

# STUDENT

# Code of Conduct

2024 - 2025



Tift County Schools

#4theT



DRAFT

**Anchor Statement:**

Tift County Schools: Relentlessly Pursuing a Culture of Excellence

**Beliefs:**

1. In a culture of excellence, relationships are the core work of education.
2. In a culture of excellence, diversity in our community is recognized and embraced.
3. In a culture of excellence, public education and community accountability are essential.
4. In a culture of excellence, all students receive a quality education within a safe environment.
5. In a culture of excellence, learning is encouraged as an ongoing process.

Tift County Schools is offering the ability to sign your student's Code of Conduct via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. This will verify that both you and your student have read and acknowledged the Student Code of Conduct.

To sign your student's Code of Conduct:

- Login to your Infinite Campus Parent Portal
- Locate and open the 24-25 Student Code of Conduct Sign-off document located either under Today > Documents Need Attention or under Documents > Documents
- Click on the red pen/paper icon.
- Accept your signature by clicking Sign (your name will appear on the signature line) and the date you are completing the form will appear in the date line.
- Click Submit

*\*You are still able to sign the paper copy and submit it to your child's school.*

*This convenience of e-signing is being offered as a way to eliminate some of the forms you are returning to your child's school each year. Please provide any feedback on this process to the administration at your child's school.*

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# PARENT STATEMENT

I have read and I understand the policies and procedures in the Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name/Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

English and Spanish versions of the Code of Conduct are available online at <http://www.tiftschools.com>.

Una versión del Código de Conducta en Español, está disponible en línea en <http://www.tiftschools.com>.

## Parental Opt-Out of Club and Activity Participation

I hereby acknowledge receipt of information ~~from~~ ~~through~~ ~~my child's~~ ~~he~~ school ~~handbook~~ regarding student clubs and activities that are scheduled to be operational at the school during the upcoming school year. I understand that if a club or activity for which information has not been provided is started during the school year, I will be provided the club or activity information at that time and my written permission will be required prior to my student's participation.

I wish to withhold permission for my child to participate in the following student clubs (please list).

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

Parents or eligible students have the right to:

- (a) inspect and review education records.
- (b) 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.
- (c) consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except when requested by a government agency.  
Identifiable information contains the following: student name, a parent name, address, personal identifier, list of personal characteristics or information that would make the student's identity easily traceable.
- (d) file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION (FERPA)**

The Tift County School System has designated the following information as Directory Information:

- (1) Student's name;
- (2) Student's date and place of birth;
- (3) Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
- (4) Weight and height of student, if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
- (5) Dates of attendance at schools within the school district;
- (6) Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the district's schools;
- (7) Photograph; and
- (8) Grade level.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as Directory Information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify, in writing, the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled within 10 days after the student's enrollment date.

You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school, a school activity or event, or by school officials as part of school publications. If you, as a parent/ guardian, object to your child being photographed, videotaped, or interviewed, the objection must be presented, in writing, to the principal of the school where your child is enrolled within 10 days after the student enters school.



## **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parent and eligible students (18 or older or emancipated minors) certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with who respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –
  1. Protected information surveys of students;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from student for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Parents and eligible students will be notified at the beginning of the school year if the school district has identified the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the activities listed above are expected to be scheduled. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. The Board of Education has developed and adopted policies, in conjunction with parents, regarding these rights as well as arrangement to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure,

or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The district will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The district will also directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The district will also directly notify parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey.

The school is required by federal law to give this notice to parents. However, the school does not have scheduled any such activities as are described above. If any such activities are initiated during the school year, parents will be notified accordingly and will be afforded all the rights described herein.

### **ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATES**

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide address and contact information changes to Central Registration in a timely manner. Parents of returning students will update their child's information via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal prior to the beginning of each school year. If there is a change of address, two proofs of residence must be provided to Central Registration. This can be completed in person at the Administrative Office or sent via email to [registration@tiftschools.com](mailto:registration@tiftschools.com). If an address affidavit is provided, verification will be completed by a Tift County Schools Social Worker.

If the school becomes aware of an address change, Central Registration will contact the parent and request the appropriate documentation. If the information is not submitted within 10 days, the student will be withdrawn from school and will not be allowed to return until all necessary documentation has been provided.

## **Complaints of Discrimination/Harassment**

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability or gender in employment decisions or educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the School District based upon any of the factors listed above should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or the appropriate coordinator as listed below, who will implement the Board's discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor.

### **The Title VI Coordinator and ADA is:**

Title: Lee Watson-Director of Special Education  
Office Address: 506 W 12<sup>th</sup> St, Tifton, GA 31794  
Telephone Number: 229-387-2460

### **The Title IX and the Sports Equity Coordinator is:**

Title: Michael Norman Director of Student Services and  
Chris Martin Athletic Director  
Office Address: Tift County Schools  
Administrative Offices

### **The 504 Coordinator is:**

Title: Trista Clemons System 504 Coordinator  
Office Address: 506 W 12<sup>th</sup> St, Tifton, GA 31794  
Telephone Number: 229-387-2460

### **The Title II Coordinator is:**

Title: Jennifer Howell Chief Academic Officer  
Office Address: 506 W 12<sup>th</sup> St, Tifton, GA 31794  
Telephone Number: 229-387-2460

Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Policy JAA (Equal Educational Opportunities) or under Policy IDFA (Gender Equity in Sports) is located on the district's website.

## Right to Know

In compliance with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act, the Tift County School District 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 teacher

- has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;  
506 W. 12th St., Tifton, GA 31794  
Telephone Number: 229-387-2400
- **The Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator is:** Trista Clemons Title: System 504 Coordinator
- Office Address: 506 W 12<sup>th</sup> St, Tifton, GA 31794
- Telephone Number: 229-387-2400
- Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such
- is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- is teaching the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you have any questions concerning the qualifications of your child's teacher, please contact the principal at (school number).

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY OF PRINCIPAL

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, along with the staff, is responsible for its orderly operation. In case of discipline violations not covered by prescribed disposition in this handbook, the principal may enact corrective measures which he/she feels are in the best interest of the school and student involved.

# CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

## TIFT COUNTY SCHOOLS

### I. Philosophy of Discipline

The process of educating our youth for citizenship in Tift County Schools is not confined to the classroom curriculum. Schools must teach by example the shared values of a civilized social order and develop a positive school climate. The students, parents, teachers, and community must work together toward promoting acceptable behavior. Discipline is not about punishment; it is about behavioral modification.

Educational values we hold:

- ... Respect for the worth and dignity of every individual.
- ... Respect for moral and spiritual values and ethical standards of conduct.
- ... Equality of opportunity for all children.
- ... Faith in mankind's ability to make rational decisions.
- ... Shared responsibility for the common good.
- ... Self-Mastery is the ultimate goal of all discipline.

The Code of Student Conduct is critical to providing and maintaining a positive school environment that allows for expression of these values. The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to:

- *Outline the role of parents, students, teachers, schools, and the community in establishing a positive learning environment.*
- *Specify offenses which disrupt the environment.*
- *Standardize disciplinary actions that schools use in responding to offenses, with sensitivity to age-appropriateness of such actions.*
- *List laws, policies, and procedures which are related to school conduct and impact on school climate.*

### II. Role of Student, Home, School, and Community

- Keep in regular contact with the school concerning their child's conduct and progress and offer assistance as necessary.
- Ensure that their child is in daily attendance and report and explain any absence to the school.
- Provide their child with the resources needed to complete classwork.
- Attend conferences and meetings as invited/requested.

The A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 authorizes local boards of education, by petition to the juvenile court, to proceed against a parent or guardian for willful and unreasonable refusal to participate in efforts to improve a chronic disciplinary

problem student's behavior. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference, 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.

- Assist their child in being well-groomed, neat, clean, and following the dress standard.
- Bring to the attention of school authorities any problems or conditions which affect their child or other children as members of the school community.
- Discuss report cards and work assignments with their child.
- Support the school by keeping the child in school throughout the entire school day.
- Inform the child of the school's rules, and support the administration of discipline for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

#### STUDENTS WHO:

- Attend all classes daily and are on time.
- Are prepared to come to class with appropriate working materials.
- Are respectful to all individuals and property.
- Refrain from profane or inflammatory statements.
- Conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- Are well-groomed, clean, neat, and dressed according to the dress standard.
- Are responsible for their own work.
- Abide by the rules and regulations set forth by the school and individual classroom teachers.
- Seek changes in an orderly and recognized manner.
- Participate in deciding appropriate discipline procedures.

#### TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS WHO:

- Support the teachers' plans for classroom control.
- Encourage use of good guidance procedures.
- Maintain an atmosphere conducive to good behavior.
- Exhibit an attitude of respect for students.
- Plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Promote effective training or discipline based on fair and impartial treatment of all students.
- Develop a good working relationship among staff and with students.
- Endeavor to involve the entire community in order to improve the quality of life within the school.
- Support and participate-in community activities.

#### COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO:

- Assume responsibility, in part, for developing positive attitudes among children and youth.
- Offer programs and activities that reinforce positive behavior and meaningful use of leisure time.
- Participate in the enforcement of the rules in the Code of Student Conduct as appropriate.

### III. Student Support Process

The most appropriate disciplinary action taken by school officials is the LEAST EXTREME MEASURE that can resolve the discipline problem. Teachers and administrators use a variety of student support services prior to and/or during disciplinary action. Early parent contact and involvement is expected. Some of these services include:

- Teacher-student conference
- Teacher-parent conference or contact
- Counselor-parent conference or contact
- Counselor-student conference
- Student program adjustment
- Home visit by teacher
- Referral to counselor, social worker
- Referral to Student Support Team/team meeting with student

### IV. Progressive disciplinary actions recognized in the Code

The Tift County Board of Education's Code of Conduct was designed and created to comply with the progressive discipline processes set forth in O.C.G.A. §20-2-735, which states that discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline, that the previous discipline history of the student during the current school year and other relevant factors will be taken into account, and that all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed.

The Code of Student Conduct recognizes many strategies which may be used as alternatives to home suspensions, or as follow-up to suspension or temporary removal from class:

**WARNING/REPRIMAND:** Students are warned if misbehavior continues they may receive a consequence.

**REFERRAL TO ADMINISTRATOR:** An administrator intervenes when informal actions fail or when violations are serious.

**DETENTION:** A school may elect to provide for certain conduct. Each school specifies those types of conduct for which detention may be assigned. A maximum of ten days of detention may be assigned for any one conduct problem.

**SCHOOL CHORES:** A school may elect to provide the student with an opportunity to perform supervised activities, away from other students, related to the upkeep and maintenance of school facilities instead of suspension, not to exceed ten hours of work for any one conduct problem. The student and parent may request this alternative; however, the decision rests with the principal.

**TIME-OUT:** Temporary removal from the situation/activity where the student is having a problem. The time-out period varies from a few minutes to the length of the school day, depending on the infraction and the student's response to this disciplinary action. Time-out areas are monitored. Parent notification is recommended.

**IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS):** ISS is the removal of students from their regular classes to an isolated area that is highly structured and supervised. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior and/or repeated offenses are assigned to ISS. Students can continue their regular classroom assignments during ISS. Remedial and/or enrichment activities are provided if needed. Parents are notified by phone or letter when students are assigned. Rules specific to ISS are provided to the student

and parent when the ISS assignment is made.

**First offense:** Administrative discretion may be used to determine if students can or cannot attend any school function, or can or cannot practice or participate in any activity during the period of suspension.

**Second and subsequent offense(s):** Students cannot attend any school function, nor practice or participate in any activity during the period of suspension.

**BUS SUSPENSION:** Any short-term, long-term, or permanent removal of bus riding privileges.



**OUT OF SCHOOL HOME SUSPENSION:** A school administrator may suspend a student from school for up to 10 days for chronic disobedience and/or gross misconduct. Principals take this action when they have at least considered other alternatives and rejected them as inappropriate in a given situation. Conferences to resolve the problem are scheduled with the parent, student, and appropriate administrator. **Students are not allowed on campus during the school day, nor are they allowed to attend, participate in, or practice at, any school function or activity during the period of suspension.**

**BEHAVIOR CORRECTION PLAN:** When a student's behavior results in chronic discipline, the parent will help write a Behavior Correction Plan. It will state: (1) expected behavior; (2) consequences for misbehavior; and (3) rewards/privileges for compliant behavior.

#### ~~TEACHER AUTHORITY TO REMOVE A STUDENT FROM CLASS:~~ ¶ Student Removal ¶

~~House Bill 605 has drastically impacted student discipline. One major area is that of teacher authority. Teachers have the authority to remove from their classes a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of a student's classmates to learn. Before a student is removed from the classroom, the request will be reviewed by a Placement Review Committee to be rejected or upheld.~~

**Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student:** 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 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-764).

- After four or more Code of Conduct violations, the school should inform the parent/legal guardian, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the principal or his/her designee to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.
- Students that commit seven or more Code of Conduct violations may be taken to a disciplinary hearing resulting in a consequence of Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion.

**Option to Attend Alternative School:** Students who receive a long-term suspension or expulsion, may be provided the opportunity to attend the alternative school based upon the disciplinary Tribunal officer's decision. Any student who commits a Level 2, 3 or 4 disciplinary infraction while attending the alternative school may be removed from the school, after being found in violation at a disciplinary hearing.

- When the circumstances that led to a student's suspension are particularly



violent, disruptive or may pose a danger to the safety and welfare of students and staff, then a Tribunal officer may determine that the student's referral to alternative program may be in the virtual setting only.

**REFERRAL TO ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM:** When less severe strategies seem inappropriate or when all school strategies have been exhausted, a principal may seek permission from the Superintendent and/or his/her designee to may refer a student to the alternative program if age-appropriate. Misbehavior at the Alternative Program can result in a recommendation for expulsion.

~~**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT:** Corporal punishment may be administered by the building principal or designee to a pupil for an infraction of school rules. Corporal punishment will always be administered in the presence of a witness who must be a member of the school faculty. Corporal punishment, when administered to a female student, must be administered by a female faculty member. In all cases involving corporal punishment, a written report will be kept on file in the principal's office. Parents must be contacted prior to administering corporal punishment to receive an explanation of the incident and options for corrective action.~~

**EXPULSION:** A school principal may request the Superintendent to recommend the expulsion of a student. This is the most serious disciplinary step available. It denies the student attendance in any and all programs of the Tift County Schools for a period of time as designated in policy.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT INVOLVEMENT:** Law enforcement agencies can be contacted at the discretion of the school if criminal activity occurs on campus, if disruption is excessive, or if chronic truancy is a problem. Law enforcement agencies must be notified without exception in situations involving weapons, alcohol, drugs, battery, or sex offenses.

## **TEACHER AUTHORITY TO REMOVE A STUDENT FROM CLASS:** **Student Removal**

House Bill 605 has drastically impacted student discipline. One major area is that of teacher authority. Teachers have the authority to remove from their classes a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of a student's classmates to learn. Before a student is removed from the classroom, the request will be reviewed by a Placement Review Committee to be rejected or upheld.



## **JURISDICTION TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The student code of conduct is effective ~~and during the following times and in the following places, and school administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action when misconduct occurs:~~

- 1. On the school grounds during, before, and after school hours**
- 2. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a group**
- 3. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event**
- 4. En route to and from school on a school bus or any other school vehicle**

## **Disciplinary Action**

Any student who violates any conduct related policy will be subject to the disciplinary plan of the school system and may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Students whose actions violate the criminal code will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The disciplinary actions to which a student may be subjected include, at the discretion of the building level administrator and/or designee, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, referral to proper law enforcement authorities for protection, and/or referral to a disciplinary tribunal for possible long-term suspension, alternative placement, or expulsion.

### ***Responsibility—Employee***

All employees must report violations of this policy to the principal or assistant principal of the school where the violation occurred.

### ***Disciplinary Policy—Progressive Model***

This progressive discipline model is divided into four levels. Each level represents progressively more serious misbehavior and consequences. The level of discipline imposed shall be based on the severity of the misbehavior.

**Level I Discipline-** Level I discipline strategies are used for minor acts of misconduct which interfere with orderly school procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, approved transportation, or a student's own learning process. Students may be disciplined by the professional staff member involved or may be referred directly to the principal.

Professional staff may utilize any of the discipline management techniques appropriate for the situation, including but not limited to the following:

1. Classroom detention.
2. Classroom isolation from peers.
3. ~~Corporal punishment.~~
4. Student participation in a conference with parent/guardian and teacher.
5. Participation in a school-service project that enables the student to be engaged in the desired character trait(s).
6. Development of a written or graphic representation that reflects understanding of the specific misbehavior, the nature of the expected behavior and the related character trait(s).
7. Isolation during lunch
8. **individually walking laps during recess**

The principal may utilize any of the above discipline management techniques, and/or may employ:

1. Student participation in a conference with parent/guardian, teacher, and/or principal.
2. Restriction from school programs and special assemblies.
3. Partial day in-school suspension.
4. **Before or after school detention with an administrator**

5. Full day in-school suspension for up to three school days.
6. Participation in the cleaning/repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment.
7. Any other disciplinary technique that positively promotes the student code of conduct and desired character trait(s).

**Level II Discipline:** Offenses are intermediate acts of misconduct that require administrative intervention. These acts include, but are not limited to, repeated, but unrelated, acts of minor misconduct and misbehaviors directed against persons or property but which do not seriously endanger the health, safety or well-being of others. Consideration of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided.

Students guilty of a Level II offense may receive any of the discipline management techniques appropriate for the situation as determined by the principal or designee, including, but not limited to the following:

1. Student participation in a conference with parent/guardian, teacher, and/or principal.
2. ~~Corporal punishment.~~
3. Restriction from programs and special assemblies.
4. Partial day in-school suspension.
5. Full day in-school suspension for up to five school days.
6. Suspension from school for up to three school days, which shall include any time during which the student was subject to suspension pending investigation.
7. Participation in the cleaning/repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment.
8. Financial restitution for the repair of and damage caused to the school-related environment.
9. Participation in a school-service project that enables the student to be engaged in the desired character trait(s).
10. Any other disciplinary technique that positively promotes the student code of conduct and desired character trait(s).
11. Assignment to ~~before or after school~~ detention ~~with an administrator.~~

***NOTE:*** Level II differs from Level I in that it increases the maximum number of days in in-school suspension from three to five, adds financial restitution for the repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment, provides for out-of-school suspension for up to three school days, and prompts consideration of behavior support services.

**Level III Discipline:** Offenses are serious acts of misconduct including, but not limited to, repeated misbehavior that is similar in nature, serious disruptions of the school environment, threats to health, safety, or property and other acts of serious misconduct. These offenses must be reported to the principal. Offenses that threaten the health, safety, or well-being of others may result in immediate suspension of the student from the school and/or school-sponsored activities for up to three school days pending disciplinary investigation of the allegations. Student and parent/guardian participation in a conference with the principal is a required element of all discipline actions in this category, even if such a

conference has previously occurred. Initiation of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided. Due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed. These may include such procedures as the school disciplinary tribunal and/or procedural safeguards provided by the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Students guilty of a Level III offense may receive any of the discipline management techniques appropriate for the situation as determined by the principal or designee, including, but not limited to the following:

1. Restriction from programs and special assemblies.
2. Full day in-school suspension for up to 15 school days.
3. Suspension from school for up to five school days, which shall include any time during which the student was subject to suspension pending investigation.
4. Seeking permission from the Superintendent or his/her designee to place the child in an alternative education program for up to one semester and until such a time as the student meets the exit requirements of the alternative program.
5. Participation in the cleaning/repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment.
6. Financial restitution for the repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment.
7. Participation in a school-service project that enables the student to be engaged in the desired character trait(s).
8. Any other disciplinary technique that positively promotes the student code of conduct and desired character trait(s).

**NOTE:** Level III differs from Level II because it requires the student and parent/guardian to participate in a conference with the principal for any discipline incident in this category, omits partial day assignments to in-school suspension, increases the maximum number of days in in-school suspension from five to fifteen, increases the number of days for out-of-school suspension from three to five days, provides an option to immediately suspend a student from school for up to three school days in situations in which the health safety or well-being of others is at-risk during the disciplinary investigation, and adds alternative program placement options.

**Level IV Discipline:** Offenses are the most serious acts of misconduct. These offenses must be *immediately* reported to the principal. These violations are so serious that they may require use of outside agencies and/or law enforcement. Such acts may also result in criminal penalties being imposed. Any misconduct that threatens the health, safety, or well-being of others may result in immediate suspension of the student from the school and/or school-sponsored activities for up to three school days, pending disciplinary investigation of the allegations. Student and parent/guardian participation in a conference with the principal is a required element of all discipline actions in this category, even if such a conference has previously occurred. Initiation of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided. Due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed. These include such procedures as the school disciplinary tribunal and/or procedural safeguards provided by the

1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Students guilty of a Level IV offense may receive any of the discipline management techniques appropriate for the situation as determined by the principal or designee, including, but not limited to the following:

1. In-school suspension for up to 30 school days. Out-of-school suspension for up to ten school days, which shall include any time during which the student was subject to suspension pending investigation.
2. Seeking permission from the Superintendent or his/her designee to place the child in an alternative education program for up to two semesters and until such a time as the student meets the exit requirements for the alternative program.
3. Referral to a disciplinary hearing in front of a Tribunal Officer where the maximum consequence could be permanent expulsion from the regular school program for up to one calendar year.
4. Participation in the cleaning/repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment.
5. Financial restitution for the repair of any damage caused to the school-related environment.
6. Participation in a school-service project that enables the student to be engaged in the desired character trait.
7. Any other disciplinary technique that positively promotes the student code of conduct and desired character trait(s).

**NOTE:** Level IV differs from Level III in that it requires student and parent/guardian participation in a conference with the principal for all discipline incidents in this category, eliminates restriction from programs and activities as an independent consequence, increases the maximum number of days in in-school suspension from 15 to 30, increases the length of placement in an alternative program from up to one semester to up to two semesters, increases the maximum number of days suspended from school from five to ten, and provides for expulsion for up to one calendar year.

## V. Disciplinary Policy and Procedures

The offenses and disciplinary actions listed below apply to all situations which occur on school campuses, during school activities, or during school-related functions, and en route to and from school on school buses. The school has the flexibility to implement the plan to best address the needs of the school and student. Any disability of the student must be taken into account when addressing misbehavior, in accordance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, IDEA, and the Georgia Special Education rules. All actions for offenses are **minimum dispositions**. The age of the child and the severity of the offense are considered in the administration of these rules.

**Repeated episodes of misconduct will result in increasingly severe disciplinary actions.**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Level I</b>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level III</b>	<b>Level IV</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Possession, sale, use in any amount, distribution or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant			X	X	Requires law enforcement involvement – Criminal Law Violation
Possession, distribution, attempted sale or sale of substances represented as drugs or alcohol			X	X	Requires law enforcement involvement – Criminal Law Violation
Sale, attempted sale, distribution, or being under the influence of a prescription or over-the-counter drug		X	X	X	Requires law enforcement involvement – Criminal Law Violation
Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous instrument				X	Requires law enforcement involvement – Criminal Law Violation
Assault, including threats of bodily harm and/or sexual assault, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions			X	X	Terroristic threats fall into this category; Requires Law enforcement involvement – Criminal Law Violation
Battery, including sexual battery, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions			X	X	Requires law enforcement involvement – Criminal Law Violation
Disrespectful conduct toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions	X	X	X		

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Level I</b>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level III</b>	<b>Level IV</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature		X	X	X	Sexual Harassment falls into this category; May require law enforcement involvement, and requires a Title IX investigation
Possession or use of tobacco in any form		X	X		May require law enforcement
Damaging or defacing personal property or school property (vandalism)	X	X	X	X	May require law enforcement
Theft, willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of school or person at school	X	X	X	X	May require law enforcement
Extortion or attempted extortion	X	X	X		May require law enforcement
Possession and/or use of fireworks or any explosives, including chemical agents (i.e. pepper spray, mace or any other chemical compound)			X	X	May require law enforcement
Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat			X	X	May require law enforcement
Marking, defacing or destroying school property or the property of other school members	X	X	X	X	May require law enforcement
Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives; disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff	X	X	X		
Classroom and school disturbances	X	X			

Violation of school dress code	X	X			
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<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Level I</b>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level III</b>	<b>Level IV</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words (including ethnic or racial slurs)	X	X	X		
Indecent exposure, and/or inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts		X	X	X	Title IX if age disparity outside of legal limit; may involve law enforcement
School day use/misuse or inappropriate storage of a cell phone, or electronic communication device, except for health or other reasons approved by the Board of Education	X	X	X		Videotaping, recording, and or sharing physical altercations (i.e., fights) to others electronically
Inappropriate public displays of affection;	X	X			
Gambling or possession of gambling devices	X	X	X	X	May require law enforcement
Moving and non-moving driving violations	X	X			May require law enforcement
Giving false information to school officials	X	X	X	X	
Cheating on school assignments	X	X			
Unexcused absences, chronic tardiness, truancy, skipping class, leaving campus without permission, in unauthorized area	X	X	X		
Bullying			X	X	On the third offense, student will be automatically placed in the alternative program.
Criminal law violations			X	X	
Habitual violations	X	X	X	X	



## WEAPONS

It is the policy of the Tift County Board of Education that a student shall not possess, use, handle or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon on property or in a building owned or leased by a school district, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation provided by the school district. Weapons may include, but are not limited to:

1. 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.
2. 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, or other bludgeon-type weapon, 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. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.
3. 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 circumstances 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 and any rationale in denying such a reduction.
4. Students who possess other weapons or hazardous objects as described in paragraph 2 will be subject to discipline strategies as specified in the student code of conduct.
5. In addition, Tift County Board of Education has deemed that any chemical compound designed for the purpose of irritating the eyes by

causing a burning sensation, pain, and temporary blindness used in policing, riot control, crowd control, and self-defense, including defense against any form of wildlife is considered a weapon and is prohibited from Tift County School Campuses. Possession or use of a chemical compound, or any derivatives, is an offense in violation of the Tift County School Board code of conduct and will be subject to discipline as specified in the student code of conduct.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student possesses a weapon as defined in paragraph 1, is involved in an assault using a weapon as defined in paragraph 2, or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus must report such violations to the principal or assistant principal of the school. If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that such a report is valid, he/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney.

The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any activity involving weapons.

Students will be given a copy of the Code of Conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to weapons and possible disciplinary actions.

## **ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

Tift County Schools expects students to be in attendance at school each day. The following requirements define Tift County's expectations in accordance with state law:

### **Requirements for K-12 students:**

#### **Excused Absences**

It is the policy of Tift County Board of Education to excuse students from school for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or when attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day.
7. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.
8. Any other absence not explicitly defined in this policy but deemed to have merit based on circumstances as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

#### **Students Counted Present**

Students shall be counted present under the following circumstances:

1. When they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
2. A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to his or her foster care shall be counted present and shall not be counted absent, either excused or unexcused, for any day or portion of a day missed from school.
3. A student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program shall be counted present and given full credit for the school day in which he or she served as a volunteer poll worker, up to two school days per school year.

Students with excessive absences will be referred to the School Social Worker. Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by School Social Worker of their responsibilities relating to school attendance.

Tift County Schools shall not release students to individuals other than custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) without written permission from the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s). It is the responsibility of the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) to notify

the school when their child will be picked up by anyone other than those filed in the child's records.

In accordance with the above policy requirements, the Tift County Board of Education shall establish administrative regulations to administer these expectations. An Appeals Process shall be established by the administrative staff to consider extenuating circumstances which may need to be addressed based on individual needs.

## **ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

### **Definitions for Student Attendance Protocol**

#### Tardy

**Tardy to Class** – A student is “tardy to class” when he/she arrives to class after the tardy bell.

**Excused Tardy** – Includes events that are physically out of your control such as: a verifiable accident, road closed due to an accident, power outage, sickness when verbally verified by parent, doctor appointment when verified by doctor's office visit slip, etc.

**Unexcused Tardy** – Over-sleeping, traffic too heavy, errand for parents, delayed at train crossing, out of gas, car trouble, missed bus, personal business, out of town, etc.

#### Truant

Any child subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has 10 or more unexcused absences.

#### Exception for suspension

School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall count as excused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

#### Excused Absences

1. Personal illness or when attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. Mental health clearance letter from a Mental Health Professional before returning to school.
4. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
5. The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
6. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
7. Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from

overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.

8. Any other absence not explicitly defined in this policy but deemed to have merit based on circumstances as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

### Students Counted Present

Students shall be counted present under the following circumstances:

1. When they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
2. A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to his or her foster care shall be counted present and shall not be counted absent, either excused or unexcused, for any day or portion of the day missed from school.
3. A student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Elections Participant (STEP) program shall be present and given full credit for the school day in which he or she served as a volunteer poll worker, up to two school days per school year.

### **Grade and Absences**

Course grades of students shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met:

1. Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.
2. Make-up work was completed satisfactorily.
3. In the event of prolonged absences due to extenuating circumstances, the student, parent or guardian may request the case be reviewed by the Attendance Appeals Committee. (See Attendance Appeals Committee.)
4. Make-up work for unexcused absences may be approved by the building principal for extenuating circumstances.

The following administrative procedures shall be followed by the school, students and parents/guardians as students return to school after an absence:

### **Procedures for Absences: Notification**

1. A written excuse from a physician, parent or guardian, stating days missed and reason for absence, shall be provided to the designated person at each within three (3) days the student returns to school after an absence. Only three (3) written excuses and/or emails from a parent/guardian will be accepted per 9 weeks. Also, school officials will accept faxed notes from the doctor once the student returns to school. School officials will ONLY EXCUSE the note(s) provided with the date(s) from the physician, parent or guardian. In regards to online learning, students are counted as present when work is verified by their teacher (s).
2. Parents of students from ages 6-15 (including kindergarten students who have been enrolled 20 consecutive school days) who have accumulated three (3) or more unexcused absences shall be referred to the Tift County School Attendance Support Team which shall initiate the Truancy Prevention Protocol

## **Attendance and Tardies/Early Dismissals for Students in Grades K-12:**

### **K-5th Grades:**

1. Students are expected to be on time and in attendance daily. Students must be present at least 1/2 of the school day to be counted present.
2. Parents are responsible for getting students to school on time and should not make a habit of taking students out of school prior to official dismissal time.

Students will be referred to the Attendance Support Team (AST) when they have received excessive tardies/early dismissals. The AST will determine whether the tardies/early dismissals are excused or unexcused. If the school nurse calls the parents/guardians to pick up the student, he or she will be excused for the rest of the school day. For students who have acquired 10 unexcused tardies/early dismissals, the school social worker may initiate legal action to resolve truancy. The social worker may initiate any or all of the following actions:

- a. ~~Contact the parent for a second attendance conference~~ an attendance conference.
- b. ~~Refer matter to the Department of Family and Children's service for an investigation of possible educational neglect.~~ Referral to the Truancy Intervention Project (TIP).
- c. ~~File a complaint in Juvenile Court alleging the child to be a dependent child for reasons of parental inability to ensure the child attends school and for educational neglect.~~ Refer matter to the Department of Family and Children's service for an investigation of possible educational neglect

### **6th-8th Grades:**

1. Students are expected to be on time and in attendance daily. Students must be present at least 1/2 of the school day to be counted present.
2. Parents are responsible for getting students to school on time and should not make a habit of taking students out of school prior to official dismissal time.
3. Students will be referred to the Attendance Support Team (AST) when they have received excessive tardies/early dismissals. The AST will determine whether the tardies/early dismissals are excused or unexcused.
4. Students who arrive after the tardy bell (to school) must go directly to the front office and SIGN IN.
5. Students must see the principal's designee to obtain a tardy pass to enter the classroom after the tardy bell rings. Excessive tardiness will result in progressive punishment using the discipline matrix.
6. Students who are tardy to class by more than 1/2 of the period are required to have an admit pass and are recorded absent for that class.
7. Parents/guardians or other persons approved to check-out students during the day must report to the Front Office. After the checkout is verified and approved by the school official, the student will be cleared to check-out at the end of the instructional period. Students who miss class for more than 1/2 of the period due to early dismissal will be recorded as absent.

Students' Illness During the Day: Students who become ill during the day must have a

pass from the school nurse to come to the Front Office. Students may be checked out of school only by their legal guardian or by persons authorized on the student's Medical Authorization and Emergency Release Form. Parents/ guardians must be available by telephone. If the school nurse calls the parents/guardians to pick up the student, he or she will be excused for the rest of the school day. For students who have acquired 10 unexcused tardies/early dismissals, the school social worker may initiate legal action to resolve truancy. Social worker may initiate any or all of the following actions:

- a. ~~Contact the parent for a second attendance conference;~~
- b. ~~Refer matter to the Department of Family and Children's service for an investigation of possible educational neglect.~~ Referral to the Truancy Intervention Project (TIP).
- c. ~~File a complaint in Juvenile Court alleging the child to be a dependent child for reasons of parental inability to ensure the child attends school and for educational neglect.~~ Refer matter to the Department of Family and Children's service for an investigation of possible neglect.

### **9th-12th Grades:**

1. Students are expected to be on time and in attendance daily. Students must be present at least 1/2 of the school day to be counted present. Students must be present at least 1/2 or more of the class to be counted present for that class.
2. Parents are responsible for getting students to school on time and should not make a habit of taking students out of school prior to official dismissal time.
3. Students who arrive after the tardy bell (to school) must go directly to the attendance office and SIGN IN. Tardy passes are issued by the attendance official until 8:45 a.m. After 8:45 a.m., tardy students are recorded as absent for 1st block and issued an admit pass to take to class.
4. Students may not have more than 3 tardies to class per semester. Upon the 4th tardy the teacher will write an administrative discipline referral.
5. Students must see the principal's designee to obtain a tardy pass to enter the classroom after the tardy bell rings. Excessive tardiness will result in progressive punishment.
6. Students who are tardy to class by more than 1/2 of the class are required to have an admit pass and are recorded absent for that class.
7. Parents/guardians or other persons approved to check-out students during the day must report to the Attendance Office. After the checkout is verified and approved by the attendance official, the student will be cleared to check-out at the end of the instructional period. Students who miss class for more than 1/2 of the class due to early dismissal will be recorded as absent.
8. Pre-Approved Early Dismissal (Check-Out): Students who need to leave school during the school day must take their note to the Attendance Office before 1<sup>st</sup> block. The student should present a note from the parent/guardian authorizing the student's early release. The note must include a parent contact number. When this note is presented and verified by the attendance official, an Early Dismissal Pass will be issued to the student. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the

student will not be allowed to check-out. The Early Dismissal Pass must be presented to the teacher of the class in session when the student leaves during the day. The student must report to the Attendance Office and sign-out before leaving campus. Verification/authorization for sign-outs must occur prior to the students' leaving campus. If the student is being checked out for a doctor's appointment, documentation regarding the appointment must be presented in order for the absence to be excused. If the parent/guardian picks up the student from the nurse's office, the absence/early check-out will be counted as excused for the remainder of the day.

10. Students Illness During the Day: Students who become ill during the day may be checked out of school only by their legal guardian or by persons authorized on the student's Medical Authorization and Emergency Release Form. Parents/guardians must be available by telephone to verify student release if they do not personally check-out the student. If the school nurse calls the parents/guardians to pick up their child, the student will be excused for the rest of the school day. For students who have acquired

10 unexcused tardies/early dismissals, the school social worker may initiate ~~legal~~ action to resolve truancy. Social worker may initiate any or all of the following actions:

- a. Contact the parent for a second attendance conference;
- b. ~~Refer matter to the Department of Family and Children's service for an investigation of possible educational neglect.~~ Referral to the Truancy Intervention Project.
- c. ~~File a complaint in Juvenile Court alleging the child to be a dependent child for reasons of parental inability to ensure the child attends school and for educational neglect.~~ Refer the matter to the Department of Family and Children Services for investigation of possible educational neglect.

### **Attendance Appeals Process: Grades K-12**

1. An Attendance Appeals Committee shall be established by the building administrator.
2. The Attendance Appeals Committee in each school shall be comprised of an administrator, counselor, school social worker, teacher, or any other person the principal feels necessary who has information for the Committee to consider.
3. The Attendance Appeals Committee shall meet as the building administrator deems it necessary. (The Attendance Appeals Committee must meet upon the request of a parent or student.) Minutes are to be kept for all attendance hearings.
4. Parents/guardians must be advised of their right of appeal to the Superintendent.



## TRUANCY PREVENTION PROTOCOL

Upon receiving a referral for a child in danger of becoming truant, the Attendance Support Team (AST) shall initiate the following steps:

# of unexcused absences	Intervention action
3 1+	Infinite Campus Call Out
5	Attendance Support Team (AST) will review attendance. A letter notifying attendance concerns will be mailed to the parent or guardian. <del>and notify Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) if absences adversely affect the educational success of the student.</del>
7	<del>Schedule</del> mandatory conference with School Social Worker or AST. Mail attendance conference letter. Parent attends conference and signs <del>letter</del> . attendance contract. At the discretion of the AST, the child may also be required to attend the conference.
10 +	Initiate legal action to resolve truancy. Social worker may initiate any or all of the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Contact the parent for a second attendance conference;</li> <li>b. Refer student to CHINS Coordinator to assist with interventions to solve truancy issues with parent/guardian and student.</li> <li>c. Refer matter to the Department of Family and Children’s service for an investigation of possible educational neglect.</li> <li>d. File a complaint in Juvenile Court alleging the child to be a dependent child for reasons of parental inability to ensure the child attends school and for educational neglect.</li> <li>e. After all school-based intervention levels and Tip involvement, the case could be referred to the juvenile courts for further court proceedings.</li> </ol>

## **Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia Programs**

### **Children in Need of Services (CHINS)**

On January 1, 2014, the State of Georgia adopted an updated juvenile code which includes a new case type called Child in Need of Services (CHINS) found in Article 5 of the code beginning at O.C.G.A. 15-11-380. The legislative purpose is:

1. To acknowledge that certain behaviors or conditions occurring within a family or school environment indicate that a child is experiencing serious difficulties and is in need of services and corrective action in order to protect such child from the irreversibility of certain choices and to protect the integrity of such child's family;
2. To make family members aware of their contributions to their family's problems and to encourage family members to accept the responsibility to participate in any program of care ordered by the court;
3. To provide a child with a program of treatment, care, guidance, counseling, structure, supervision, and rehabilitation that he or she needs to assist him or her in becoming a responsible and productive member of society; and
4. To ensure the cooperation and coordination of all agencies having responsibility to supply services to any member of a family referred to the court.

The purpose of CHINS is to deter neglect, child abuse, and delinquency by creating a comprehensive system of support that focuses not only on intervention, but also on prevention. CHINS provide support and services to at-risk youth and their families to help divert them from the path of child welfare and/or court intervention to a healthier and more productive path in life.

### **Truancy Intervention Project T.I.P.**

Truancy Intervention Project better known as T.I.P. is a committee composed of school-based professionals and community leaders to remedy issues regarding students' academics, behavior, and attendance issues. T.I.P. committee conferences are held at the Charles Kent Administration Building on the third floor. Students will be recommended to this committee by school administrators, counselors, and social workers. The T.I.P. committee is led by the Tift County Public School CHINS Coordinator. The T.I.P. committee will agree on the best solutions possible to better our Tift County students and families. The students and families will be case managed by the CHINS Coordinator to ensure that all voluntary agreements are met.

## HEAD LICE

Tift County Schools is following a “no-nit” policy. Your child can return to school only when all head lice and nits are removed from the child’s head. Your child will be rechecked by the school nurse/school personnel before being allowed to return to class. If nits are found, the child will not be allowed to return to class.

## BULLYING

Tift County Schools believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law [O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.4](#), of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; **or**
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; **or**
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
  - A. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harms as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
  - B. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
  - C. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; **or**
  - D. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Electronic communication includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

Each school shall encourage teachers or other school employees, students, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control or charge of a student,

either anonymously or in the person's name, at the person's option to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity. Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying is encouraged to immediately report it to the principal.

Any report will be investigated by the administration based on the nature of the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented and what other steps should be taken.

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. Such consequences shall include disciplinary action, as appropriate under the circumstances. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative education program.

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

Student and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the student/parent handbooks.

## **OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT**

Tift County Board of Education and the institutions under its jurisdiction shall have authority to control the conduct of students under the general power to provide for control and management of the school system. It is the duty of the Tift County Board of Education to approve necessary rules and policies to regulate student conduct for the purpose of maintaining good order and discipline in the school. The Board has a responsibility to provide protection for students and employees and to provide and maintain a safe and orderly environment for education to take place.

Administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for conduct which occurs:

(a) on the school grounds during or immediately before or immediately after school hours; (b) on the school grounds at any other time; (c) off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event; (d) en route to and from school or school activity.

Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school related actions by students which have a direct and immediate impact on school discipline, the educational function of the school or the welfare of the students and staff. A student who has been formally charged with violation(s) of criminal law, whether or not the case has been adjudicated, and whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare and/or safety of other students or staff, or whose presence may cause substantial disruption at school is subject to disciplinary action.

Off-campus, non-school related misconduct may be considered as a sufficient basis for suspension, exclusion from school. Other appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to in-school suspension and assignment to an alternative educational program or site may be taken.

School officials shall contact proper authorities to verify any and all allegations that a student has been arrested or charged. The Superintendent and staff shall cooperate with the probation office or courts in order to allow for that office to conduct a proper investigation. If the matter involves a juvenile, the Superintendent and staff shall cooperate with the Juvenile Court concerning the student's conduct and record in school.

Any suspension, expulsion, or exclusion from enrollment under this policy shall not waive the student's rights to a due process hearing as set out in the Board policy relating to suspension or expulsion.

## **STUDENTS – INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES**

### **Search of School Property**

Any property owned by, loaned to, or otherwise entrusted to the Board may, even though possession thereof has been assigned by school employees to individual students, be searched by school officials where there exists reasonable cause to believe that such property contains or otherwise conceals items, the possession of which is prohibited by either rules adopted by the Board or criminal laws.

### **Search of Private Property, and the Person of Students**

On reasonable cause that private property brought onto school property by a student or that the person of a student while on school property contains or conceals items described in the Code of Student Conduct, school officials may search such property

or person. Upon the failure of any student to grant such permission, school officials may detain such student until such time as the school day ends, the school receives permission of the student's parent or guardian for such search, or a warrant is issued authorizing such search, whichever event shall first occur.

**Seizure**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, school officials may seize and retain custody of any item referred to in the Code of Student Conduct upon the discovery of the existence of any such item either in or on any school property, in or on any private property brought onto school property by a student, or on the person of a student while on school property.

**\*\*\*STUDENT TOBACCO USE\*\*\***

All students are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco in any form, and using electronic nicotine delivery systems on Tift County Schools (TCS) school grounds or in TCS facilities, in TCS owned vehicles or at any on or off campus TCS sponsored events, at all times. School grounds include all school campuses, athletic fields and facilities, all central office facilities, and school buses.

**STUDENTS ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE**

**Student Drug Use:**

It shall be the policy of this Board to take positive action through education, counseling, parental involvement, intervention, medical referral, and police referral in the handling of incidents in the schools involving the possession, sale, and/or use of behavior affecting substances.

It shall further be the policy of the Board for all students in the system to be provided age appropriate, developmentally- based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs, which address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug and alcohol use, and to be provided with information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs and alcohol. These programs shall also provide information about any drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs available to students.

**Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages, Stimulant Drugs:**

A student shall not possess, sell, use, distribute, or be under the influence of any legal or illegal drug in any form whatsoever, including but not limited to, any narcotic drug, inhalants, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, cocaine, marijuana, other controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroids, intoxicant of any kind, or any substance represented to be or reasonably appearing to be any type of drug:

- 1) at school or on school property at any time;
- 2) off the school grounds at a school-sponsored activity, function, or event; and/or
- 3) en route to and from school.

A student shall not attend school or any school event after having consumed any quantity of alcohol or illegal substance. Use may be detected by observation, odor or other means.

A student shall not have on his/her person, or in any way be in possession or control

of drug related paraphernalia.

A student shall be deemed to be in possession of substances or paraphernalia prohibited by this policy if such substances or paraphernalia are found in cars, lockers, book bags, desks or other personal effects of students.

**Discipline Action and Procedures:** All employees must report violations of this policy to the principal or assistant principal of the school where the violation occurred. If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that a report is valid, he/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the police and district attorney.

The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any illegal drug activity.

Students will be given a copy of the Code of Conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to drugs and alcohol and possible disciplinary actions.

Compliance with this policy and its rules is mandatory.

## **PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT REPORTING OF ACTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

- A. 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.
- B. 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 the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.*
- C. 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 immediately, 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 in writing, 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 policy 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, [reported to the School Resource Officer, and reported to the District's Human Resources](#). 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.

## **BUS CONDUCT**

The Superintendent of Schools will ensure that all bus drivers know and understand their responsibilities for establishing and maintaining appropriate student behavior on school buses. The administrative procedure for Bus Conduct will be included in each driver's Transportation Handbook.

### **Discipline**

Self-control on the part of the student is necessary for the safe operation of any school bus. Students are expected to conform to the same standards of behavior as required during regular school activities.

Students who fail to conform to reasonable behavior expectations may expect to receive disciplinary measures. Repeated or serious violations will result in short or long term loss of bus privileges, and subject to all other provisions contained in Code of Student Conduct.

### **Safety**

All drivers will emphasize safety instructions and emergency evacuation procedures during the first week of school. An annual emergency drill will be conducted.

Students are expected to follow safety procedures concerning loading, unloading, seating and emergency evacuation as directed by their driver, teacher and principal.

Violation of safety measures is considered a serious offense; appropriate disciplinary measures will result.

## **TRANSPORTATION RULES AND PUPIL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **School Bus Rules and Pupil Responsibilities**

1. The driver is in charge of the bus and all pupils aboard. Obey the driver promptly and respectfully.
2. Student must be at bus stop a minimum of 5 minutes prior to scheduled pick-up time; the driver cannot wait beyond his or her regular schedule for those who are tardy.
3. Wait in an orderly line off the street or road. (Minimum: 12 Feet)
4. Cross in front of the bus only when the road is clear and at a safe distance in front of the bus in order to be seen by the driver. (Minimum: 12 Feet)
5. Do not run toward a school bus while it is in motion.
6. Ride only the bus assigned by school officials. Student must get on and off at the stop assigned by school officials.
7. Do not try to get on or off the bus or move about within the bus while it is in motion.
8. Pupils must remain seated while the bus is moving. Ride three in a seat, if necessary, and do not exchange seats unless given permission by the driver. If all



seats are taken, stand to the rear while the bus is in motion.

9. Behave on the bus as you are expected to behave in the classroom. Any acts of physical violence, bullying, physical assault or battery of other persons on the bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the bus and other unruly behavior is prohibited. Physical violence is defined as intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with another or intentionally making physical contact that causes physical harm to another unless such physical contacts or harms were in self-defense.
10. Do not engage in any activity which might divert the driver's attention and cause an accident such as:
  - (a) Loud talking or laughing, or unnecessary confusion.
  - (b) Unnecessary conversation with the driver.
  - (c) Extending any part of the body out of the bus windows or doors.
11. The usage of mirrors, lasers, flash camera, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus is prohibited.
12. The usage of any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the bus is prohibited.
13. Pupils are not to open or close bus doors at any time nor shall they regulate or operate any part of the bus.  
Students must be able to hold items carried on the bus in his/her lap.  
This does not include prohibited items.
14. Do not engage in any activity which might damage, cause excessive wear or litter to the bus or other property. The following activities are prohibited at all times:
  - (a) Smoking, eating, possession or use of alcoholic beverages on the bus.
  - (b) Spitting or throwing anything in or from the bus.
  - (c) Possessing knives or sharp objects on the bus.
  - (d) Bringing animals, baseball bats, skateboards, or any other item deemed inappropriate by the Director of Transportation.
15. Pupils will not leave the bus on the way to school or home without a written request from the parent/guardian except in cases of personal emergency or if approved by the principal or transportation director.
16. Pupils must be courteous to driver, to fellow students, and to passersby at all times.
17. Report promptly to the driver any damage done to the bus.  
Persons causing damage shall be expected to defray its full cost.
18. All School Board Policies governing Student Discipline and Conduct will be observed.

### **Violations**

Discipline for bus misconduct will be handled with an age appropriate, progressive

plan of discipline that may include any of the punishments listed in the disciplinary action plan. In addition to these punishments, bus conduct will also be subject to bus contracts, assigned seating, and short-term, long-term, or permanent removal of bus riding privileges. **Automatic suspension of bus riding privileges can be implemented for the following offenses: fighting, cussing, vulgar language, obscene gestures, bullying, or other behavior deemed inappropriate by the school administration or Director of Transportation.** When a student is removed from a bus, they are not allowed to ride any Tift County bus. During any bus suspension, the parent/student is responsible for school attendance, unless the student has been suspended from school.

#### **K-5**

1st Offense: Discretion of administrator.

2nd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 2 days.

3rd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 3 days.

4th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 4 days.

5th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 5 days.

6 or more Offenses: Suspension of bus privileges for a minimum of 10 days.

Automatic Suspension: Suspension of bus privileges for a minimum of 10 days.

#### **6-12**

1st Offense: Discretion of administrator.

2nd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 3 days.

3rd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 6 days.

4th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 9 days.

5th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for 15 days.

6 or more Offenses: Suspension of bus privileges for a minimum of 30 days.

Automatic Suspension: Suspension of bus privileges for a minimum of 30 days.

## **POSSESSION/USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES BY STUDENTS**

### **Student and Faculty Owned Electronic Devices On Campus**

Tift County Schools does not prohibit students from bringing personal electronic devices on campus. However, the use of personal electronic devices on each campus is subject to the discretion of the administration of that campus. There is no uniform rule requiring or allowing use of devices during the school day. Students, parents, and staff are duly informed that bringing a personal device on campus can subject it to search and seizure in the event of an investigation of misuse.

#### **Definition of “Device”**

“Device” means a wireless and/or portable electronic hand held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile

communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), hand held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc. This list is not all inclusive and the administration of the building will determine if the device is acceptable.

### **Internet**

The school system has created a “GUEST” WIFI network for student personal devices on campus. Only this internet gateway provided by the school system may be accessed while on campus. Personal internet connectivity such as but not limited to cell phones/cell network adapters are not permitted to be used by students to access outside internet sources at any time. Student cellular devices must be set to WIFI and join Tift County Schools “GUEST” network.

### **Security and Damages**

The responsibility for keeping one's device secure rests with the individual owner. **The school system, its staff and employees, shall not be liable for any loss or damage to any device owned by a user or third party.** If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal property that is stolen or damaged. It is recommended that serial numbers are recorded and that skins (decals) and other custom touches are used to identify a user's device. Serial numbers will be used to identify "found" items. Additionally, protective cases for devices are encouraged.

### **Student Responsible Internet Use Guidelines**

As a student, I understand that using digital devices (whether personal or school owned) and the school system's technological resources is a privilege, conditioned upon compliance with this regulation.

- *Students are required to:*
  - Use digital devices, networks and software in school for educational purposes and activities.
  - Show respect for yourself and others when using technology including social media.
  - Give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work.
  - Report inappropriate use of technology immediately.
  - Abide by the Student Acceptable Use Agreement with the school system.

**Educational Use ONLY During Class** – devices are to be used to support or enhance teaching and learning only while in the classroom unless specifically authorized by school level administration.

**Used ONLY with Teacher Discretion During Class** – Teachers will work with students to establish when technology devices are to be used in class.

**Optional** – it is optional to bring a device from home.

Students need to be responsible for their own device. As a condition to using the school system's technological resources and before a student is eligible to access the system's network, such student and his or her parent or guardian must execute and return the Student Acceptable Use Agreement (IFBG-E1) and agree to accept and abide by the terms and conditions set forth in this regulation.

## GENERAL STUDENT DRESS STANDARD

The **rationale** for dress standards is to foster good citizenship and the school's ability to achieve its academic and instructional purposes and help students understand situational/environmental awareness for appropriate dress.

The **goal** is to promote student learning, safety, and behavior by assisting students and parents in making choices about appropriate school attire. Further, dress codes will assist in preventing disruption of the education environment, prevent health or safety hazards, and prevent interference of the learning of other students. The following regulations regarding the dress code apply to students while on school grounds, while remote learning, while participating in school athletic events, while participating in school extracurricular activities, or while on any transportation vehicle owned or used by the Board of Education.

The **expectation** is for students to dress in a clean, modest, and dignified manner.

- Clothing should not be too tight, too loose, too short, or too long and should not have inappropriate writing or pictures, including but not limited to:
- ~~Clothing with words or graphics depicting or alluding to any of the following are strictly prohibited:~~
- Any attire, words, symbols, or accessories deemed by the administration to be a threat to the safety and security of the campus or a distraction to the learning environment will not be permitted. Examples below:

- |                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ❖ violence         | ❖ alcohol                         |
| ❖ weapons          | ❖ tobacco                         |
| ❖ gang affiliation | ❖ intimidation                    |
| ❖ sex              | ❖ bullying                        |
| ❖ profanity        | ❖ self-destructive behavior       |
| ❖ drug use         | ❖ negative/inappropriate messages |

- Pants and jeans with noticeable splits or holes that, in the opinion of the principal or the principal’s designee, would cause a disruption of the educational environment, would be a health hazard, or would interfere with the learning of other students, are prohibited.
- Shorts, skirts, culottes, split skirts, or dresses must be reasonable in length and appropriate for school.
- Immodest clothing is prohibited. See-through clothing, pajamas, bare shoulders, bare midriffs, halters, tank tops, and spaghetti straps are prohibited. Tight-fitting clothing, such as spandex or bicycle type clothing and/or any facsimile, is prohibited.
  - Undergarments are defined as the following: Underwear/Boxer, Bra, Briefs (T-shirts worn under top shirt is not considered an undergarment) and at no time, regardless of movement, should be exposed.
  - Pants should be worn at the waist to not expose undergarments or private areas and not be so tight as to define the private areas.
  - Shorts should be worn at the waist not to expose undergarments or private areas and not be so tight as to define the private areas.
  - Skirts and Dresses must be worn at the waist not to expose undergarments or private areas and not be so tight as to define the private areas.
- Wearing any clothing, jewelry, or other item symbolizing gang affiliation is prohibited.
- Shoes must be worn at all times and properly secured. Appropriate footwear is required for science labs, vocational shop classes, P.E., and other classes as deemed by administration.
  - \*Bedroom shoes/slippers and roller-skate shoes/heelys are NOT allowed.
- Sunglasses cannot be worn inside buildings.
- No headgear accessories or hoodies can cover the ears. Nighttime headwear is not allowed.

**Violations**

- Violations of dress code will follow a progressive discipline approach with repeated violations resulting in different consequences than initial violations.
- First violations of the dress code policy should be referred to an administration for resolution to include a review of the policy with the student and parent.
- For middle and high school students, initial violations may result in a child being assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the school day. Students may return to regular class upon correction of the dress code violation.

- For middle and high school students, students may be placed in In-School suspension for up to three days for repeated violations.

¶

~~Undergarments~~ are defined as the following: Underwear/Boxer, Bra, Briefs (T-shirts worn under top shirt is not considered an undergarment) and at no time, regardless of movement, should be exposed. ¶

¶

~~Pants~~ should be worn at the waist to not expose undergarments or private areas and not be so tight as to define the private areas. ¶

¶

~~Shorts~~ should be worn at the waist not to expose undergarments or private areas and not be so tight as to define the private areas. ¶

¶

~~Skirts and Dresses~~ must be worn at the waist not to expose undergarments or private areas and not be so tight as to define the private areas.

~~Shirts and Dresses~~ must cover undergarments, private areas, midriffs, lower back and not be so tight as to define the private areas. (No spaghetti straps or strapless)

~~Shoes~~ must be worn at all times and properly secured. Appropriate footwear is required for science labs, vocational shop classes, P.E., and other classes as deemed by administration. ¶

¶

~~\*Bedroom shoes/slippers and roller skate shoes/heelys are NOT allowed.~~

~~Accessories:~~ ¶

¶

~~Sunglasses cannot be worn inside buildings.~~

~~No headgear accessories can cover the ears. Nighttime headwear is not allowed.~~

## **SECLUSION OR RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS**

The Board of Education shall require that all schools and programs within the district comply with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.35 concerning “seclusion” and “restraint,” as those terms are defined within the rule.

This policy is not intended to prevent the use of physical restraint in limited circumstances where a student exhibits behavior that place the student or others in imminent danger and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or less intensive techniques. The Board of Education recognizes that in determining when and how to implement this policy and any procedures related to it, educators will have to exercise their professional judgment and discretion. Therefore, the policy is not to be construed as imposing ministerial duties on individual employees. Further, it is not intended to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.

For schools and programs within the district, that use physical restraint as defined within SBOE rule, the Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement written procedures governing its use, which shall include the following provisions:

1. Staff and faculty training on the use of physical restraint;
2. Written parental notification within a reasonable time, not to exceed one school day from the use of restraint, when physical restraint is used to restrain a student;
3. Procedures for observing and monitoring the use of physical restraint;
4. Documentation by staff or faculty participating in or supervising the restraint for each student in each instance in which the student is restrained;
5. Periodic review of the use of restraint and the documentation described in item 4.

## **GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS**

It is the policy of Tift County Board of Education to prohibit discrimination based on gender in its elementary and secondary school athletic programs. As a part of achieving this goal, the Tift County School District annually shall notify all of its students of the name, office address, and office telephone number of the employee(s) who coordinate efforts to comply with and carry out the provisions of state law. This notification shall be included in a student handbook containing the code of conduct and distributed to all students.

An equity in sports grievance procedure is hereby adopted which provides 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 pertinent Code section. The grievance procedure shall be as follows:

1. The employee designated as the person who coordinates efforts to comply shall render his or her decision in writing no later than 30 days after receipt of the complaint, and such decision shall set forth the essential facts and rationale for the decision;
2. A copy of such decision shall be provided to the complainant within five days of the date of the decision; and
3. A complainant shall have a right to appeal such a decision to the local board within 35 days of the date of the decision.
4. A complainant may appeal a decision of the Board in accordance with the procedures specified in O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160.

The Superintendent shall annually appoint an Equity in Sports Coordinator whose responsibility is to coordinate efforts to comply with and carry out requirements in regard to Equity in Sports.

The Equity in Sports Coordinator shall investigate any complaints communicated to the school system in regard to Equity in Sports.



## **Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as “Section 504,” is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system’s Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

System 504 Coordinator  
506 W 12<sup>th</sup> St  
Tifton, GA 31794  
229-387-2400

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

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system’s request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.

You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.

10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

### **Section 504 Procedural Safeguards**

1. **Overview:** Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant’s failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.
2. **Hearing Request:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following:
  - a. The name of the student.
  - b. The address of the residence of the student.
  - c. The name of the school the student is attending.
  - d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
  - e. The requested reasons for review.
  - f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
  - g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

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

3. **Mediation:** The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.
4. **Hearing Procedures:**
  - a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant’s Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.

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

- m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. **Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
6. **Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

## **PROCEDURES WHEN DISCIPLINING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

School personnel may, for not more than ten school days in a row, remove a child with a disability who violates the code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension without consulting the student's IEP team. School personnel may also impose additional removals of not more than ten days for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement.

Once a child has been removed from his or her current placement for a total of ten, consecutive or not consecutive, school days in the same school year, the school system must, during any subsequent days of removal in that school year, provide services that enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.

Within ten school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct (except for a removal that is less than ten school days and is not a change in placement), the school system, the parent and relevant members of the IEP team must review all relevant information in the student's file, in the IEP, any teacher observations and any relevant information provided by the parent to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b. If the conduct in question was a direct result of the school systems failure to implement the child's IEP.

If the relevant members of the IEP team determine that either of these conditions was met, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. If the conduct was the result of the school system's failure to implement the IEP, the school system must take immediate action to remedy those deficiencies. When the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability the IEP team must conduct (or review if already in place) the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and develop and implement (or review and modify) a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) for the

student to address the behavior so as to prevent it from occurring in the future. If your child carries a weapon to school or to a school function; if your child knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function; or if your child inflicts serious bodily injury on another person while at school, on school premises or at a school sponsored function, school system personnel may order a change in placement of your child to (a) an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than 10 school days (to the extent such alternatives would be applied to children without disabilities), or to (b) an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for the same amount of time that a child without a disability would be subject to discipline, but for not more than 45 days without regard to whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of disability. The alternative education setting shall be determined by the IEP team.

1. School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement is appropriate.
2. An ALJ/hearing officer may order a change in placement of your child to the IEP-determined appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days if the ALJ/hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of your child is substantially likely to result in injury to your child or to others; and determines that the interim alternative educational setting meets the requirements of paragraph (5).
3. Any interim alternative educational setting in which your child is placed pursuant to paragraph (1) or paragraph (4) in this section shall: (a) be selected so as to enable your child to continue to receive educational services in order to participate in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to continue to progress toward the goals set out in the IEP; and (b) receive the services and modifications of a functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan designed to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
4. If a disciplinary action is contemplated as described in paragraph (1) or paragraph (4) of this section for the behavior of your child, you shall be notified of that decision and of all procedural safeguards accorded under this section no later than the date on which the decision to take that action is made, and immediately, if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date on which the decision to take that action is made, the school system, the parent and relevant members of the IEP team shall conduct a review of the relationship between your child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.
5. In carrying out a review described in paragraph (6) of this section, the school system, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team (as determined by the parent and the school system) shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, and teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine (1) if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability; or (2) if the conduct in question was the direct result of the school systems failure to implement the IEP. When the school system, the parent, and the relevant members of the IEP determine that either (a) or (b) is

applicable, the conduct is a manifestation of the disability. If the determination is that the behavior of your child was not a manifestation of his or her disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to children without disabilities may be applied to your child in the same manner in which they would be applied to children without disabilities except that the child: (a) must continue to receive educational services so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and

(a) receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

6. If the determination is made that the conduct was a manifestation of the disability, then the IEP team shall conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement the behavior intervention plan or review such and revise as necessary if already in place. The child shall be returned to the placement from which he or she was removed unless the parent and the school system agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan. For circumstances described in paragraph (1) or (4) an interim alternative setting may be used as determined by the IEP team.
7. If you request an expedited due process hearing regarding a disciplinary action described in paragraph (1)(b) or paragraph (3) to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, your child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the ALJ/hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in paragraph (1)(b) or paragraph (3), whichever occurs first, unless you and the State or the school system agree otherwise. Such expedited due process hearing must occur within 20 school days of the date the hearing is requested and must result in a determination within 10 school days after the hearing; a resolution session meeting must occur within seven days of the date the hearing is requested and the hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within 15 days of receipt of the hearing request. The decision of an expedited due process hearing may be appealed.
8. When an expedited due process hearing has been requested regarding placement as a result of a violation of the code of conduct, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the ALJ/hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period defined, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the State or local agency agree otherwise.
9. If a child has not been determined eligible for special education and related services and violated a code of student conduct, but the school system had knowledge before the behavior occurred that the child may be a child with a disability, then the child may assert the protections described in this notice. A school system has knowledge that the child may be a child with a disability if:
  - A. The parent of the child has expressed concern in writing that the child is in need of special education and related services to supervisory or administrative personnel or the teacher of the child.

- B. The parent requested an evaluation related to eligibility for special education and related services under the IDEA.
- C. The child's teacher or other system personnel expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the school system's director of special education or to other supervisory personnel of the school system.

A school system does not have knowledge if:

- a. The child's parent has not allowed an evaluation of the child.
- b. Has refused special education and related services.
- c. Has revoked consent for the delivery of special education and related services or;
- d. The child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability eligible for services under the IDEA.

If you would like a further explanation of any of these rights, you may contact the special education director for your local school system.

## **Notification of Charge or Commission of a Felony**

Any student seeking enrollment into the Tift County School District and who has been charged with, convicted or adjudicated of a felony, or for an act that would constitute a felony under the law if committed by an adult, and including any charges, conviction or adjudication that results in an abeyance or given first offender status, or incarcerated for any period of time, prior to the student being enrolled in the Tift County School District, the student and the student's parent 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.

Prior to the student enrolling in the Tift County School District, the Superintendent shall make a decision of proper placement of the student. The student's placement may include provisional or long-term status anywhere within the district. Any placement may also include, at the Superintendent's discretion, a safety or transition plan. Upon enrollment, failure of the student to abide by the terms of any



developed safety or transition plan may be grounds for disciplinary action, including referral to a Disciplinary Hearing Officer.

Failure of any student to provide the required documentation upon enrollment shall be a violation of the Code of Conduct and will result in the student being referred to a Disciplinary Hearing for disciplinary action.

While the student's placement is pending, the student will not be permitted on campus, unless authorized by the Superintendent. The student will not be permitted to participate in any regular school activities, extracurricular activities, athletic activities, or school-sponsored social events.

If the student and the parents are dissatisfied with the placement of the student by the Superintendent, they shall have the right to appeal the Superintendent's decision by filing written notice with the Superintendent within five (5) days thereof. The Board shall consider the student's placement within ten (10) school days of the Superintendent receiving written notice of the Student's appeal. If no appeal is received by the Superintendent, then the Superintendent's decision shall become final.

### **Disciplinary Hearings or Tribunals**

Tribunal Officers are independent decision makers appointed by the Board of Education to hear disciplinary matters. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary here within, Tribunal Officers have the authority to issue a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion of any student found to have violated the Code of Conduct. If a hearing is called, the student will be suspended from school until the hearing can be held. The hearing will be held no later than ten (10) school days after the beginning of the suspension unless the parent and school mutually agree to an extension, or the conduct of the student or parent causes a delay beyond said ten (10)-day period. Prior to the hearing, students and parents will receive a notice to include the

following:

1. The rules which the student has allegedly violated.
2. A description of the student's acts.
3. The names of the witnesses who may testify against the student (witnesses may be added prior to and during the hearing).
4. The maximum consequence that the student could receive.
5. The time and place for the hearing.
6. That the student is entitled to require witnesses to be present at the hearing and the student will have to present evidence, examine any and all witnesses presented and have an attorney at the student's expense, to represent the student. School administrators should be notified prior to the hearing if a subpoena is to be issued by the Superintendent.

Parents/guardians should contact the school if they would like the notice and other documents related to the hearing in a language other than English. Language interpreter services are also available, upon request, for a student disciplinary hearing.

At the hearing, students and parents/guardians will have the right to present witnesses and evidence, to examine any and all witnesses presented, and to have an attorney, at the parent's/guardian's expense, to represent the student. Any teacher called as a witness shall be given notice no later than 3 days prior to the hearing. O.C.G.A. §20-2-754(b)(4). The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer may be appealed by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Superintendent within twenty (20) calendar days from the date the decision is made.

A student disciplinary hearing is formal, although the strict rules of evidence as applied in a court do not apply in a disciplinary hearing, the school has the burden of proving that the student engaged in acts that violated the student code of conduct. The student will have the opportunity to present evidence and/or witnesses for the Tribunal Officer's consideration but is not required to do so. The Tribunal Officer will determine whether the student committed or did not violate the code of conduct as set forth by the school.

The Tribunal Officer shall make a verbatim or written record of any information orally presented at the hearing. A transcript of the hearing will not be prepared unless there is an appeal to the Board of Education.

The record and documentary evidence shall be kept on file by the Superintendent or designee for a period of twenty (20) days after the date of the decision of the Tribunal Officer. If no appeal is filed within twenty (20) days of the date of the decision of the Tribunal Officer, the record and documentary evidence may be destroyed. If an appeal is filed, the record and documentary evidence will be kept until thirty-one (31) days after the appeal(s) become final, at which time the record and documentary evidence may be destroyed.

All parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses about any matters logically relevant to the charge against the student. The Tribunal Officer may limit unproductively long or irrelevant questioning.

The parents or legal guardian of the student may give testimony at the hearing and make a statement to the Tribunal Officer concerning their feelings about the proper disposition of the case and to answer any questions. The student may be represented by counsel at the student's expense at the hearing. If parents intend to be represented by counsel at the disciplinary hearing, the parents must notify the school twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the hearing so that the school district may elect to retain legal counsel to represent its interests. Failure to notify the District of a student being represented by counsel may cause a delay or continuance of the hearing.

All parties shall be entitled to subpoena witnesses for the hearing. A student or parent/guardian shall submit all requests for subpoenas to the student's principal at least three (3) days prior to the time of the disciplinary hearing. All student disciplinary proceedings and hearings conducted by either the Tribunal Officer or the Board of Education are confidential and are not subject to the open meetings law. Only the

following persons are permitted to attend a school disciplinary hearing conducted by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer: the accused student, parents or legal guardians of the accused student, legal counsel, a provider of interpretative services, school staff, and witnesses. Any written records, transcripts, exhibits or other documents assembled or used in any manner with regard to the conduct of any student disciplinary hearing are not public records and are not subject to public inspection. Students who receive long-term suspension, expulsion or permanent expulsion may file an appeal to the Board of Education. The student's appeal must be in writing and delivered to the Superintendent.

When a hearing is appealed, the Tift County Board of Education will review the transcript of the hearing, make a decision based solely on the record, and notify students and parents, in writing, of the Board's decision. At the hearing before the Board, students have the right to be represented at the students' and parents' expense, by an attorney. The attorney will not, however, be permitted an oral argument at the disciplinary hearing appeal. Students and parents may appeal the Board's decision to the Georgia Board of Education by giving the Superintendent written notice within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Tift County Board of Education.

Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836)

Reports of child abuse and neglect can be  
made to

1-855-GA CHILD (1-855-422-4453):

OR

\*If a child is in immediate danger call **911**



Students or parents in the school community can anonymously submit any suspicious activity, bullying or other student related issues to a school administrator using the Anonymous Alerts link found on our system webpage at [www.tiftschools.com](http://www.tiftschools.com).

# NOTICE

## **Search & Seizure Warning**

All Persons, Vehicles and Personal Belongings on  
School Property Are Subject to Search by  
School Administrators  
and/or  
School Resource  
Officers.

**If You Suspect a Weapon  
in Your School, Call  
1-877-SAY STOP**

(1-877-729-7867)

### **Tift County Schools**

506 W 12<sup>th</sup> St  
P.O. Box 389  
Tifton, Georgia 31793- 0389  
229-387-2400