must be specifically identified in the plan (e.g., tablet with text-to-speech software, communication device, medical monitoring device).

Device use is limited to the purposes outlined in the plan and during times necessary to fulfill the accommodation. Unauthorized or non-educational use of the device outside these purposes is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

Notifications:

The district or individual schools within the district shall not assume any responsibility or liability for theft, loss, or damage to a personal electronic device.

USE OF STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS/ LIKENESS

During the school year there are opportunities for students to have pictures and/or information about themselves in the various publications. These publications include but are not limited to newspapers, newsletters, yearbook, clubs, PTO programs, Booster organizations, School/School organization Facebook pages, Pike Portraits, and Student of the Month. This information is for the purpose of recognition for awards, honors, and/or achievements (honor roll, merit roll, student of the month, contests winners, etc.) they may have received. On rare occasions, a television news crew may be on campus and may photograph and/or interview students to show on television that evening. Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act FERPA), parents have a right to deny the publication of such information about their children. It is the obligation of the parent/guardian to indicate that preference in the PowerSchool Parent Portal if permission is NOT granted for the use of student photographs in situations such as, but not limited to, those mentioned above. This request must be submitted annually.

WITHDRAWAL GUIDELINES

For the purpose of accurately measuring the academic performance of students continuously enrolled in public schools, the Pike County Board of Education adopts the following State Board of Education criteria for withdrawing students.

Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who:

- Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences
- Is not subject to compulsory school attendance
- Is not receiving instructional services through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the

federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall use his/her best efforts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such a student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program. Appropriate school personnel shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

Parent Permission to Drop Out (Senate Bill 413)

In accordance with state law, an un-emancipated minor who wishes to withdraw must have the written permission of his/her parent or guardian if under the age of eighteen prior to withdrawing. Prior to accepting such permission, a school administrator will have a conference with the student and parent/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.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program. Reflective and instructional alternative discipline methods may be used, if appropriate. Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.16 Unsafe School Choice Option.

Parents and police will be notified in every instance where the law is violated.

The local Board of Education shall observe Georgia Law in developing and implementing disciplinary hearings held by a disciplinary hearing officer, disciplinary panel, or disciplinary tribunal pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751 through 20-2-759 including to honor disciplinary orders of private schools and other public schools/school systems pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2. Refer to FCBOE Policy JCEB for student disciplinary tribunal hearings. *Each local board of education shall make available to all Qualified Student Discipline Hearing Officers and Disciplinary Tribunal or Panel Members the initial and ongoing tribunal training course prior to the individuals serving in such capacity. The local board of education shall ensure initially trained student discipline hearing officers and disciplinary tribunal, or panel members undergo continuing education so as to continue to serve in such capacity.*

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline 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. All due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed. The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those consistent with sustained academic and personal success.

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Loss of Privileges
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Parent Conference
- Detention/Saturday School
- Temporary Placement in Alternative Education Program
- Short-Term Suspension
- Referral to a Hearing Officer or Tribunal for Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia Law requires that certain acts of misconduct are referred to law enforcement officials. The school shall refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when

school officials believe a breach of the law has occurred.

Detention

Detention is a requirement that a student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to complete work missed, complete assignments, or receive specific instruction in behavior modification. One (1) day notice will be given. Detention may require the student's attendance before school, after school, or on Saturday.

Saturday School

Saturday School is an instructional activity held on Saturday which allows a student to complete work that was assigned when they were absent during the regular school day, complete missing assignments, or as an optional discipline strategy. Saturday School may be assigned by a building-level administrator to address certain school discipline infractions. With parental consent, Saturday School for disciplinary infractions may involve community service activities such as trash pick-up, weeding flower beds, sweeping, etc. Saturday School for incomplete assignments must be attended by a parent, and the parent must remain with the student until the work is complete or the lesson ends.

In-School Suspension

The In-School Suspension program is designed for minor infractions that necessitate the student's removal from the general classroom setting. The student is assigned to a classroom monitored by a teacher or paraprofessional to complete the day's schoolwork in isolation for a specified period of time at the local school. Classwork assignments are sent to the student by the student's teachers. Students are excluded from all school-sponsored activities until completion of the assigned dates.

Short-Term Suspension

Before a student is suspended for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. If the student is suspended, the student's parents will be notified. During the term of the suspension, the student is not allowed on Pike County School property or at any school activity or school-sponsored activity. This provision begins immediately upon notification by the school to the student and the parent.

Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion

The maximum punishment for an offense may include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion; however, long-term suspension and expulsion will be determined only by a hearing officer or a disciplinary tribunal as outlined in the Pike County Board of Education Policies. Long term-suspension occurs when a student is prohibited by the District from attending school for more than ten consecutive days. Expulsion occurs when a student is prohibited from attending school for the remainder of the year, end of the grading period, into the next year, or permanently. Parents or students may elect not to contest the alleged violation of the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline. In such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving their right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer. Such an agreement and waiver must also be approved by the disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer in accordance with local board policy. The District reserves the right to withhold a waiver offer.

Searches

School officials may search a student and their personal possessions if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Student vehicles, student bags, student electronic devices, school lockers, desks, and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without prior notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, cell phones, lockers, or vehicles brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon-sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities that occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of an administrator.

Some of the disciplinary actions that may be used for student violations of the Code of Conduct include the following:

- **Warning/Reprimand:** Students will be warned that they may be punished if the misbehavior continues.
- **Detention:** Detention may be used to address tardiness, behavior detrimental to learning, and physical contact between students that is deemed inappropriate. For each day assigned to detention, students will be required to spend a period of time, not to exceed one supervised hour, completing assigned class work. No other activity will be allowed during detention.
- **In-School Suspension:** This program is designed to isolate students who violate certain school rules from their regularly-assigned classrooms and school activities, while allowing students the opportunity to progress with classroom assignments. While assigned to In-School Suspension, students may not participate in or attend

any extracurricular activity, including athletic participation and other school events. If students violate any rule of the In-School Suspension program, they will be suspended from the program and from school for the remaining number of days those students were assigned to In-School Suspension. Students assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS) who choose to serve their suspension at home or are removed from ISS for any violation of the Code of Conduct will not be allowed to make-up schoolwork missed.

A suspension or expulsion is for a specific term and includes suspension or expulsion from all regular school activities, extracurricular school activities, athletic participation, and other school events.

- **Short-Term Suspension:** Students subject to a short-term suspension will be suspended from school for not more than five (5) consecutive days.
- **Long-Term Suspension:** Students subject to a long-term suspension will be suspended from school for more than five (5) consecutive days but not beyond the end of the current semester.
- **Expulsion:** Students subject to an expulsion will be suspended from school beyond the end of the current semester.
- **Permanent Expulsion:** Students subject to a permanent expulsion from school will be permanently suspended from school at all times after the effective date of the permanent expulsion beyond the current semester and not allowed to attend any Pike County Schools.
- **School Personnel:** Persons employed by the Pike County Board of Education, their agents, representatives, adult invitees, adult guests, and School Resource Panels.

Suspension or Expulsion from School

All In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, or Expulsion shall also include suspension from all regular school activities, extracurricular school activities, athletic participation, and other school events. While students are suspended pending a disciplinary tribunal hearing, they will be allowed to make-up schoolwork during the suspension time.

TRANSPORTATION DISCIPLINE PROGRESSION

Bus discipline is cumulative for the entire school year and will not reset at the semester. Serious infractions that occur on the bus will be addressed through the regular code of conduct and these infractions will also count towards the total number of bus referrals for the year (i.e. fighting, vaping, etc.). These infractions may result in disciplinary measures beyond a standard bus suspension and may include ISS, OSS, or a hearing pending a tribunal.

- 1st bus referral: warning and/or up to 2-days bus suspension
- 2nd bus referral: up to 3- day bus suspension
- 3rd bus referral: 5-day bus suspension
- 4th bus referral: 10- day bus suspension
- 5th bus referral: Bus suspension for the remainder of the school year

THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS ARE THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF OFFENSES WHICH ARE PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT

SECTION 1 OFFENSES (see protocols for Vaping use/possession)

1. **Academic Dishonesty:** Intentional receiving or providing of unauthorized assistance and/or intentional plagiarism on classroom assignments, projects, and assessments. In addition to discipline, actions outlined in the school grading policy will be applied.
2. **Behavior Detrimental to Learning:** Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, unexcused tardies to school or class and conduct that disrupts the learning environment.
3. ****Bullying:** The 1st offense of participation in written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4.
4. **Bus Conduct:** Violation of the bus conduct policy.
5. **Disrespectful Behavior:** Being disrespectful to students, school personnel, or other persons.
6. **Dress Code:** Violation of the dress code policy. Students shall dress in a manner that is reasonable and not distracting to other students and teachers. The dress of students must be in good taste and appropriate for school activities.
7. **Encouraging Prohibited Behavior:** Inciting, encouraging, counseling, or advising others to engage in prohibited behavior that violates the Pike County Code of Conduct Parent Manual or any policy of the District.

A student violates this rule when he/she verbally or physically encourages others to engage in prohibited behavior, which may include oral instruction or physically showing a student how to engage in prohibited behavior. Included in this would be photographing, videoing, or simulating the act of videoing a school fight and/or distribution of photos/video of a school fight.

8. **False Information:** Deliberately giving false or misleading information, including, but not limited to, forgery and altering records.
9. **Gambling:** Includes, but is not limited to, betting money or other items on card games, dice games, or the outcome of athletic contests or other activities, and/or possession of gambling materials or paraphernalia. Activities requiring such items under the supervision of school personnel for instructional purposes are allowed.
10. **Hazardous Objects:** Possession of any hazardous objects on school grounds, school busses, school bus stops, or school events *without intent to use*;
11. **Inappropriate Behaviors or Comments:** Behaviors that are inappropriate to an orderly and safe school environment, or comments that are inappropriate to another student or a staff member that do not rise to the level of threat or verbal abuse, or behaviors that are inappropriate to an orderly and safe school environment.
12. **Inappropriate Items:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any material, substance, food item, or personal belonging that is inappropriate for school. (Toy guns are not appropriate items to bring to school).
13. **Inappropriate Physical Contact between Students:** Includes, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, inappropriate display of affection, or inappropriate touching (including touching the private parts of self or others).
14. **Inappropriate Restroom Behavior:** Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to: multiple students in stalls, looking under stalls, intentionally clogging toilets/sinks, damaging or destroying fixtures.
15. **Insubordination:** Being insubordinate to school personnel or approved school volunteers.
16. **Leaving the classroom without permission**
17. **Miscellaneous Violations:** Violating any other Board of Education or school rule, including, but not limited to, failing to report to detention and/or violating rules of the In-School Suspension program.
18. **Unauthorized Possession of Electronic Communication Devices:** Displaying or using a cell phone, pager, or other electronic communication device during the school day without the consent of the principal or his/her designee.
19. **Over-the-Counter Medication:** Using or possessing over-the-counter medication at school without the written consent of the principal or his/her designee.
20. **Personal Electronic Devices:** The unauthorized possession or use of personal electronic devices as described within Pike County Schools' Distraction Free Education policy.
21. **Profanity:** Using profane, vulgar, obscene, insulting, or threatening language, gestures, graphics, or materials, whether spoken, written, gestured, or communicated in person or via any electronic device, directed towards any person other than school personnel.
22. **Racial Slur:** Using words or language that involves a negative connotation about a person's race or ethnic origin not specifically directed at any one individual or groups of individuals.
23. **Skippping School:** Leaving school, skipping school, or skipping class without permission.
24. **Tobacco/Vaping/Other Nicotine Products and Paraphernalia:** Possessing any tobacco/vaping/other nicotine products and paraphernalia **or products that simulate these restricted items** (Vaping protocols listed separately)
25. **Unauthorized Areas:** Being in an unauthorized area without permission.
26. **Academic Dishonesty:** Misrepresenting someone else's work as one's own or helping others do the same. This may include, but is not limited to: copying from a peer, website, or other work without appropriate citation; submitting AI-generated content as original work; cheating on an assignment, sharing answers with others.) In addition to discipline, actions outlined in the school handbook may be applied, which may include a grade of 0 for the assignment in question.

Disciplinary Actions for Section 1 Violations (see protocols for Vaping use/possession)

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Section 1 offense can result in disciplinary action as outlined below:

- **1st Violation:** Verbal Warning and Administrative Directive or In-School Suspension up to two (2) school days.

- **2nd Violation:** In-School Suspension up to three (3) school days.
 - **3rd Violation:** In-School Suspension up to five (5) school days.
 - **4th Violation:** Out-of-School Suspension up to two (2) school days (Chronic Discipline Plan Information Provided). At this step the administration reserves the right to prohibit students from participating in any planned special activities including, but not limited to: Field days, end of year or holiday celebrations, pep rallies, dances, attending sporting events on campus, etc.). The administration further reserves the right to prohibit students from attending any off-campus activities including field trips.
 - **5th Violation:** Out-of-School Suspension up to three (3) school days.
 - **6th Violation:** Out-of-School Suspension up to five (5) school days.
- Identified as Chronic Discipline (Chronic Discipline Plan goes into effect)
 Required parent/guardian conference to develop Behavior Correction Plan required before returning to school.
- 1st violation after Chronic Discipline Conference:** Out-of-School Suspension up to seven (7) days.
 - 2nd violation after Chronic Discipline Conference:** Out-of-School Suspension for ten (10) days pending Disciplinary Tribunal.

Administrative Directives and Additional Disciplinary Actions for Section 1 Violations

Administrative Directives are phone calls made to the student's parent or guardian, an individualized behavioral contract, behavioral checklist, and/or counseling. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the Section 1 violation, school administrators shall have the discretion to deviate from the progressive discipline policy. If the Section 1 violation warrants deviation from the progressive discipline policy, a student may be given a Verbal Warning, Administrative Directive, assigned to In-School Suspension for up to five (5) consecutive days, be given a Short-Term Suspension, or be sent to a Disciplinary Tribunal hearing for the Section 1 Offense, regardless of the number of previous violations.

SECTION 2 OFFENSES

1. **Academic Dishonesty:** Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a major exam, statewide assessment, or project or the falsification of school records (including forgery). In addition to discipline, actions outlined in the school grading policy will be applied.
2. ***Battery:** The act of beating someone with successive blows or offensive touching or use of force on a person without the person's consent.
3. ****Bullying:** The 2nd offense of participation in written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4.
4. **Deliberate Physical Aggression** - Intentional physical actions directed at another individual with the purpose of intimidating, asserting control, provoking a reaction, or causing discomfort or minor harm. These actions exceed inappropriate or incidental contact and demonstrate a willful disregard for school norms and personal boundaries, but do not meet the threshold for "Battery" (i.e., they do not result in serious bodily harm or medical intervention).
5. **Disruption of School:** Causing or contributing to the disruption and interference of school operations. An example of prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, causing, participating in, or encouraging a food fight.
6. **Failure to Report:** Failure to report to a teacher or administrator the knowledge of an event, device, object, or substance that could cause harm to self or others.
7. ***Fighting:** For the purpose of this offense, fighting shall include, but not be limited to, hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, or other physical contact with another student or person that is not school personnel and does not rise to the level of Excessive Physical Contact as defined in Section 3.
8. **Gang Affiliation:** Exhibiting gang affiliation, as evidenced by a common identifying sign, symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic.
9. **Giving False Information:** Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.
10. **Inappropriate Activity:** Illicit activity on school grounds which does not rise to the severity of Section 3 Sexual Misconduct.

11. **Medical Substance Containing Alcohol:** Possessing any substance containing alcohol which is normally used for medical purposes that has not been reported to the appropriate school official in accordance with the Medicine Policy.
12. **Non-Dangerous Use of Hazardous Objects:** Displaying, using, or otherwise exhibiting intent to use a hazardous object in such a manner that is neither dangerous or threatening to the student, other students, personnel, or any other person. If the hazardous object is displayed or used, or the student exhibits an intent to use the object in such a way that the object could be considered a dangerous weapon, refer to Section 3, Rule 6 or Section 4, Rule 1.
13. **Possessing Obscene Materials:** Possessing obscene or vulgar materials when such conduct does not involve another student.
14. **Possession of Prescription Drugs:** Possession of prescription medication which was prescribed to you by a doctor but has not been reported to appropriate school officials in accordance with the Medicine Policy.
15. **Profanity Directed at School Personnel:** Using profane, vulgar, obscene, insulting, or threatening language, gestures, graphics, or materials, whether spoken, written, gestured, or communicated in person or via any electronic device, directed toward school personnel.
16. **Racial Slur:** Using words or language that involves a negative connotation about a person's race or ethnic origin specifically directed at any one individual or groups of individuals.
17. **Restricted Areas:** Entering, directing, or soliciting another student to enter an area designated for the opposite sex only.
18. **Theft:** Theft, including, but not limited to, attempted theft, extortion, bribery, theft by deception, and/or possession of stolen property.
19. **Tobacco/Vaping/Other Nicotine Products and Paraphernalia:** Using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any tobacco/vaping/other nicotine products and paraphernalia or products that simulate these restricted items. (Vaping protocols listed separately)
20. **Threat or Intimidation:** Verbal, written, physical, or electronic communication that expresses an intent to harm, frighten, or intimidate another individual or group, or that creates a significant disruption to the school environment, **without rising to the level of a terroristic threat.** This may include conditional threats ("If you do that, I'll hurt you"), menacing gestures, or intimidating language that causes fear.
21. **Unintentional Physical Contact with School Personnel:** Unintentional but inappropriate physical contact or action with school personnel.
22. **Unintentional Possession of a Knife or Knife-like Item:** Unintentional possession of a knife or knife-like item on school property without intent to harm or intimidate.
23. **Vandalism:** Vandalizing school or personal property, regardless of whether there is a monetary loss of value. Parent/Guardian may be held liable for repair and/or replacement costs resulting from vandalism.
24. **Verbal Abuse:** Verbally abusing others, including, but not limited to, threats, intimidation, harassing, or taunting in person, on the internet, or by other modes of electronic communications.
25. **Viewing Obscene Materials:** Accessing or viewing obscene or vulgar materials when such conduct does not involve another person.
26. **Violation of Electronics and Technology Policy:** Misuse of electronic or technological resources or devices, including, but not limited to, unauthorized access to the system network; creating "deep fake" images or videos to alter or change an image or video of someone; creating or using false usernames, passwords, or proxies; transmitting unauthorized or malicious programs or viruses; or using the email or messaging account of another without permission to send communications.

Disciplinary Actions for Section 2 Offenses

1st Offense During School Year: Engaging in or attempting to commit any Section 2 offense during a school year can result in the student being assigned 10 consecutive school days of In-School Suspension OR Short-Term Suspension, not a combination thereof. If the student commits any Section 1 violation while serving In-School Suspension, then the student will serve the remainder of the suspension out of school.

2nd and Any Subsequent Offense During School Year: Any student engaged in or attempting to commit a second or subsequent Section 2 offense during a school year will result in the student being assigned to In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to a Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel. If the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel finds the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a second or subsequent Section 2

offense, the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel will issue either a long-term suspension or expulsion from school. The student will be allowed to enroll at PCAP, provided the student complies with the enrollment rules of the program.

Administrative Directives and Additional Disciplinary Actions for Section 2 Violations

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the Section 2 violation, school administrators shall have the discretion to deviate from the progressive discipline policy. If the Section 2 violation warrants deviation from the progressive discipline policy, a student may be given 10 consecutive days of In-School Suspension, assigned a Short-Term Suspension, or be sent to a Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing for the Section 2 offense regardless of the number of previous violations.

SECTION 3 OFFENSES

1. **Alcoholic Beverages:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, receiving, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, whether at school or any school-related activity prior to attending school or a school-related activity.
2. **Attempting to make or inadvertent inappropriate physical contact of a violent nature or action with school personnel.**
3. **Counterfeit Money:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, receiving, or exchanging any counterfeit money.
4. **Bullying, Third Offense:** The 3rd offense of participation in written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4.
5. **Damaging or Setting Off a Fire Alarm:** To willfully damage or destroy a school fire alarm so as to endanger human life, or to set off a school fire alarm with no reasonable belief that a fire exists on the school premises. This offense shall also include refusing to evacuate the building when a fire alarm sounds or an evacuation of a school is ordered.
6. **Dangerous or Threatening Use of a Hazardous Object:** The intentional display, brandishing, or use of a hazardous object in a threatening, intimidating, or reckless manner that causes fear or potential danger to others. While the object may not meet the legal definition of a weapon, its use in this context creates a clear threat or risk to the safety or security of others. (Swinging or thrusting a metal rod, belt, or heavy item toward another student, holding up scissors or tools in a threatening posture, throwing a hard object with force near someone, even if not intended to hit, making verbal threats while holding a hazardous item, advancing on another person with clenched hazardous object in hand, etc.)
7. **Drugs:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, receiving, or being under the influence of any Schedule I, II, III, or IV drug as defined by the Official Code of the State of Georgia, or any substance or chemical that is mood altering when taken that has not been prescribed to the student taking the substance or the chemical, including any substance represented to be or reasonably appearing to be any type of drug.
8. ***Excessive Physical Contact:** The use of *excessive* force resulting in harmful contact with a student or person other than school personnel referenced in Section 4. This includes, but is not limited to, fights that are beyond a Section 2 fight that are violent or planned or cause a disruption of the school environment or educational process, group fights of 3 or more individuals, and/or fights that cause an injury.
9. **False Representation of Substances:** False representation of a substance to be a drug for which the student has no valid prescription, or false representation of a substance to be an illegal drug as defined under the laws of the State of Georgia.
10. **Failure to provide notification of charge, adjudication, or conviction of a felony:** Upon any enrolled student being charged, adjudicated, or convicted of a felony offense as defined in Section 4, Rule 3, or Rule 4, the student shall immediately notify the Principal and the Superintendent of said charges, adjudication, or conviction and shall provide to the Principal and Superintendent a copy of all documents received by the student concerning said charges, adjudication, or conviction, including any probation terms. This includes any offense held in abeyance or given first offender status. Failure to provide the required documents shall be grounds for disciplinary action consistent with Section 3 offenses below.
11. **Gang-Related Activity:** Engaging in gang-related activity that encourages, solicits, promotes, condones, causes, assists, or abets any illegal or disruptive act.
12. **Incarceration: Failure to Notify:** Incarceration at a Department of Juvenile Justice Facility or at any criminal detention facility maintained by a local government or state Department of Corrections for any period. Upon release, the student and parent/guardian shall immediately notify the Principal and the Superintendent of said

charges, conviction, or adjudication, and shall provide to the Principal and Superintendent a copy of all documents received by the student concerning said charges, conviction, or adjudication, including any bond or probation terms. Failure to provide the required documents shall be grounds for disciplinary action consistent with Section 3 offenses below.

13. **Prescription Medication:** Possessing, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, distributing, or receiving any prescription drug not prescribed to the student in possession thereof or wrongfully possessing, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, distributing, or receiving any prescription drug that is prescribed to the student, or the use of any substance represented to be a prescription drug prior to or after attending school or a school-related activity that was not prescribed for the student.
14. **Possession of Obscene Materials Involving Another Student**
15. **Nine or More Section 1 Offenses:** Accumulation of nine (9) or more Section 1 offenses in one academic school year.
16. **Sexual Misconduct:** Illicit behavior on school grounds that includes, but is not limited to, indecent exposure; displaying or disseminating obscene or indecent images or videos; using any electronic or other devices to take or forward inappropriate, indecent, vulgar, sexual, or obscene pictures of students, minors, or school employees; and touching of intimate body parts of oneself or another person that rises above inappropriate activities in Section 2.
17. **Terroristic Threats:** A terroristic threat is any communication that could be perceived as a threat by a school administrator to commit any act of violence or to burn or damage property. Terroristic threats shall also include, but are not limited to: making false calls to 911 which have the effect of causing a lock-down of a school building; the evacuation of a school building; the search of a school building or any bus, property, or building belonging to the school district by the school resource panel or any other public safety panel or agency; or the use of electronic communication to convey text, video, or images which have the effect of causing a disruption of the school environment.
18. **Theft, greater than \$500:** Theft, including, but not limited to, attempted theft, extortion, bribery, theft by deception, and or/possession of stolen property when the value of the property is greater than \$500.00 as estimated by school officials.
19. **Vandalism, damage greater than \$500:** Vandalizing school or personal property, with the cost of damages being greater than \$500.00 as estimated by school officials.

Disciplinary Actions for Section 3 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Section 3 offense during a school year will result in the student being assigned Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to a Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel. If the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel finds the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a Section 3 offense, the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel will issue either a long-term suspension or expulsion from school. The student will be allowed to enroll at PCAP, provided the student complies with the enrollment rules of the program.

If the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel finds that the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a second or subsequent Section 3 offense during a school year, the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Hearing Panel will issue either a long-term suspension or expulsion from school.

SECTION 4 OFFENSES

1. **Possession of a Firearm, Dangerous Weapon, or Explosive Compound:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any firearm, dangerous weapon, explosive compound, or an object that can reasonably be considered and/or used as a weapon.
 - Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun, or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O. C. G. A. § 16-11-121, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.
 - Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid bludgeon-type weapons, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected

in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or taser in subsection (a) of Code Section 16-11-106. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

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

2. Intentional physical contact or action of an insulting or provoking nature with a school employee.

3. Adjudication or Conviction of a Felony: The adjudication or conviction of an enrolled student or a student seeking enrollment that involves one or more of the following violent criminal offenses and which makes his/her continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process:

- a. Murder (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-1);
- b. Voluntary Manslaughter (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-2);
- c. Rape (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-1);
- d. Aggravated Sodomy (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-2);
- e. Aggravated Child Molestation (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-4);
- f. Aggravated Battery (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-24); and
- g. Aggravated Armed Robbery (O.C.G.A. § 16-8-41).

4. Adjudication or Conviction of Felony (All others): The adjudication or conviction of a student of an offense that is designated as a felony under the laws of the State of Georgia or a felony under the laws of the United States of America and which makes his/her continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Disciplinary Actions for Section 4 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Section 4 offense will result in the student being assigned Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being assigned to a Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel. A student charged with violating a Section 4 offense may not execute a waiver of the Disciplinary Hearing. If the Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal Panel finds that the student has committed any Section 4 offense, the student will receive a minimum one-year of expulsion but may receive the punishment of permanent expulsion.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT GR. 6-8

Interscholastic extracurricular programs are an integral component of the total educational program and a means of developing positive attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Pike County Schools encourage participation in a variety of extracurricular activities.

Participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is a privilege and not a property right. The Code of Conduct establishes high expectations regarding behavior by establishing minimum and consistent consequences when violations occur.

Non PCMS Participation

8th grade students/athletes may try out for offered sub-varsity teams. Homeschooled students follow the Dexter Mosley Act (Senate Bill 42) [SB42 Guidance-Dexter Mosely Act](#) for eligibility information.

Violations and Consequences

Students enrolled in Alternative Program = Ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities

Each team has their own team rules that can/will be enforced beyond what is outlined below. Playing time will be

determined by the coach after discipline is served.

In-School-Suspension (In Season – First Practice)

1st offense = No practice while serving discipline and one contest / activity suspension, not including any missed competition during ISS.

2nd offense = 1-2 game suspension (coaches' discretion) /scheduled extracurricular activities. No practice while serving ISS.

3rd offense = Dismissed from team / activity, no participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the current semester and the following semester.

Out-of-School Suspension (In Season – First Practice)

1st offense = One contest / activity suspension, not including any missed competition during OSS. No practice until the first non-discipline day back to school.

2nd offense = Suspension equal to 50% of the season or removal from the activity based on remaining contests.

3rd offense = Dismissed from team / activity, no participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the current semester and the following semester.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT GR. 9-12

Interscholastic extracurricular programs are an integral component of the total educational program and a means of developing positive attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Pike County Schools encourage participation in a variety of extracurricular activities.

Participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is a privilege and not a property right. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to establish high expectations regarding behavior by establishing minimum and consistent consequences when violations occur.

Non Pike County High School Enrolled Student Participation

8th grade students/athletes may try out for offered sub varsity teams. Homeschooled students follow the Dexter Mosley Act (Senate Bill 42) [SB42 Guidance-Dexter Mosely Act](#) for eligibility information.

Students enrolled in Pike County Alternative Program are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

Hazing

1st offense = Suspension from any contest/activity for 25% of the season.

2nd offense = Dismissed from team/activity, no participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the current semester and the following semester.

Code of Conduct Violations resulting in In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension

ISS Assignments:

1 day = Notify in season coaches/Activity sponsors

2 days = Notify in season coaches/activity sponsors, no participation until completion of ISS

3 days = Notify in season coaches/activity sponsors, no participation until completion of ISS, held out of the first half of the next competition/activity

Out-of-School Suspension

1st offense = One contest / activity suspension, not including any missed competition during OSS

2nd offense = Suspension equal to 25% of the season or removal from the activity based on remaining contests.

3rd offense = Dismissed from team / activity, no participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the current semester and the following semester.

Removal from a Georgia High School Athletic Competition

1st Removal = game suspensions & sportsmanship course as outlined in the GHSA constitution.

2nd Removal = removal from the team and no athletic participation for the remainder of the season.

NICOTINE AND VAPING PROTOCOLS

NOT TO INCLUDE THC PRODUCTS (SEE SECTION 3, RULE 7)

Grades 6-8 Nicotine Products Possession/Use:

First Offense: 3 Days ISS + Required Vaping and JUULing Module

Second Offense: 2 Days OSS

Third Offense: 5 Days OSS

Fourth Offense: 10 Days OSS Pending Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

**Any waiver agreed upon will include a substance abuse/addiction workshop option.

Grade 6-8 Nicotine Distribution (possession of 2 or more vaping devices and/or sharing one device with others)

First Offense: 2 Days OSS + Required Vaping and JUULing Module

Second Offense: 5 Days OSS

Third Offense: 7 Days OSS

Fourth Offense: 10 Days OSS Pending Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

**Any waiver agreed upon will include a substance abuse/addiction workshop option.

Grade 9-12 Nicotine Possession/Use

First Offense: 3 Days OSS + Required Vaping and JUULing Module

Second Offense: 5 Days OSS

Third Offense: 10 Days OSS Pending Disciplinary Hearing

**Any waiver agreed upon will include a substance abuse/addiction workshop option.

Grade 9-12 Nicotine Distribution (possession of 2 or more vaping devices and/or sharing one device with others)

First Offense: 5 Days OSS + Required Vaping and JUULing Module

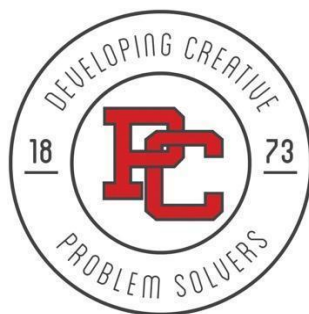
Second Offense: 7 Days OSS

Third Offense: 10 Days OSS Pending Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

**Any waiver agreed upon will include a substance abuse/addiction workshop option.

Grades 6-12 THC Products (Possession and/or Use):

1st Offense: 10 Days OSS Pending Disciplinary Tribunal



PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Board Members

Mr. Allen Edwards, Board Chair, District 2

Mr. Floyd Miller, Board Vice-Chair, District 6

Mr. Brian Hubbard, District 1

Ms. Emily O'Steen, District 3

Ms. Marcie Bradberry, District 4

Mr. L. Blaine Hoopes, Jr., District 5

Superintendent

Mr. Shane Williamson, Ed. S.

Pike County Board of Education

7454 US Highway 19 South

Zebulon, Ga. 30295

Telephone Number 770-567-8489

Fax Number 678-359-9675

