

Columbia County School System Elementary School Code of Conduct

To Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Every student in Columbia County deserves the opportunity to take advantage of the instructional program. Parents and guardians, you play a significant role in student success because you are ultimately responsible for the actions of your children. When students choose to exhibit disruptive or inappropriate behavior, they diminish the learning experience for themselves and others. As the superintendent of schools, I fully support the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove from the classroom any student who repeatedly and/or substantially interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or the students' ability to learn.

This brochure will inform you of actions which violate school and bus rules as well as the age appropriate disciplinary consequences for each. It is each student's responsibility to know and follow these rules and to do his or her part to maintain a safe learning environment in the school. Additionally, it is very important that everyone take particular notice of the following items:

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Please note that the following is not an all encompassing list of offenses but a description of types of behavior which interfere with our students' right to learn. Such inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated in our schools. Additional offenses may be proscribed by each school's student handbook or by administrative or faculty personnel.

To help Columbia County schools provide a positive learning environment, please discuss these rules as a family and contact your school principal if you have any questions. Working together, we can ensure a successful, positive school year for all!

Charles R. Nagle, Superintendent

STATEMENT ON AUTHORITY OF PRINCIPAL

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, with the staff, is charged by the superintendent with the safe and orderly operation of the school. In case of disciplinary violations not covered by this brochure, the principal may impose corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student involved and the school.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESSES

The Columbia County Board of Education provides a variety of resources which are available at every school to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline program will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. These resources include, but are not limited to, the Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions, school counselors, school social workers, and chronic disciplinary problem student behavior plans.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE, WEAPONS, DRUGS, AND ALCOHOL ON THE SCHOOL CAMPUS

Physical acts of violence against teachers or other school employees, unlawful possession and/or use of weapons, possession or sale of illicit drugs or alcohol on school property, any sexual offense, any substantial physical or visible bodily harm to or seriously disfiguring another person, including another student, by students are illegal, wrong, and harmful and will not be tolerated by the school system officials. Compliance with this standard of conduct is mandatory.

POLICIES FOR REMOVAL OF STUDENTS FROM CLASSROOM FOR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Students who engage in repeated disruptive behavior may be immediately removed from the classroom and subject to the disciplinary provisions in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated §20-2-738.

STUDENT OFFENSES AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Progressive discipline processes are designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline imposed by each school will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student, the previous discipline history of the student and other relevant factors, while ensuring that each student receives the due process mandated by federal and state law. Parents, guardians, teachers, community representatives and school administrators all work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance, by reviewing the CCSS Code of Conduct on a regular basis through the School Council process.

The following listing of offenses and dispositions is in accordance with established disciplinary procedures and policies of the Columbia County School System. School personnel, parents, and students should be aware of the following:

- The school principal will, in every case, take initial disciplinary action.
- The hearing officer may assist in cases, if requested by principal or parent.
- The principal, at his or her discretion, may take action that ranges from a simple reprimand to a ten-day suspension from school. Offenses that warrant suspension beyond ten days will be referred to the hearing officer. The case will then be processed in accordance with the regulations governing the hearing process as established by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated §20-2-754 and Columbia County Board of Education policy.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. Parents, guardians, law enforcement officials and the Superintendent's Office will be notified when any criminal conduct occurs on school property.
2. Parents are encouraged to discuss with their children the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.
3. A student guilty of repeated violations of school policy is demonstrating insubordination, disregarding school authority, and/or is interrupting the instructional process. The student may be recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion.
4. Suspension, when deemed necessary, will begin no later than the day following an act subject to suspension, provided that due process rights can be afforded within this time.
5. Students suspended from other school systems will not be eligible for enrollment during the time of suspension.
6. Offenses, which are punishable by short-term suspension of less than ten days, will be disposed of preferably through in-school suspension.
7. Students that are assigned in-school-suspension, out-of-school suspension, long-term suspension or expulsion from school may not attend or participate in any school functions and may not be on the home school campus without the principal's permission.
8. When student behavior results in damages, the restitution amount will be determined by the following authority:
 - A. School Property - Director of Facilities and Maintenance
 - B. School Buses - Director of Transportation
 - C. Salaries - Controller
 - D. All Other - Principal

JURISDICTION

The Columbia County Board of Education shall have jurisdiction over all offenses occurring on campus, on school property, on school buses/school bus stops or other school vehicles, at school sponsored events, or off school property provided that the actions cause a substantial disruption of the educational environment.

Any student who has been arrested, charged, or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony offense or a delinquent act occurring off school property and whose presence at school is reasonably certain to endanger other students or staff or causes substantial disruption to the educational climate, may be disciplined and/or suspended from school.

The school bus/school bus stop is considered an extension of the classroom. Student behavior on the school bus/school bus stop is subject to the provisions of this code of conduct.

Student behavior on a school-sponsored trip is subject to the provisions of this code of conduct. A school-sponsored trip is defined as any off-campus experience whereby one or more students, under the supervision of school personnel, represent the school in some capacity. The trip begins upon arrival at school and concludes upon return to school and dismissal from campus.

CONTRABAND

When there is reasonable suspicion, a student's person, possessions, or automobile parked on school property may be searched by school officials. The proper law enforcement agencies will be called, at the request of the administration, to use metal detectors and drug sniffing dogs to provide for the safety of all students. Lockers and desks are school property and may be opened and searched at any time.

If weapons or drugs are found on school property by a student, they should not be placed in pockets or concealed in any manner, but should be immediately given to school officials and then turned over to the proper law enforcement agency. Should a student find while on school property or at a school-related function that he/she is in possession of a weapon such as a knife, he/she should turn that item in to the school administration immediately. If after the administrator's investigation that this possession is as reported by the student and no other evidence contrary to the student's report is determined, disciplinary action other than long-term suspension or expulsion may be imposed.

Contraband is defined as any item not allowed on school property. Contraband (including pornographic/obscene materials) will be confiscated, and illegal items will be turned over to the proper legal authorities for prosecution. The school system is not liable for confiscated items.

Specific violations and dispositions for these offenses are as listed in the Student Code of Conduct Offenses.

Student Code of Conduct Offenses:

1) Accumulation of Offenses – A student who has a series of two or more code of conduct violations occurring within a single academic year may be subject to discipline for accumulated offenses. Students who are charged with an accumulation of offenses may be subject to recommendation for short-term suspension upon a showing that the school has tried all less severe options for the previous offenses, including but not limited to, Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions tiers, student conferences, behavior management plans, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, etc.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

2) Acts of Violence Against a School Employee or Official – A student that commits an act of violence against a teacher or other school system employee involving intentional physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature shall be disciplined by expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension. A tribunal of certified employees to include the hearing officer will be appointed to investigate and provide the penalties against a student found to have committed any act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee. The tribunal may at its discretion, permit the student to attend an alternative school for the period of long-term suspension or expulsion. It would be at the discretion of the tribunal to allow a student in grades K-5 to re-enroll in a regular school setting if an alternative placement is not available. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Student is to be suspended immediately and removed from school. This offense carries the recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

3) Alcohol – No student shall commit an offense involving alcohol, which is defined as a violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or use of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol, during the school year. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

4) Arson – No student shall commit the offense of arson, which is defined as the unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device. Examples include firecrackers, fireworks, of which no student shall be in possession of or cause the detonation of such devices; and trash can fires if they are contributing factors to a damaging fire. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Restitution must be made prior to re-entry.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

5) Assault – No student shall commit the offense of assault. A student commits the offense of assault when he or she either attempts to commit a violent injury to the person of another or commits an act, which places another in reasonable apprehension of immediately receiving a violent injury. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Violators who commit this offense against a school employee or official may be subject to short-term suspension or expulsion.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

6) Attempt to Commit a Code of Conduct Violation – A student who performs any act which constitutes a substantial step toward the commission of a CCSS Code of Conduct violation shall be subject to the same disciplinary treatment as if the violation were completed. However, any school administrative official may mitigate the punishment by taking into consideration that the violation was not completed.

7) Battery – No student shall commit the offense of battery, which is defined as actual and intentional touching or striking of another person against his or her will or intentionally causing bodily harm to an individual. For example, an individual physically attacks or 'beats up on' another individual. This includes an attack with a weapon, an attack that causes serious bodily harm to the victim, or the actual placement of a bomb or one sent through the mail, regardless of whether the bomb explodes. This offense occurs only when the attack is very serious, serious enough to warrant calling the police or bringing in security, where the intent is to do bodily harm to someone. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to long-term suspension. Violators who commit this offense against a school employee or officials may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion.

8) Breaking and Entering/Burglary – No student shall commit the offense burglary, which is defined as unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime. This applies to school buildings or activities related to a school function. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

9) Bullying - No student shall commit the offense of bullying. A student commits the offense of bullying when he or she attempts or threatens to inflict injury upon another person or makes any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate harm. Such act may be made in person, in writing, or by a third party.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

10) Bus Misconduct – No student shall commit the offense of bus misconduct which is defined as unruly behavior on a school bus and/or at a school bus stop. If the student is found in violation of this offense, the parent/guardian of the student and the appropriate school officials may meet to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such contract shall provide for assigned seating on the school bus, ongoing parent involvement, and progressive age appropriate discipline for student misconduct on the bus, including possible suspension from riding the school bus.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion.

11) Computer Trespass – No student shall commit the offense of computer trespass, which is defined as the unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s), or data. No student shall disclose a number, code, password, or other means of access to school computers or the school system computer network without proper authorization. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Restitution must be made prior to re-entry. Use of a school computer for anything other than instructional purposes is not permitted. In order to fully utilize the CCSS computer network, all students and parents/guardians are to sign the Network Responsibility Agreement for Students of the Columbia County School System, Policy/Procedure IFBGA. Please see Policy/Procedure IFBGA printed at the end of this code of conduct.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

12) Defiance/Willful Refusal – No student shall commit the offense of defiance/willful refusal. A student commits this offense when he or she willfully refuses to immediately follow school staff directives. (Based upon the severity of the defiance/willful refusal, a principal may refer a defiant/willful refusal incident to the hearing officer with a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.)

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

13) Destruction of Property – No student shall commit the offense of destruction of property. A student commits the offense of destruction of property when he or she intentionally damages any property of another without consent of that person or maliciously interferes with the possession or use of the property of another person without consent of that person. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Restitution must be made prior to re-entry.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

14) Disorderly Conduct – No student shall commit the offense of disorderly conduct, which is defined as any act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff, or others. A student commits the offense of disorderly conduct when he or she commits any of the following:

- Acts in a violent or tumultuous manner toward another person whereby such person is placed in reasonable fear of the safety or such person's life, limb, or health;

- Acts in a violent or tumultuous manner toward another person whereby the property of such person is placed in danger of being damaged or destroyed;

- Without provocation, uses toward another person in such other person's presence, disrespectful or abusive words which by their very utterance tend to incite to an immediate breach of the peace;

- Uses obscene and vulgar or profane language in the presence of another person while at school or while attending a school sponsored event whereby causing a substantial disruption in the orderly conduct of the learning environment or school function.

A violation resulting in a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

15) Dress Code for Students – In order to facilitate a safe educational environment conducive to learning, the Board of Education has determined the following:

A student shall not dress, wear or use emblems, insignias, over-sized chains, badges or symbols, to include excessive or extreme hairstyles, hair colors, body piercings, or tattooing, which are likely to distract the attention of other students in the classroom, cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school, or violate health and safety standards of the school. No clothing shall be worn which is excessive or extreme in appearance, displays messages that are profane, vulgar, lewd, indecent or

sexually suggestive, contains alcohol, tobacco or drug advertisements, or advocates criminal activity.

Students shall at all times abide by the following guidelines:

- Clothes and shoes that show good taste, avoiding extreme designs and styles which may pose a safety problem, are expected. Headdresses, hats, sweatbands and scarves, which are meant to be worn outside, are not to be worn inside the school building. Undergarments are not to be exposed.
- Shirts and Blouses – Unacceptable attire includes clothing that exposes the torso such as see-through garments, halters, spaghetti straps, backless dresses, tube tops, tank tops or muscle shirts, bare midriff outfits, or shirts or blouses that are tied at or may rise above the waist.
- Skirts, Shorts and Dresses – Skirts and shorts must be fitted at the waist and should be of appropriate length. Note to parents: As a general rule, appropriate length would be at fingertips, provided this measurement is mid-thigh and below. Mini-skirts are deemed to be disruptive and are not allowed. This includes skirts and dresses with any opening that exposes the leg above the appropriate designation.
- Pants and Shorts – Pants and shorts must be fitted at the waist. They must not be baggy, frayed at the bottom, torn, tattered, and/or ripped. Pants must not drag the floor. Unacceptable shorts include, but are not limited to, athletic shorts, spandex-style 'bicycle' shorts, cut-off jeans, cut-off sweat pants, short-shorts, running shorts, and see-through boxer-type shorts.
- Belts and Straps – Belts, if worn, must be secured at the waist and buckled. All straps should be fastened, and sashes must be tied.
- Hats – No hats or head covers may be worn in the school building, (unless worn for religious reasons.)
- Bandannas – No bandannas of any type will be allowed.
- Fraternity and sorority insignias on clothing are forbidden.
- Sunshades and/or dark glasses will not be worn inside the school building unless prescribed by a physician or another person who is professionally qualified to make such recommendations.
- Students shall not wear clothing, (shirts, caps, etc.), that will in any way promote or advertise the use of narcotics, alcoholic beverages, tobacco or stimulant drugs which are illegal for any such student to use.
- Suggestive, vulgar, or obscene pictures and/or language on clothing or body are forbidden.
- Cheerleading uniforms – During school hours, cheerleading uniforms can be worn only during pep rallies. Cheerleaders must comply with the dress code all other periods of the school day.
- Extreme out-of-season dress may be questioned by school administration.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

16) Drugs (except Alcohol and Tobacco) - unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any

controlled drug or narcotic substance or marijuana, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics, including being under the influence of drugs or substances represented as drugs.

Except when permission is granted by school officials, no student shall possess, purchase, or have under his or her control any drug, controlled substance, or marijuana while on school property or at any school function. Except when permission is granted by school officials, no student shall attend school or any school function while under the influence of any drug, controlled substance, or marijuana. The term 'drug' shall include all ingestible, injectable, or externally applied substance other than food. Drugs include all controlled substances, marijuana, over-the-counter medicines, inhalants, pills, tablets, or items designed to look like drugs. No student shall attend school, or any school function, or school sponsored event while under the influence of any illegal drug or marijuana. Students directly involved in, though not in actual physical possession, actual possession, shall be considered accessories and subject to disciplinary action. Any medicine (prescription or over-the-counter) brought to school by students must be checked into the office immediately upon arrival. All medication to be administered by a school employee will only be given if the parent/guardian has completed an **Authorization to Give Medications at School Form** at the local school office. This form must be updated annually. Any item sold or in possession by a student under the pretense of offering a drug or drug-related item is subject to the disciplinary action described in this brochure. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Violators may be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion. Individuals selling or distributing drugs or substances held out to be drugs on school campus or at school functions shall be subject to expulsion.

17) Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student—No student shall commit such an offense.

Disposition – Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions.

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

18) Fighting – No student shall commit the offense of fighting in school. This does not include verbal confrontations, tussles, or other minor confrontations. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Violators who commit this offense against a school employee or official may be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions.

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

19) Gambling – No student shall commit the offense of gambling. A student commits the offense of gambling when he or she makes a bet upon the partial or final result of any game or contest or upon the performance of any participant in such game or contest; or plays and bets for money or other things of value at any game played with cards, dice, or balls.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:
Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

20) Gang Activity – No student shall engage in gang activity or attempt to engage in gang activity. No student shall wear or display gang affiliated clothing or signs while on school property or at any school activity, whether or not such a person is a member of the gang. Heavy chains, spikes, etc. are not acceptable. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:
Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

21) Homicide – No student shall commit the offense of homicide which is defined as murder and non-negligent manslaughter, killing of one human being by another, killing a person through negligence. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Student is to be suspended immediately and removed from the school. Violators will be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

22) Honor Code - A student shall not commit the offenses of cheating, plagiarism, or lying.

The term cheating includes providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in academic endeavors (including quizzes, tests, examinations, reports, term papers, and other assignments); and using sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and includes a student's use of the writings or work of another person in a manner which represents the writings or work as the student's own instead of the true author; or the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another agency or person providing academic materials; or the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of material without complete acknowledgment of the source.

Lying includes any false or deceiving representation made to a faculty member, administrative official, school safety officer, staff member, hearing officer, or any other adult designated by the school as having a position of authority. Lying will also include concealing or distorting the true facts, nature, origin, persons involved, or details which are the subject of inquiries by a faculty member, administrative official, school safety

officer, staff member, or any other adult designated by the school as having a position of authority.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Copying homework and other forms of dishonesty will be handled at the discretion of the administration and teachers. Classroom cheating on tests will result in the student receiving a grade of "0" on that assignment, the teacher notifying parents/guardians and the student being placed on probation. If the student holds a position (office) in a club, on an athletic team, or an organization, he/she must relinquish that position. The student may remain a member of the particular organization.

23) Kidnapping – No student shall commit the offense of kidnapping which is defined as the unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her parents or legal guardian. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Student is to be suspended immediately and removed from school. Violators will be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

24) Larceny/Theft – No student shall commit the offense of larceny/theft which is defined as the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property of another person without threat, violence, or bodily harm. Included are pocket-picking, purse or backpack-snatching if left unattended, theft from a building, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a coin-operated machine, and all other types of larcenies. The charge of Larceny/Theft should occur only when theft is serious enough to warrant calling the police or bringing in security and may require restitution for violator's re-entry. Students taking pencils or paper from each other are not examples of Larceny/Theft.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

25) Motor Vehicle Theft – No student shall commit the offense of motor vehicle theft which is defined as theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle, to include car, truck, motorcycle, dune buggy, RV, or anything that is self-propelled. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Student is suspended immediately and removed from school. Violators will be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

26) Party to Violations of the Code of Conduct – Every student concerned in the commission of a code of conduct violation is a party to the violation and may be subject to the same discipline as any other party involved in the code of conduct violation. A student is considered in the commission of a code of conduct violation if he or she:

-Directly commits a code of conduct violation;

- Causes some other person to commit a code of conduct violation;
- Helps in the commission of a code of conduct violation; or
- Advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures or acts in concert with another to commit a code of conduct violation.

27) Possession of Unauthorized Electronic Devices – No student shall possess unauthorized electronic devices not expressly permitted by school authorities. Students shall not have cellular phones out, on, or in use during the school day.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension; item(s) will be confiscated and returned at principal's discretion.

28) Property Loss/Damage – No student shall be in possession of property of another without his/her permission and with intent not to restore said property to the rightful owner. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency and may require restitution for violator's re-entry.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension.

29) Public Display of Affection (PDA) – No student shall commit the offense of Public Display of Affection. PDA is not acceptable behavior at school or school related activities. PDA is defined as kissing, hugging, or physical touching of another person. Physically touching of another person will be handled at the discretion of the school administration. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

30) Public Indecency – No student shall commit the offense of public indecency. A student commits the offense of public indecency when he or she performs any of the following acts in a public place:

- a lewd act of a sexual nature;
- a lewd appearance in a state of partial or complete nudity; or
- a lewd caress or indecent touching of the body of another person.

This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

31) Public Intoxication – No student shall commit the offense of public intoxication. A student commits the offense of public intoxication when he or she appears in an intoxicated condition as under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at school or any school related function. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

32) Receiving Stolen Property – No student shall commit the offense of receiving stolen property. A student commits the offense of receiving stolen property when he or she receives, disposes of, or retains stolen property which he or she knows or should know is stolen unless the property is received, disposed of, or retained with intent to restore it to the owner. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

33) Robbery – No student shall commit the offense of robbery which is defined as the taking, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization, under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. An essential difference between robbery and larceny is that a threat or battery is involved in a robbery. Examples include extortion of lunch money. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension

34) School Disruptions – No student shall engage in any activity that disrupts any school activities. Violators shall be disciplined at the discretion of the principal.

35) School Pranks – No student shall commit the offense of school pranks. A student commits the offense of school pranks when he or she disrupts the school or defaces school property. If damages occur, the offense will be treated as an act of vandalism. Restitution must be made prior to re-entry. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

36) Sororities and Fraternities – Fraternities, sororities, and other secret organizations are strictly forbidden. Activities, invitations or fund-raising of these organizations is prohibited. Violators shall be disciplined at principal's discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension.

37) Sexual Battery – No student shall commit the offense of sexual battery. Includes rape, fondling which includes touching of private body parts of another person (either through human contact or using an object), indecent liberties, child molestation, sodomy. This offense shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Student is suspended immediately and removed from school. Violators will be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

38) Sexual Harassment – No student shall commit the offense of sexual harassment, which is defined as deliberate, repeated, and unsolicited physical actions, gestures, or verbal or written comments of a sexual nature, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student’s academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. The more severe the conduct, the less the need to show a repetitive series of incidents; this is particularly true if the harassment is physical. Examples include behaviors such as leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments, suggestive jokes, or pressure to engage in sexual activity. Students who feel they have been the victim of sexual harassment should report it immediately to school authorities. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal’s discretion up to short-term suspension

39) Sexual Offenses – No student shall commit a sexual offense at school or a school related function. A sexual offense is defined as sexual intercourse, sexual contact, or other unlawful behavior or contact intended to result in sexual gratification with or without force or threat of force and where the victim is capable of giving consent. Includes indecent exposure and obscenity. Examples include entering or downloading pornographic content onto school computers. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal’s discretion up to long-term suspension or expulsion

40) Terroristic Threats - No student shall make or cause to be made a terroristic threat. A person commits the offense of a terroristic threat when he or she threatens to commit any crime of violence or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another or of causing the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation or otherwise causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience. This offense may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal’s discretion up to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

41) Threat/Intimidation – No student shall commit the offense of threat/intimidation, which is defined as unlawfully placing another person in fear of bodily harm through verbal or physical threats, without displaying a weapon or subjecting the person to

actual physical attack. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

42) Tobacco – No student shall possess, use, sale, distribute tobacco products on school grounds, at school sponsored events, or on transportation to or from school. (Should a student discover tobacco or related products, including matches, lighters, on his/her person before arrival at school, he/she should take the items directly to the principal's office. Depending upon the circumstances, no charges will be filed.)

Disposition - Violator will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

43) Trespassing – No student shall commit the offense of trespassing, which is defined as entering or remaining on a public school campus or school system facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry. This includes students under suspension or expulsion, and unauthorized persons who enter or remain on a campus after being directed to leave by the chief administrator or designee. This violation may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

44) Truancy – No student shall commit the offense of truancy. A student commits the offense of truancy when he or she misses school/class, leaves campus, or school-sponsored activities where attendance is monitored by administrative officials, without an excused absence. Students will follow the Student Attendance Protocol of Policy JBD – Absences and Excuses, as listed on Page 26 of this code of conduct.

Relative to school attendance, additional sanctions may be taken by the school relative to participating in extracurricular activities, exam exemptions, student parking privileges, etc.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Principal's discretion

45) Vandalism – No student shall commit the offense of vandalism, which is defined as the willful and/or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it. Restitution must be made prior to re-entry. This offense may be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.

Disposition - Principal's discretion up to short-term suspension

46) Violations of Georgia Law – Any student who violates any provision of Georgia's criminal law or a Columbia County municipal ordinance while the student is on campus, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at school sponsored events, or off of school property provided that the actions cause a substantial disruption of the educational environment, may be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Please be advised that the Columbia County School System and local law enforcement agencies operate cooperatively under a Memorandum of Understanding. Violations of the law reported to the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, Grovetown Police Department and/or the Harlem Police Department, which occurred or are occurring within the jurisdiction of any Columbia County school campus shall be handled by the appropriate law enforcement agency. The decision to bring criminal charges will rest solely with the appropriate law enforcement agency and any illegal contraband or any illegal substance taken into possession will remain in the custody of the appropriate law enforcement agency. The Columbia County Board of Education Department of School Safety officers will not house or retain evidence gathered in the course of any investigation.

47) Weapons Possession – No student shall carry or possess or have under his or her control while at a school building, school function, on school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound. This violation shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency. Excluded are any instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher or school administrator.

47-a) Weapons Firearm – possession of any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device; any machine gun. A destructive device is any bomb, grenade, mine, rocket, missile, pipe bomb, or similar device containing some type of explosive that is capable of causing bodily harm or property damage. This includes firearms of any kind, loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable.

47-b) Weapons Knife – the possession, use, or intention to use any type of knife, including a pocket or penknife, to inflict harm on another person, or to intimidate any person.

47-c) Weapons Other – the possession, use, or intention to use any instrument or object to inflict harm on another person, or to intimidate any person. Included in this are chains, pipes, razor blades, ice picks, dirks, nunchakus, brass knuckles, Chinese stars, billy clubs, tear gas guns, electrical weapons or devices, explosives, or propellants. Firecrackers and other fireworks are also included if fire is not included.

Disposition - Violators will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:
Violators may be subject to recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion

DEFINITIONS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Prior to assignment of suspensions from school, the school administration must inform a student of the specific acts of misconduct the student is accused of committing and afford a reasonable opportunity to defend against these charges. The parent or guardian of the student will be notified of the suspension in writing, stating the offense and reasons for the suspension.

1. **Short-Term Suspension** - The suspension of a student from a public school for not more than ten school days.
2. **Long-Term Suspension** - The suspension of a student from a public school for more than ten school days but not beyond the current school semester or year.
3. **Expulsion** - The expulsion of a student from a public school beyond the current school semester or year. A student who has been expelled must appear before the hearing officer for re-entry into the Columbia County School System.

Suspension, when deemed necessary, will begin no later than the day following an act subject to suspension, providing due process rights can be afforded within this time.

Students suspended from other school systems will not be eligible for enrollment during the time of suspension.

Students assigned to out-of-school suspension, or expulsion for disciplinary reasons, lose their eligibility to participate in extra-curricular activities. An assigned disciplinary suspension is considered to have ended when the student returns to the regular class setting the following school day. Absences due to short-term suspension or pending a disciplinary hearing or tribunal are unexcused and make up of class work shall not be afforded; however, an opportunity to make up major exams and special projects shall be afforded, provided the suspension is imposed by the school and is not the choice of the student.

DISCIPLINARY HEARING PROCESS

The hearing officer is appointed by the Columbia County Board of Education. The hearing officer serves as the direct representative of the Columbia County Board of Education in determining student discipline cases involving recommendations for out-of-school suspensions of more than ten days. Decisions of the hearing officer carry the full weight of the authority of the Columbia County Board of Education. The hearing officer has been established in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated §20-2-750 and by policies and regulations of the Columbia County Board of Education.

APPEALS

The principal has the authority to suspend a student out of school for a period not to exceed ten cumulative days. Any out of school suspension, in-school suspension, or

detention is not subject to appeal beyond the school level. Any rulings by the hearing officer involving long-term suspension or expulsion may be appealed to the Columbia County Board of Education in accordance with the policies and regulations of the Columbia County Board of Education.

This code of conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers, students, and school administrators 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. The development of this student code of conduct is age appropriate, clearly defines the standards of expected behavior, provides for a process of progressive discipline, has in place a student support process, and provides a process for parental input when developing/updating the code of conduct.

**NOTICE to Parents/Guardians of Rights under FERPA/NCLB
(FERPA=Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act;
NCLB= No Child Left Behind)**

Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 USC S. 1232g), parents/guardians have a right to:

- (1) Inspect and review the student's education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is 18 years of age or older, your own education records.
- (2) Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights;
- (3) Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except "Directory of Information", which may be released unless a parent objects in writing. Parents/guardians have the right to "opt out of participation" under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Columbia County Board of Education has designated as "Directory of Information" the following:
 - Student's name, address, and telephone number;
 - Student's date and place of birth;
 - Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
 - Weight and height of student if member of an athletic team;
 - Dates of attendance at Columbia County Schools;
 - Awards received during the time enrolled in Columbia County Schools.
- (4) File a complaint with the United States Department of Education under 20 C.F.R.99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the Columbia County Board of Education to comply with the requirements of FERPA.
- (5) Obtain a copy of the Board of Education Policy JR-Student Records, which the Columbia County Board of Education has adopted regarding access to student records.

Copies of this policy may be obtained by contacting the Board of Education at 4781 Hereford Farm Road, Evans, Georgia 30809, or by the Internet at www.ccboe.net, (click on BOE Policies).

NOTICE to Parents/Guardians of Rights of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Protection of Pupil Rights

Under the Protection of Pupil Rights (Title X, Part F, Section 445 of the General Education Provisions Act), Local Education Agencies must adopt the following policies and notify parents/guardians of these policies at least annually at the beginning of each school year about the content of these policies.

- (1) Parents/guardians may inspect any third-party surveys of students before they are administered, including policies to protect student privacy if the survey contains sensitive subjects identified in the law. (Board of Education Policy IKB - Controversial Issues, and Board of Education Policy JR-Student Records)
- (2) Parents/guardians may inspect any instructional material used in the curriculum. (Board of Education Policy IC/ICB-Curriculum Development/Planning)
- (3) Parents/guardians must be notified in writing of any physical examinations or screenings the school may administer. (Board of Education Policy/Procedure JGCA-Physical Examinations)
- (4) Parents/guardians have the right to “opt the students out of participation” of any of the following activities:
 - The collection or use of personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing that information (except for the development of educational products or services).
 - The administration of any survey that delves into the sensitive subjects identified in the law.
 - The administration of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is not otherwise permitted or required by State Law, including those without parental notification.

Copies of this policy may be obtained by contacting the Board of Education at 4781 Hereford Farm Road, Evans, Georgia 30809 or by the Internet at www.ccboe.net, (click on BOE Policies).

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Columbia County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, handicap, religion or national origin in the educational programs and the activities or admissions to facilities operated by the Columbia County School System, or in the employment practices of the Columbia County Board of Education.

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

Carraway, Deputy Superintendent, 4781 Hereford Farm Road, Evans, Georgia, 30809. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the sports equity coordinator by calling 706-541-0650.

Definition of a Potentially Dangerous School

(Please contact your child's principal should you have questions regarding definitions of a Potentially Dangerous School.)

Georgia has defined a public school to be persistently dangerous if for each of three consecutive years on the property of the public school, or at an event within the jurisdiction of a public school, or at a school, or at a school sponsored event at least one student enrolled in that school is found by *official action* to have committed an offense in violation of a school rule that involved one or more of the following violent criminal offenses: aggravated battery (O.C.G.A. 16-5-24); aggravated child molestation (O.C.G.A. 16-6-4); aggravated sexual battery (O.C.G.A. 16-6-22.2); aggravated sodomy (O.C.G.A. 16-6-2); armed robbery (O.C.G.A. 16-8-41); arson – first degree (O.C.G.A. 16-7-60); kidnapping (O.C.G.A. 16-5-40); murder (O.C.G.A. 16-5-1); rape (O.C.G.A. 16-6-1); voluntary manslaughter (O.C.G.A. 16-5-2);

or

Two percent or more of the student population or ten students, whichever is greater, are found by *official action* to have committed an offense in violation of a school rule that involved one or more of the following offenses; non-felony drugs (O.C.G.A. 16-13-2); felony drugs (O.C.G.A. 16-13-127.1); felony weapons (O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1); terroristic threats (O.C.G.A. 16-11-37)

or

any combination during the three years of either of the above.

Official action is defined by the rule as an official tribunal held by the school system; a hearing conducted by a disciplinary hearing officer of the school system (O.C.G.A. 20-2-752 through 20-2-758); through a waiver process; or through an action of the local board of education.

**COLUMBIA COUNTY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

School transportation is furnished by the Columbia County Board of Education to all eligible pupils. The following rules are published for the safety, health and welfare of all children who ride school buses.

SCHOOL BUS RULES AND PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students will follow the directions of the driver
2. Students should be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus arrives, waiting in a safe place, clear of traffic and ten feet from where the bus stops.
3. Students must be at the stop in inclement weather as well as fair weather.
4. Students will wait in an orderly line and avoid playing.
5. Students will cross the roadway in front of the bus after the bus has stopped, they have looked at the driver for a hand signal, and they have looked in both directions for traffic; left, right, left.
6. Students will signal the driver with a waiving motion if something is dropped and wait for the driver to give a signal before picking up the object.
7. Students will go directly to their assigned seat when entering the bus. Keep the aisles and exits clear.
8. Students will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat and keep hands to themselves.
9. Students will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substances on the bus.
10. Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items, hazardous materials, or weapons on the bus. Students may carry only objects that can be held on their laps (no large items such as plants, trees, balloons, flowers, and posters may be carried on the bus.)
11. Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, vulgarity, and/or obscene gestures, and respect the rights and safety of others.
12. Insolence, disobedience, fighting, and pushing will not be tolerated on the bus.
13. Students will not extend head, arms, or objects out of the bus windows.
14. Band instruments must be held in the student's lap or placed under the seat. No instruments may be placed in front of the exit door nor in a seat needed for students. Buses cannot transport instruments larger than a trombone.
15. Students will be totally silent at railroad crossings.
16. Students will stay seated until time to get off of the bus. The open door is the signal to get up from the bus seat.
17. Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, not expressly permitted by school administration.
18. Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
19. Students shall be prohibited from acts of physical violence, bullying as 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.
20. Students must provide a written note, signed by a parent or guardian and school official giving permission to ride a different bus or get on or off the bus at a different bus stop location.
21. Students will keep their bus clean and in good, safe condition. Students will be charged for any damage to the bus.

The Columbia County Board of Education shall require, upon finding that a student has engaged in unruly behavior on a school bus/school bus stop, the parent or guardian of the student and the appropriate school officials to meet to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such contract shall provide for assigned seating on a bus, ongoing parent involvement, and progressive age appropriate discipline for student misconduct on the bus, including possible suspension from riding the bus. These provisions are not to be construed to limit the instances when a school code of conduct or local board of education may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

STUDENT

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN

DATE

BOARD POLICY

Descriptive Code: IFBGA

**USE OF ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

Date: January 22, 2002

The Board of Education is committed to the development and establishment of a quality electronic communications system. In making this provision, it is the responsibility of the Columbia County Board of Education to provide and enforce a policy of Internet safety that includes measures to block or filter Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions. These include visual depictions that are:

1. Obscene as defined in O.C.G.A. 16-12-80(b)
2. Child pornography as defined in 18 U.S.C. SEC. 2256
3. Harmful to minors as defined in 47 U.S.C. SEC. 254(h)(7)

The superintendent will certify that the school system has adopted and implemented an Internet safety policy addressing:

1. Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and world wide web;
2. The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
3. Unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking", and other unlawful activities by minors online;
4. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and,
5. Measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials harmful to them.

An authorized person(s) designated by the superintendent may disable the blocking or filtering measure during any use by an adult to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purpose.

The superintendent will certify that the school system's policy of Internet safety includes monitoring the online activities of minors.

REFERENCE: POLICY IFA

PROCEDURE: YES

ADOPTED: 03/24/98

REVISED: 8/10/99

Columbia County Board of Education

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all uses of the Columbia County School System Technology Network are consistent with the goals and educational philosophy of **the** Columbia County School System. The use of the Columbia County School System Technology Network includes computer hardware, software, local and wide area networks, media equipment, and access to the Internet. Due to the complexity of this system and the magnitude of information available through user access, the Columbia County Board of Education believes guidelines regarding appropriate use are warranted.

APPROPRIATE USE OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY NETWORK:

User access to the Internet from any school/system computer shall comply with the district's USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM Policy IFBGA. The superintendent reserves the right to designate administrative staff members to monitor all Internet activity by users including e-mail.

The use of the Internet is a privilege. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of this privilege by the system administrator. Users violating the conditions in Policy/Procedure IFBGA shall be subject to revocation of these privileges and potential disciplinary actions including possible legal action.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

User access to the Columbia County School System Technology Network is provided for educational and communicational purposes consistent with the needs and goals of the Columbia County Board of Education. All users are required to sign the NETWORK RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT. Parents of students must sign and return **the NETWORK RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT** to their child's school before the student will be allowed access to the Internet connection provided by the Columbia County School System Technology Network and to give/deny permission for limited information about students to be included on system or school websites. Staff members must sign and return **the NETWORK RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT** form to their immediate supervisor.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY NETWORK INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO USERS:

- Accessing, sending, creating or posting materials or communications that could be inconsistent with the district's educational needs and goals
- Sending verbally abusive, obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, disrespectful or threatening electronic messages and images
- Placing unauthorized or unlawful information on the system that could cause damage, danger, or disruption, or engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial, discriminatory, or harassing attacks or knowingly or recklessly posts false or defamatory information about a person or organization. Please be advised that student's home and personal internet use can have an impact on the school and on other students. If a student's personal internet message creates a likelihood of material disruption of the school's operations, students may face school discipline and criminal penalties. Our school system takes bullying and harassment by computer very seriously. Students shall not use any Internet or other communication device to intimidate, bully, harass, or embarrass other students or staff. Students who engage in such activity off campus and create a material disruption of school operations shall be subject to penalties for

bullying and harassment contained in the Columbia County School System Code of Conduct as well as criminal penalties.

- Vandalizing the system including uploading/creating computer viruses/worms (“hacking”)
- Using the system for financial gain, product advertising, commercial activities, or fundraising that has not been approved by the Board of Education
- Providing personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, social security numbers, etc. without proper authorization
- Violating state and/or federal laws including copyrights, confidentiality, computer fraud and abuse
- Engaging in non-educational games and monopolizing resource time and materials
- Using the identity or password other than the user’s own

(Any user becoming aware of inappropriate use of the Columbia County School System Technology Network should report **the inappropriate use** to his/her immediate supervisor. In the event of a claim that a student has violated this policy **or** procedure, the school system will provide the student with notice and an opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the Columbia County School System Code of Conduct.)

ADOPTED: 03/14/98

REVISED: 08/07/00, 01/22/02, 03/11/02, 10/14/02,7/29/03,3/8/04,4/19/04,07/06/04,09/28/04

Student Attendance Protocol

A Student Attendance Protocol Committee was established by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court of the Columbia County Jurisdiction for the purpose of ensuring coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues; to improve student achievement by reducing student absences from school; and to ensure compliance with the percentage of students participating in required standardized tests and other attendance requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The attendance committee set forth the following protocol to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance and appropriately addressing the issues with parents and guardians. The attendance committee voted unanimously on May 19, 2005 to accept the following protocol and to establish policy for the Columbia County Board of Education.

Truant

For the purpose of this protocol a student may be considered truant during any semester upon the accumulation of three unexcused absences or a total of seven absences without required documentation.

Excused Absences

A student may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious illness or death of an immediate family member (Immediate family includes parents or legal guardians, grandparents, siblings, and stepfamily)
3. Special and recognized religious holidays recognized by their faith
4. Mandated order of government agencies
5. Registration to vote (limited to one day)
6. Emergencies which reasonably necessitate absences from school
7. Special events which reasonably necessitate absences from school
8. Days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to deployment to or during leave from an overseas assignment to a combat zone or combat support posting, up to a maximum of 5 school days per school year.

In the case that a student's personal illness or attendance in school endangers the student's health or the health of others, the Columbia County Board of Education requires the student to present required documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating the absence as excused. The school will allow up to five absences with medical excuses per semester on the authority of written parent notes. Following five absences for illness per semester excused by notes written by the parent or guardian, additional absences will be excused only with an original medical excuse signed by a health care professional. Parents must retain copies of all documentation of excuses for the duration of the school year and must present them to the applicable agency or Court upon request. Parents or students who claim that the absence is properly excused bear the burden of providing copies of the medical excuses and/or other documentation of excuses, which may be demanded to be reviewed at any time.

With proper verification, a student may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction (S.B.O.E. Rule 160-4-2-.31). Additionally, certain acute health conditions of the student may warrant a Health Care Plan coordinated by the school nurse, in concert with the student's parent and attending physician, whereby provisions can be made relative to medically based absences for the student beyond those set forth in this protocol.

In the event of a serious illness in a student's immediate family, local boards will require students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.

School days missed as a result of an out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Grades and Absences

All excuses are required within two school days of the student's return to school; otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused and make-up opportunity will not be afforded to high school students; however, an opportunity to make-up major tests and projects shall be afforded. All documentation for excusing an absence must specify the particular day missed.

When absences are excused, students shall be afforded the opportunity to make up all work. It will be the student's responsibility to attend to make-up work promptly upon return to school and to complete all assignments within a reasonable time. Students who have emergencies necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must have been present for the majority of the school day to be counted present. Schools shall establish incentives and rewards to enhance student attendance.

Absences due to short-term (out-of-school) suspension or pending a disciplinary hearing are unexcused and make up of class work shall not be afforded; however, an opportunity to make up major exams and special projects shall be afforded, provided the suspension is imposed by the school and is not the choice of the student.

Absences shall not penalize student's grades provided the following conditions are met:

- (1) Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons;
- (2) Make-up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily;
- (3) A grade average of 70 or above has been earned in the course work.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The school shall not allow a student to participate in any extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, or cooperative work experience if the student was not counted present for the school day. Students who have been deemed truant by the auspices of this policy shall lose eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities for the remainder of the semester.

Parental Notification

The school will notify the parent or guardian when a student is in jeopardy of becoming truant as defined by this policy. Parents will also be notified that subsequent absences will be referred to the system social worker and the appropriate legal authority. Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate the Truancy Code, O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction.

Notification by Certified Mail

After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student, the Columbia County School System will send written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested.

The Columbia County School System requires that all its public schools provide the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a

written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.

Statement of Receipt

By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the Columbia County School System, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.

In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local system's policy.

Drivers License Denial

The Columbia County Board of Education requires the local school superintendent or the superintendent's designee to use his or her best efforts, including certified mail, to notify students age 14 and older when the student has only three absences remaining before violating the state's attendance requirements pursuant to O.C.G.A. 40-5-2 regarding the denial of driver's permits and licenses.

Parking

Students who have more than five absences may lose their right to park on school campuses. The denial of parking privileges will be determined by the principal.

Truancy

The Columbia County Board of Education adopts, as a part of the student codes of conduct developed pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-735, a definition of truancy that contains the minimum standards related to student attendance and a summary of possible consequences and penalties for truancy established in state board rule (160-5- 1-.10).

Referral to the Legal Authority

Upon the student's third unexcused absence per semester or the student's seventh total absence per semester, without the required documentation, the student and the parent shall be referred by the school to the appropriate legal authority having jurisdiction. The parent or student may face penalties including a fine, loss of custody of the student, or incarceration for each day missed.

Upon the student's tenth absence per semester, regardless of the reasons for the absences, a student may be referred to the legal authorities for further investigation. The penalties described above may be applicable.

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive to school and their classes on time. Middle and high school students who arrive late to class may be subject to school detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. The parents of elementary students who arrive chronically late to school shall be referred by the school to the appropriate agency or legal authority having jurisdiction. School principals should exercise their discretion in implementing progressive discipline.

Prior Approvals

Prior to the implementation of this attendance protocol, students were permitted excused absences for reasons not included on page one of this policy. This practice, known as prior approval, will no longer be in effect. Items #6 and #7 of the Excused Absences Section provide for the excuse of absences due to emergencies and special events not covered in this policy. Special event absences must be presented to and approved by the school principal prior to the absence.

Georgia Code: 20-2-690; 20-2-310(6); 20-2-690.1; 20-2-691;
20-2-692; 20-2-701; 40-5-22

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

The Superintendent of the Columbia County Schools has the authority to close the schools of Columbia County under emergency situations. An emergency situation would be anything that poses a threat to the safety of the students and staff.

Plan One – Delayed Opening:

When weather conditions are predicted to cause unsafe travel to school, a two hour delayed school opening public announcement will be made to the public via the media preferably the night before. The decision of opening or closing schools will be made the next morning. School based administrators will report to school as normal to receive students and man the telephones.

Plan Two – School Closings:

If at all possible, the “Go” or “No Go” decision will be made by public announcement via the local media the previous night. If a closing decision cannot be made at that time, a delayed opening will be implemented until a final decision can be made. Central Office personnel and essential 250 day employees will report to their work site unless specifically announced otherwise.

Plan Three – Emergency Early Dismissal:

Should severe weather conditions dictate the early closing of schools, the following offices will remain open and staffed until all students have been accounted for and their safety assured.

Superintendent’s Office	706-541-0650
Transportation Office	706-541-0657
Facilities, Maintenance and Operations	706-541-2731

Administrators will remain at their school until all buses have delivered the last student home.

Since standard practice in cases of emergency closings of schools is that the superintendent will convey public announcements via the local media, parents should always monitor local media sources during times of inclement weather when conditions possibly warrant an interruption to the normal opening/closings of school. Another source of information will be the CCSS website.

It is strongly recommended that parents discuss with their child(ren) what they should do in such cases of emergency early dismissal of schools.

Elementary School Sponsored Clubs and Organizations

The following list represents clubs and organizations that may be offered in Columbia County elementary schools. A brief description of the purpose or a mission statement of each has been provided. More information regarding these extracurricular opportunities, including the school sponsor and planned or past activities, can be obtained from each elementary school. By signing the Acknowledgement Form included in this code of conduct, the parent or legal guardian gives permission for his or her child to participate in any or all of these organizations. Any parent or legal guardian, who wishes to decline permission, shall sign and return the form below to the school principal. For all student initiated clubs or for any clubs or organizations added during the school year, parent permission will be obtained by the faculty supervisor.

Club or Organization	Purpose/Mission Statement
Art Club	To give students the opportunity to explore art through various mediums, to develop leadership skills, and to participate in special projects
Book Club	To offer students opportunity for in depth study and discussion of age appropriate books
Chorus	To expose students to a wide variety of musical styles while emphasizing the development of musical skills and understanding
Door Engineers	To teach children responsibility as they serve to open the front door during morning arrival as students enter the building from the buses
Four-H Club	To provide student with the opportunity to learn leadership, citizenship, and life skills
Math Olympiad	To allow high ability math students to participate in a challenging, nationally-recognized mathematics competition
Safety Patrol	To give leadership opportunities to 5 th grade students as they mentor younger students in safety procedures while at school
School Postal Workers	To teach students responsibility as they collect, sort, and deliver mail written by parents, students, and staff members to classes and departments
Scouts	To Inspire students to develop the highest ideals of character, patriotism, and service
Student Council	To provide students with the opportunity to contribute to school improvement efforts and to develop leadership skills
Student Leadership	To encourage students to assume leadership responsibilities which promote communication, teamwork, and responsibility

*I **do not** give permission for my child, (print child's name) _____,
to participate in any school sponsored club or organization listed above.

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN NAME (Please print): _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN: _____

DATE: _____



Charles R. Nagle
Superintendent of Schools

Sandra Carraway
Deputy Superintendent of Schools

COLUMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
4781 Hereford Farm Road
Evans, Georgia 30809
(706) 541-0650
www.ccboe.net

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regina N. Buccafusco, Chairman
Roxanne Whitaker, Vice-Chairman
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Wayne Bridges
Micheal N. Sleeper

August 13, 2008

Dear Parents,

The United States Education Department recently released an updated version of its guidance on the Improving Teacher Quality Program, including standards for highly qualified teachers. Under *Section 1111(h) (6)* of the No Child Left Behind Act, parents have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher. You may request the following information:

- (a) Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
- (b) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which the State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived,
- (c) The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and field of discipline of the certification or degree and,
- (d) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

To request such information you may call the school and speak with the principal. This information must be provided to you in a timely manner. As always, the Columbia County School System strives for excellence by meeting all federal and state mandates and laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles R. Nagle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles R. Nagle
Superintendent of Schools

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Name of School: _____

It is required that both you and your child sign and return this Acknowledgement Form to your child's school to verify that you and your child are in receipt of this Columbia County School System Code of Conduct for the 2008-2009 School Term. It is also required that the original signed copy of this form be kept on file at your child's school through the end of the school year.

STUDENT NAME and STUDENT SIGNATURE

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME and SIGNATURE

DATE

Columbia County School System Character Education:

In keeping with State of Georgia legislative action, the Columbia County School System provides a Character Education Program for grades K-12 which focuses on the students' development of character traits. Parents/Guardians and community representatives are engaged in partnerships to support the principles of character and conduct that help our students make responsible decisions. In turn, our school communities become safer, better disciplined, and more welcoming places to learn and work. Following are the 27 Character Education terms approved by the State and Local Boards of Education.

Cheerfulness	Patience
Citizenship	Patriotism
Cleanliness	Perseverance
Compassion	Punctuality
Cooperation	Respect for Others
Courage	Respect for Self
Courtesy	Respect for the Creator
Creativity	Respect for the Natural Environment
Diligence	School Pride
Fairness	Self-control
Generosity	Sportsmanship
Honesty	Tolerance
Kindness	Virtue
Loyalty	

Equal Opportunity System