

UPSON-LEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



334 KNIGHT TRAIL
Thomaston, Georgia 30286
706-647-3632

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

THOMASTON-UPSON SCHOOL SYSTEM MISSION STATEMENT

Excellence in Education...Every Individual, Every Day

UPSON-LEE ELEMENTARY MISSION STATEMENT

Excellence in Education...Every Individual, Every Day

UPSON-LEE ELEMENTARY VISION STATEMENT

We expect our students to be RESPONSIBLE, RESPECTFUL, and READY citizens. WE ARE SOMEBODY!

Administrators

Nesha Campbell, Principal

Amy Ellington, Assistant Principal

Chip Clarke, Assistant Principal

Web Address: <https://ules.upson.k12.ga.us/o/ules>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/upson elementary/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3gV8ITEGOTPLZSpIUz7LDw>

Dear Parents and Students,

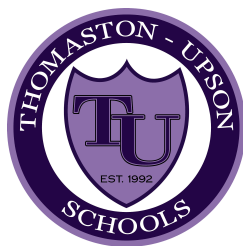
Welcome to Upson-Lee Elementary School! I am honored to be the instructional leader of this amazing school. My primary role as principal is to ensure that instruction and learning are taking place in each classroom and to ensure a safe and orderly environment throughout the school building. Upson-Lee Elementary School is committed to providing all students opportunities to succeed academically and socially.

We welcome your participation and support this school year and solicit your membership in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or volunteering to help with other functions at ULES. A collaborative effort will enable us to reach our collective and individual goals and celebrate the achievements of our students.

The pages of this handbook are filled with important information regarding school policy and procedures. Parents and students should review the contents together. If you have any questions, please call the school. We feel that open and clear communication between school and home is important to the success of our educational program. We look forward to working with you and your child and to a wonderful, productive school year.

During the first two days of school, we welcome parents/guardians to walk their child(ren) to their new class. There are staff members on duty throughout the building to ensure all of our students get to class safely after the first two days. We kindly request that you leave your child(ren) with us at the front of the school after the first two days, and we promise to take great care of him/her.

Nesha Campbell



2025-2026 Thomaston-Upson County School System Board of Education

Jacqueline Hollis	Chairperson- District 2
Steve Sadler	Vice Chairperson-District 6
Angeline D. McGill	District 1
Brent King	District 3
Brian Salter	District 4
Scott Roberts	District 5
Steven South	District 7

The Thomaston-Upson County School System Board of Education holds public meetings on the second Tuesday of each month except during school closure (i.e., Fall Break, Spring Break). Please contact the Superintendent's Office or check the system website for the time and location of these meetings.

2025-2026 Thomaston-Upson County School System District Administration

District Office Staff

Dr. Larry Derico	Superintendent
Dr. Amy Miller	Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction
Mr. Matt Bentley	Director of Instructional Technology and Student Information Systems
Dr. Cristina Cunningham	Director of School Nutrition
Mrs. Mindy Davis	Director of Federal Programs and Assessment
Mrs. Jenna Dunaway	Director of Exceptional Children Services
Mr. Marc Ellington	Director of Operations & Facilities
Mr. Cabon Eubanks	District Network Engineer
Mrs. Joan Foy	Director of Transportation
Mrs. Starr Jeffreys	Assistant Director of Exceptional Children Services
Dr. Jeff Kelly	Executive Director of Human Resources and Safety and Title IX Coordinator
Mrs. Kathy Matthews	Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Tiffany Taylor	Director of Student Services & 6-12 Curriculum Director of School & Community Relations and Fine Arts

The Thomaston-Upson County School System provides high-quality educational programs for students. All schools in the system meet the Standards for Public Schools in Georgia and are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Georgia Accrediting Commission.

District Office Phone (706) 647-9621 District Office Website www.upson.k12.ga.us
Georgia's curriculum is available at www.doe.k12.ga.us

2025-2026 Thomaston-Upson School System Calendar

July '25						
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August '25						
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September '25						
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December '25						
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January '26						
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February '26						
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March '26						
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April '26						
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May '26						
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June '26						
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Important Dates

August 1: First Day of School
September 1: Labor Day
October 13-17: Fall Break
November 24-28: Thanksgiving Break
December 22-January 2: Christmas Break
January 7: Start of 2nd Semester
January 19: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 16-20: Winter Break
April 6-10: Spring Break
May 21: Last Day of School
Graduation: May 21, 2026



- Schools Closed/Holidays
- Professional Development
- Professional Development / Inclement Weather
- First Day/Last Day of School for Students

Instructional Dates

1st 9 Weeks: August 1 - October 3 (44 Days)
Midterm: September 3
Report Cards: October 22
2nd 9 Weeks: October 6 - December 19 (44 Days)
Midterm: November 12
Report Cards: January 14
3rd 9 Weeks: January 7 - March 13 (41 Days)
Midterm: February 4
Report Cards: March 18
4th 9 Weeks: March 17 - May 21 (43 Days)
Midterm: April 22

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- Parties and Celebrations
- Visitors in the Building/Classroom
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Thomaston-Upson School System Information

- Access Control System /Visitors in the Building
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Audio and Video Camera Surveillance
- Board Policy
- Bullying Policy and Reporting Procedures
- Child Custody
- Chromebook Policy
- Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment
- Counseling Services
- Drug Free/Tobacco Free Schools
- Emergency Information Forms
- Enrollment & Withdrawal
- Exceptional Children/Special Education Program
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Georgia Teenage & Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA)
- Health Records
- Hospital/Homebound Services
- Internet Access
- Moment of Reflection
- Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (Student Support Team/Response to Interventions)
- Non-Resident Student Policy
- Notice of Non-Discrimination
- Parent Policy
- Parents Right to Know
- Physical Restraint Guidelines
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- School Nutrition
- School Safety Plan
- Section 504 Program
- Severe Weather: Tornado Protocol
- Student Support Team
- Wellness Program
- Thomaston-Upson Student Code of Conduct /Activity Code of Conduct

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SCHOOL DAY/DAILY SCHEDULE

SCHOOL DAY/DAILY SCHEDULE

The academic day for students begins at 7:50am and ends at 2:45pm. Students will not be allowed to enter the building prior to 7:15am, and the school and its employees will assume no responsibility or liability for any students left at the school prior to the 7:15am opening time. Students will report directly to their homeroom class upon entering the school.

Research shows that there is a direct correlation between student achievement and school attendance. Coming to school and being on time each day is important and expected. **To be counted present, a student must be in school a minimum of one-half the school day, or remain at school until 11:15 am.** Students are counted present when they are on a school-sponsored trip.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

GENERAL ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

- Any student who is tardy or must leave school before the regular dismissal time must check in and/or out with the attendance office secretary. Otherwise, the student will be considered truant.
- If a student misses school in order to attend a non-school function, the absence will be considered as unexcused unless he/she has received prior approval from his/her building principal.
- Students participating in a contest or event will attend school for the whole day to participate. Exceptions can only be made by the building principal designee.
- A student who has been absent more than five (5) consecutive days for illness must present a physician's statement for the absences to be excused.
- Any student who is late to school must sign in with the attendance office/clerk, or school designee.
- Disciplinary actions for excessive absences, unexcused absences, tardiness, and truancies are outlined in the Progressive Discipline Attendance Matrix.
- A student will be marked absent for the entire day if they are out of school for more than half of the school day.
- After an absence, a parental note or doctor's excuse is required on the date of return stating the dates and reasons for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student. If a parental note or doctor's excuse is not provided within five days of absence, tardiness, or early dismissal, the student's absence will be marked as an unexcused absence in Infinite Campus.
- Handwritten parent notes for sickness should state the type of sickness and not just the words "was sick". If students are frequently absent or tardy, the principal may request that parents provide more information, such as medical documentation, regarding the absences, tardiness, or early check-outs. The school will excuse only five (5) days per semester, provided a written note from a parent is submitted. After this point, a doctor's note will be required for excused absences.
- Perfect Attendance: Students must be present each school day and not accumulate 10 or more unexcused tardies to school or unexcused early dismissals or a combination of both in order to receive this award at the end of the school year.

THOMASTON-UPSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Thomaston-Upson County School System operates under the authority of the rules and laws set forth by the Georgia State Board of Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). The responsibility of our district and schools is to provide each student with quality instruction and inform parents if their child is absent from school. Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents and guardians will be given notice of the State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1. The guidelines also note the location of the system website of the local Board of Education school attendance policy JB. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the policy by requesting signatures from parents/guardians acknowledging that they have received and understood this notice. Regular attendance is crucial for students to receive the full benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them..

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

ULES will provide 3 attendance incentives throughout the year. The incentive periods will be for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd nine weeks periods. To earn the incentive, a student can have no more than 5 unexcused absences and can have no more than 8 combined unexcused tardies or early dismissals combined per nine weeks. Each 9 weeks will start over for every student with the opportunity to earn the incentive for each 9 weeks.

DISTRICT ATTENDANCE MATRIX:

District Attendance Matrix:

	All Absences Excused and Unexcused	5 Unexcused Absences	7 Unexcused Absences	10+ Unexcused Absences
Unexcused Absences	Parents will receive an automated (school reach message) or personal call when the student is absent from school.	Parents will receive a truancy letter detailing unexcused absences and next steps. The letter must be signed by a parent or guardian. If the letter is not signed and returned, an additional letter will be sent via first-class mail. The student will be referred to the school attendance support team.	School counselors will contact parents to discuss student truancy and next steps.	The student may be referred to the district social worker for 10 or more unexcused absences. The district social worker may refer students and parents to the Upson County Attendance Task Force*. A retention committee may retain students with 15 or more unexcused absences.
	All Unexcused Tardies/ Unexcused Early Dismissals			10 Unexcused Tardies/ Unexcused Early Dismissals
Unexcused Tardies/ Unexcused Early Dismissals	Parents will receive an automated (school reach message) or personal call when the student is tardy to school.			The school attendance support team will meet to discuss the educational impact of tardiness. Administration will be notified of excessive tardiness. Students with 15 or more unexcused tardies/unexcused early dismissals are not eligible for perfect attendance.

* Students accruing 10 or More unexcused absences may be referred to the Attendance Task Force for further action. The attendance task force is a committee with members from the following stakeholders: Upson County DFCS, Upson County Department of Juvenile Justice, Upson Collaborative, Upson Mental Health, TUCS schools, Upson County Sheriff's Office, and Thomaston Police Department. The attendance task force will provide recommendations for improved attendance. If neither the parent nor the student meets the recommendations, both parties will be referred to local law enforcement.

TARDINESS

Tardies: Students are tardy if they enter the front doors after 7:50 a.m.. If a student arrives at school after 7:50 a.m., parents must walk their student to the front desk and the student will be given a tardy slip to class. A student arriving on a late bus will not be counted tardy. Proper documentation is required for a tardy to be considered as excused. Excused tardiness could include doctor appointments, court, unexpected car trouble. In the case of bad weather or a traffic issue near the school, no student will be considered tardy.

EARLY DISMISSALS/DISMISSALS

Early Dismissal: Proper documentation is required for the early dismissal to be considered as excused. Excused early dismissals could include doctor appointments, funerals, court, etc. Leaving early the day before a holiday is not considered an excused early dismissal. A student is expected to be in school for a full day's session. To be counted present, a pupil must be in school a minimum of one-half the school day or remain at school until 11:30 am or two block periods. **If picking your child up early, please do so no later than 2:15pm.** The time and reason for leaving should be included. When possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours. A child will be released only to the parents or designee approved by the parents on the student information sheet completed at the beginning of the year. All transportation changes must be received in writing and/or emailed to rulesbusnotes@upson.k12.ga.us by 2:00 PM in order to ensure time to complete/verify the request.

DISMISSALS

The school day for all students ends at 2:45pm. If you pick your child up from school, please be on time. Bus riders will be dismissed in two waves beginning at 2:45pm.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following are considered excused absences: illness, funeral, medical or dental appointment, and other absences for which permission has been granted in advance.

- Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others. The Thomaston-Upson School District Board of Education may require students to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence. With proper verification, a student may be eligible for hospital or homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 Hospital/Homebound Instruction.
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitates absence from school. In the event of a serious illness in a student's immediate family, the Thomaston-Upson School District Board of Education may require students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.
- 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.
- Observing religious holidays necessitates absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- The Thomaston-Upson School District Board of Education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
- Any student serving as a page within the Georgia General Assembly.
- The Thomaston-Upson County Schools (TUCS) Board of Education permits a student, whose parent is in the military service and who has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, to be granted up to 5 excused absences per school year to visit with a parent prior to deployment or during such leave.
- 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.
- School days missed as a result of out-of-school suspension shall not be counted as unexcused for the purpose of determining student truancy, but shall be counted as unexcused for other purposes.

MAKE-UP WORK

It's crucial for students to stay on track with their learning, even when they're unable to attend classes. To ensure that your child doesn't fall behind, please note the following guidelines for make-up work. Parents or students are responsible for initiating contact with the teacher to determine if there is work to be made up after an absence of any kind. The student will have two (2) days for each day absent to make up work or tests up to a maximum of ten (10) days. Missed work will be recorded as a zero in the grade book until work is completed.

BUS INFORMATION

Riding a school bus in the Thomaston-Upson County School System is a privilege extended to students that can be taken away at any time because of disruptive or unsatisfactory conduct.* In the event of such behavior, school administrators will have the authority to suspend students from riding any Thomaston-Upson County School System bus for a period of up to ten (10) consecutive days. Students who behave in unsafe or disruptive ways on the school bus—such as bullying, fighting, battery, or distracting the driver—will be put on a School Bus Behavior Contract. This contract will include clear rules and consequences that match the student's age and the seriousness of their actions. It may include things like assigned seats, regular talks with parents, or losing the right to ride the bus. Parents must help create this contract (as required by Georgia law § 20-2-751.5 (2024)). Until the contract is made, the student won't be allowed to ride the bus. If the disruptive behavior continues, the school administrator can suspend the student from the bus for more than ten days—or even the rest of the school year—with approval from the superintendent. Disciplinary decisions for cases involving weapons, drugs, alcohol, violence, or any other offense considered to be of a serious nature will carry the same penalty as if the incident took place on the school campus.

In all cases where bus discipline problems involve students from more than one school, the administrator from each school involved will consult before bus discipline is assigned. A copy of the bus rules will be sent home at the beginning of each school year for parents to review and sign.

For the safety and well-being of our children, Thomaston-Upson County's Transportation Department follows guidelines from the Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) in the bus delivery of younger students to their homes at the end of the school day.

Under DFCS guidelines:

- Children 8 years and younger cannot be left alone. Therefore, a bus driver must make visible contact with a parent or guardian before leaving the child at home.
- Children 9-12 years old can be left alone for up to two hours.
- Children 13 and older can be left alone without adult supervision.

In delivering younger children to their homes in the afternoon, bus drivers communicate with school personnel to determine safe drop-off conditions. Schools and parents should work collaboratively to establish procedures and requirements for children 13 or older who are medically fragile or have significant cognitive disabilities and require adult supervision at drop-off.

Should a bus driver deem they cannot leave a child in a safe situation, the driver will contact school personnel and/or parents or guardians. If necessary, the child will be returned to their home school.

Repetitive violation of the above DFCS guidelines may result in the following actions:

- Parent conference regarding student supervision
- Return the student to the school administration
- Communication with and/or transportation of the student to the Upson County Sheriff's Department
- Communication and referral to DFCS and/or TUCS Social Worker

Parents with questions or concerns about these guidelines may contact the TUCS Student Transportation Department, TUCS School Social Worker, or their child's school administrators.

*Transportation is a related service as defined by 34 CFR §300.34(c)(16) of the IDEA regulations and can include travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps. A child's individualized education program (IEP) Team is responsible for determining both if transportation is required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education and related services, and how the transportation services should be implemented. Transportation may also be a service documented in a child's 504 Plan.

BUS SAFETY RULES

1. Students should be at the designated bus stop 5 minutes before the bus arrives at the stop.
2. Bus seating is the bus driver's responsibility. Students must sit in the assigned seat only and may move only with the bus driver's permission. Students must REMAIN SEATED when the bus is in motion. NO STANDING!
3. Aisles should be kept clear at all times (clear of persons and possessions).
4. Seat covers should be protected from pens or other objects that may mark or puncture. The student, parents, or guardians will be responsible for the cost of repairs or replacement of seat covers.
5. Students should always follow the bus driver's instructions, especially in the event of an emergency.
6. Eating/drinking/tobacco products of any kind are prohibited on buses.
7. Proper behavior is a LIFE-OR-DEATH matter on a school bus! Listed below are some unacceptable behaviors that will result in referrals from the drivers and disciplinary actions by school administrators:

Immediate attention will be given to the following behaviors:

- Disrespectful behavior or language toward the bus driver
- Hitting/touching other students
- Any conduct that endangers the other riders

The following behaviors will result in the discipline process:

- Disruptive behavior such as horseplay, shouting, or profanity
 - Handling other students' possessions without permission
 - Putting objects through windows, including hands and arms, or tossing items out the windows
8. If an unusual item must be transported to/from school for a project, assignment, or a regular class, the item should be placed where the driver instructs.
 9. SKATEBOARDS AND BALLOONS ARE PROHIBITED ON SCHOOL BUSES AT ALL TIMES.
 10. Students are required to bring a note signed by a school administrator or designee to get on or off the bus at any place other than their regular stop.
 11. Students shall be prohibited from using any audible electronic devices during the operation of a school bus or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus's communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. The board authorizes drivers to prohibit any electronic usage by a student who is causing a disturbance with the device. The Thomaston-Upson School System will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices.
 12. Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
 13. The School Dress Code will be enforced on the bus.

Note: Water is permissible on the bus during extremely hot weather at the Transportation Department's discretion.

CONSEQUENCES

Possible interventions by the driver to mitigate student behavior:

1. Mandatory seat assignments (all students)
 2. Verbal reminder
 3. Talked privately with the student
 4. Reassigned bus seat
 5. Parent/Guardian called
 6. Parent/Guardian notified
 7. The bus discipline form was sent to an administrator
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1. Mandatory seat assignments (all students)
2. Verbal reminder
3. Talked privately with student
4. Reassigned bus seat

5. Parent/Guardian called
6. Parent/Guardian notified
7. Bus discipline form sent to administrator

*If transportation is provided under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a bus suspension must be treated as a suspension under 34 CFR §300.530, and all of the discipline procedures applicable to children with disabilities would apply. An LEA is not required to provide alternative transportation to a child with a disability who has been suspended from transportation for 10 school days or less unless the LEA provides alternative transportation to children without disabilities who have been similarly suspended from bus service. 34 CFR §300.530(d)(3). If a child with a disability is suspended from transportation for more than 10 school days in the same school year, and transportation is included in the child's IEP, during any subsequent suspensions, the LEA must provide transportation.

After-School Clubs

Upon-Lee Elementary School will be offering after-school club opportunities for ULES students.

- Gardening Club-Get ready to dig, plant, and grow! In Gardening Club, students will explore the wonders of nature as they learn how to grow flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Through hands-on activities, kids will discover how plants grow, how to care for a garden, and why taking care of the Earth is important. We'll get our hands a little dirty while learning responsibility, teamwork, and patience—all while having fun outdoors! No gardening experience needed—just bring your curiosity and a love for nature! Our goal is to meet once a month after school.
- Kids for Christ-The Kids for Christ Club is a fun and welcoming group where students can grow in their faith, build friendships, and learn how to live with character and integrity. Kids for Christ is open to all students; and it encourages teamwork, kindness, and making positive choices. Through short devotionals, games, activities, and prayer, kids will discover how to follow Jesus and support one another in a safe and uplifting environment. Our goal is to meet once a month after school.
- Beta Club-Beta Club is a leadership and service club for students who show strong character, responsibility, and a desire to make a positive impact in their school and community. Members of Beta Club will work together on fun service projects, practice good citizenship, and build leadership skills. It's a great way for students to grow in kindness, teamwork, and academic excellence while helping others. Beta club members are inducted into the club as fourth graders.
- Scrabble Club will be available for fourth and fifth-grade students beginning January 9th, 2026 continuing through May 2026. (The membership fee of \$15 must be received by the 2nd meeting.) Meetings will be held on Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 3:55 p.m. Students will report to Ms. Busbee's classroom #206 when 2nd wave bus riders are released. Our goal is to meet two times a month. (A calendar with meeting dates will be sent home the first day of our meeting.) Meetings will be the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Parents are responsible for providing transportation home from all meetings. Students will be picked up in front of the building by the entrance to the school.
- **Technology Club will be available for fourth and fifth-grade students beginning September 2nd, continuing through May 2026. The membership fee of \$15 must be received by the 2nd meeting. Meetings will be held on Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 3:55 p.m. Students will report to Mrs. Channin's classroom, room 546, when 2nd wave bus riders are released. We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. Calendars with meeting dates will be sent home the first day of our meeting. Parents will be responsible for providing transportation home from all meetings. Students will be picked up in front of the building by the entrance to the school.**

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate for school. Student dress should not have the effect of unreasonably attracting the attention of other students or otherwise cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school. The following guidelines will be enforced and should be considered in determining proper dress:

- Shorts, skirts, dresses, and spirit wear must be of reasonable length (mid-thigh). All shirts, dresses, and blouses should have moderate sleeves. This includes any clothing worn with leggings. Leggings must be covered by shorts, skirts, shirts, or dresses that cover the student's front and back area.
- All shirt sleeves must fit the armpit and edge of the arm.
- Sheer tops, loose-woven tops must be worn with a shirt underneath.
- Appropriate shoes are to be worn at all times.
- Students may wear stud earrings in the ears only. No other body piercing is allowed.
- If a student wears flip-flops, he/she should bring tennis shoes on the day his/her class is scheduled for PE.
- All pants and shorts must be worn so that the garment's waist is maintained at the individual's waistline and not allowed to sag onto the hips exposing their underwear. Belts are encouraged to be worn with pants or shorts that have belt loops.
- Caps, hats, bandanas, sunglasses, or any other type of head ornamentation are not to be worn inside the building unless special days are recognized. This applies to both male and female students.
- Hoodies are allowed, but hoods are not allowed to be worn at any time in the building. Disciplinary action will be taken if the student does not comply.
- Holes in pants are not allowed with skin exposed above fingertip length.

A student wearing clothing that does not meet the dress code will be given the opportunity to call home to get a change of clothing or will be asked to correct the violation on the spot. Parents will be notified of the problem.

The following types of clothing are not to be worn:

- Slippers, hair bonnets, blankets and/or snuggles may not be worn.
- Biking shorts
- Clothing that is sexually suggestive, has profanity on it, or contains advertising about alcoholic beverages, drugs, tobacco, or other illegal materials may not be worn to school or to school sponsored events.
- Midriff tops, halter tops, or tube tops (No low cut or revealing tops), tops with straps that are less than 1-inch
- Fishnet apparel without other clothing under it
- Heeleys/Skate shoes with wheels
- Facial adornments such as pimple patches, face jewels, rhinestones, glitter, temporary tattoos, or decorative stickers

- Over-the-ear headphones or earbuds (unless they are being used for approved classroom instruction or testing purposes)

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Students are not allowed to bring the following items to school:

- Electronic Smoking Device
- Collector cards/playing cards, dice, and marbles
- Tobacco and Alcohol products of any kind, including lighters
- Knives of any length
- Fish hooks/chains, letter openers
- Any type of recreational guns (toy guns)
- Any type of bullets or bullets for recreational guns
- Laser pens
- Scissors, nails, screws
- Fingernail files, fingernail polish, fingernail polish remover, nail glue
- Glass containers or bottles
- Manual pencil sharpeners

CELL PHONE/SMART WATCH POLICY

Our school has greatly increased the number of devices available for student use. Cell phones are not needed to support instruction. At the elementary level, cell phones serve as a distraction to students and negatively impact our ability to provide a safe and productive learning environment both on the bus and in the building. Phones and other student-owned electronic devices will not be permitted for use at school or on the bus. If phones are brought to school, they must be silenced at all times. Texts/emails on Smart watches should also not be checked in the class or halls. Cell phones should **NEVER** be out! If students are caught with them out without permission (not to be visible whether in a students' hand or sticking out of pockets), they will face the following consequences.

- 1st offense = No SIR or consequence (teacher returns phone/smartwatch to student at end of the day)
- 2nd offense = No SIR or consequence (phone/smartwatch to front desk)
- 3rd + offense = SIR given by teacher (phone/smartwatch to front desk)

***The school district assumes NO LIABILITY for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.**

HOMEWORK

Students will be assigned homework as a means of encouraging independent study, establishing good work habits, and reinforcing basic subject skills. Homework assignments may be given weekly throughout the year Monday-Thursday. No homework assignments will be given on Friday or holidays. All homework assignments may not be written, but could be in the form of study or review for a test. It is important that children read each night and practice their sight words and math facts. Parents/Guardians are asked to be supportive of the school by assuring that the assignments are completed and are done by the student with only necessary help from adults.

FIELD TRIPS

Educational field trips are carefully planned by the teachers to enrich or extend classroom learning. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the Georgia Standards of Excellence curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. Parents/Guardians may attend field trips with their child as determined by the terms of the field trip destination (i.e. the venue that has limited space, and therefore sets a maximum number of participants); however, additional siblings are not permitted. Parents will be asked to drive and follow the school buses. Students must ride the school bus to the field trip location. If a parent/guardian wishes for their child to ride home with them from the field trip, the parent/guardian will be required to sign the Early Dismissal form with the child's teacher. Parents/guardians will be allowed to chaperone their own child during the trip. Parents will be asked to assist by providing payment to help cover the cost of their child's event ticket and transportation. For the safety and well-being of all students and staff, students who present a safety risk, as determined by school administration, may not be permitted to attend field trips.

GRADES

ONLINE-PARENT PORTAL

Parents can view grades online after setting up a parent portal account (you will only need your child's birthdate and the last four numbers of their social security number). Grades are to be updated in the Parent Portal (Infinite Campus) within one week after the student submits assignments/projects/tests.

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS/GRADING

The purpose of our report card is to inform you about your child's progress toward achieving our state's curriculum, the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Our report cards are designed to provide parents/guardians with the most accurate, fair and useful information about their child's progress in school. Each nine weeks, students have multiple opportunities to practice, attain, and demonstrate mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. It is important to keep in mind that the report card is only one part of an effective reporting system.

Students in third-fifth grades will receive a numerical average for each content area.
The grade scale is as follows:

- A.... 90-100
 B.... 80-89
 C.... 70-79
 F....Below 70 *No grade below a 60 will be given on a report card.

Please refer to the school calendar for progress report and report card dates.

PROMOTION /PLACEMENT/RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

A promotion/retention meeting must be held to discuss promotion, placement, or retention in the current or higher grade level if the student meets the following criteria:

- Failed the required EOG Milestones Gateway assessment (main or retest administration); or,
- Parent refusal of required EOG Milestones Gateway assessment (main or retest administration); or,
- Did not meet achievement criteria established by the school for the current grade level. Students must be passing 2 out of the 4 content areas, one of which is reading OR math.

Placement

- Students that do not meet the achievement criteria established by the school for the current grade level **AND** do not participate or score within the required achievement level/status on the required EOG Milestones Gateway assessment (main or retest administration) can be **PLACED** in a higher grade level by a promotion/retention committee.
- Students that do not meet the achievement criteria established by the school for the current grade level **BUT** attain the required achievement level/status on the EOG Milestones Gateway assessment (main or retest administration) can be **PLACED** in a higher grade level by a promotion/retention committee.
- Students that meet the achievement criteria **BUT** do not participate or score within the required achievement level/status on the required EOG Milestones Gateway assessment (main or retest administration) can be **PLACED** in a higher grade level by a promotion/retention committee.

Retention

- A student can be retained by the building principal if he/she fails to meet the achievement criteria established by the school for the current grade level regardless of EOG participation or achievement level/status. Parents may appeal the retention decision; however, the school may adhere to the retention based on the established criteria outlined in the Student Handbook.

Exceptional Children with an IEP

- The IEP team may serve as the promotion/retention committee for students with an IEP.

Truancy

- If the established school attendance team determines that a student is truant (excessive unexcused absences), a promotion/retention meeting should be held if the student does the achievement criteria established by the school for the current grade level and/or does not participate or score within the required achievement level/status on the required EOG Milestones Gateway assessment (main or retest administration)

SCHOOLWORK FOLDERS/ CONTACTING TEACHERS/ CONFERENCES

SCHOOLWORK FOLDERS

Folders containing schoolwork will be sent home by each teacher on Wednesdays at least once every two weeks. Parents are asked to sign the folders and return them the next day.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Teachers are not available to receive phone calls during instructional time. Allowances are made in time of emergencies. Messages may be left at the office to be delivered to a teacher or you may contact teachers by email, or Remind. Parents will not be allowed to walk students back to class to talk to teachers in the mornings as teachers are responsible for monitoring students and beginning instruction. **Teachers are asked to return all phone calls/messages within 24 hours.**

CONFERENCES WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled each year for reporting student progress. We encourage additional conferences if needed during the year either after school or during a teacher's planning period as requested by parents/guardians or teachers.

CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS

- Computer Science
- Music
- Physical Education
- Keyboarding

PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION POLICY

Physical education is a very important component of each student's school day. Our physical education program is designed to allow students to exercise, learn games and activities, improve endurance, learn teamwork skills, and extend their physical capacity. Students will attend physical education classes on a regularly scheduled basis. Students needing to be excused from participation in physical education classes should have a note from their parents/guardians, a note from a doctor, or a note from their teacher. If a student will need to miss numerous classes, an explanation from a doctor needs to be presented to the physical education teacher.

LOST AND FOUND

In the event that a student misplaces or loses an item, he/she should immediately report the situation to his/her teacher. Inquiry should also be made at the administrative offices, any classroom areas where the student attends, and on the student's bus. A lost and found area in the school will house all misplaced/lost articles of clothing/book bags. Articles that have not been claimed by the end of the year will be donated to charity.

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER/ CONTACT CHANGES

It is the policy of the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education that accurate and complete student academic and discipline records shall be maintained for each student enrolled in the schools of this school district. Please notify your child's school when there are updates to household addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact information. Changes to information can be made in person, by visiting the school, or via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

NURSE/CLINIC/MEDICATION

The clinic's purpose is to provide medical treatment (within their scope of practice), services required under a doctor's order, and the administration of prescribed medicines. **No medication will be given by the clinic without a written, signed parent request.** All prescription medication must have a written statement/authorization from a licensed physician. All medication (prescription and nonprescription) brought to school by parents and/or students must be taken to the clinic immediately upon arriving on campus with a note from the parent/guardian authorizing the dispensing of the medicine. The medicine should be in the original, up-to-date pharmaceutical container clearly labeled as to the student's name, name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the time for each dose. No more than a 30-day supply of the medication can be stored in the clinic. At the prescribed time for dosage, the student should come to the clinic for the nurse to dispense the medicine. The nurse/designee is the only person certified to distribute medicine. **According to policy JGCD, a student for whom the school has supporting medical documentation on file may carry at all times, with parental/guardian permission, inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine for allergic reactions, and all necessary supplies and equipment to perform monitoring and treatment functions authorized by the student's diabetes medical management plan while in school or at a school-sponsored activity.** Students may not dispense medicine, including cough drops, to other students.

If a student becomes too ill to remain in class, the school nurse will try to reach a parent/guardian by phone and recommend that they come to school and pick up their child. It is so important that we have updated, working phone numbers on every student's contact information form. Bus transportation cannot be provided to sick children. If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school. A student who contracts a contagious disease or condition, such as pink eye, chickenpox, ringworm, impetigo, or pediculosis (head lice) will be sent home from school and must remain home until the condition or disease is corrected.

I NEED TO STAY HOME IF....						
I HAVE A FEVER 	I AM VOMITING 	I HAVE DIARRHEA 	I HAVE A RASH 	I HAVE HEAD LICE 	I HAVE AN EYE INFECTION 	I HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL 
Temperature of 100.4 or higher	Within past 24 hours	Within past 24 hours	Body rash with itching or fever	Itchy head, active head lice	Redness, itching, and/or "crusty" drainage from eye	Hospital stay and/or ER visit
I AM READY TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL WHEN I AM...						
Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication I.e. Tylenol, Motrin	Free from vomiting for at least 2 solid meals and/or 24 hours	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours	Free from rash itching or fever, I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed	Free of live lice and nits w/in 1/4 " from scalp; Proof of treatment is required	Evaluated by my doctor and have note to return to school	Released by my medical provider to return to school

MATERIALS

MATERIALS (FEES, FINES, CHARGES)

Library books, Chromebooks, headphones, and other materials are loaned to students for their use during the school year. The school system may charge students a reasonable fee for lost, damaged or abused school system property. Report cards will be held at the end of the year if the main office has not cleared a fine. SEE DISTRICT POLICY BELOW

OUTSTANDING/UNPAID FEES

Outstanding fees for field day shirts, returned checks, or any other money owed to the school, should be paid by April 24th. In the event that these debts are not cleared, the student may not be allowed to participate in field day activities and his/her report card will be held. Principal discretion may be used to withhold privileges until the balance is paid.

PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

There are two formal school parties throughout the year: Christmas, and End of School. We expect each teacher to discuss this fully with their students' parents. Parents wishing to bring a pre-packaged snack or birthday surprise should bring them during their child's lunch period. We ask that you keep the treat simple (pre-packaged) so we can remain on schedule. Due to the limited space in classrooms, we ask that no more than 2 guests attend a class party per student. No other children (siblings) are allowed due to space limitations.

In addition, there are to be:

1. No surprise or planned parties for students or teachers (this can be done after school).
2. Board Policy prohibits students carrying balloons or glass on the bus.
3. No Birthday Parties.
4. Invitations to outside private parties are not allowed to be distributed at school by school personnel.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

All visitors are required to report to the main office immediately upon arriving on campus to get a visitor's permit and to gain permission to enter the buildings or any other area of the school or its grounds. Visitors may be escorted to and from the area to be visited. All visitors are asked to enter and exit through the front desk entrance and not enter or exit through any other exterior doors for safety reasons. All visitors must abide by the same dress code as outlined for the students of the school. A visitor must be someone who is listed as a contact person in our school information system. A photo ID will be required to obtain a visitor's pass. Students are not to bring visitors with them for any purpose. On Field Day, visitors under the age of 21 must come with and be supervised by the parent or grandparent of a student who is registered as a contact person in our school information system. Visits to classrooms are not permitted during instructional time without permission from the principal and can only occur in accordance with the district procedures listed below:

Who May Visit: The right to observe a child's instructional program during classroom time resides solely with a child's parent, legal guardian, or foster parent and does not extend to grandparents, other interested close relatives, 3 party agencies or caregivers.

Who May Be Observed: The sole purpose of a classroom visit by a parent is to observe their student and the instructional program being presented. At no time should a parent's motive for or focus of a classroom visit be to observe another student or students in the classroom. If the Principal has knowledge of or suspects that the focus of a parent's classroom visit is to observe another student, he/she reserves the right to deny a requested visit or to end a visit in progress.

Scheduling: Visits must be scheduled through the Principal for a time and date convenient to both the parent and the teacher. The parental observation date shall be within a reasonable time frame following the initial request. A request for a specific date must be made no less than 48 hours in advance. No visits will be allowed while students are participating in assessments, quizzes or tests.

Duration: To minimize potential interruptions and distractions during instructional time, the Principal reserves the right to limit the duration of classroom observations.

Conduct During Classroom Visitation: Parents visiting classrooms should arrange their schedules to enter and exit the classroom in a manner that would not interrupt the instructional activities in progress. While visiting the class, the teacher will designate an area for parents to sit, generally in the back of the classroom. (Parents are asked NOT to sit with their students as this could create an unnecessary disruption for other students.) Once in the classroom and seated, parents are asked to remain seated and refrain from interacting with students or the teacher unless the classroom teacher initiates the interaction. Unnecessary noise and/or movement must be kept to a minimum. Parents wishing to discuss their students' behavior after observing him/her during class should schedule a parent conference with the teacher. Parents who fail to observe the stated guidelines during their visit may be asked to leave the room if their presence or conduct unduly interferes with the orderly operation of the classroom. Any concerns or complaints may be addressed directly to the classroom teacher after regular school hours or to the Principal.

No Audio or Video Taping of Classroom: Video and/or audio recording of classroom visits by the parent or guardian is prohibited. Electronic devices which could be used for video or audio record should not be visible during the visit. Violation of this guideline can result in dismissal from the classroom visit, and/or school site.

School Administration: The Principal or his/her designee is required to be in the room during the parent observation to protect the learning environment for all students.

Lunch with your Student: Please call the front desk 24 hours in advance to schedule lunch with your student. No outside food can be brought into the building.

WITHDRAWALS

WITHDRAWAL

A. Request to Withdrawal

In order to withdraw a student from TU school system, the parent/legal guardian must fill out a withdrawal form with the school registrar indicating the child will withdraw. Only formal withdrawal forms or records requests are recognized by the state as acceptable forms of withdrawal.

B. Withdrawal by Email

A parent may elect to withdraw the student by email, but they must submit a signed TU withdrawal form with the effective date and their signature.

C. Students Subject to Compulsory School Attendance

Students who are not in attendance, and their parent/legal guardian, has not filled out documentation for withdrawal shall be marked as an unexcused absence for each day they are not in attendance. Students (over the age of 5) missing 10 consecutive unexcused days may be dropped for lack of attendance*, provided the school has adhered to the guidelines of the school attendance matrix. Students withdrawn for this reason should receive an exit code "R: Removed for Lack of Attendance". Students (5 and younger) may be withdrawn using the exit code "5: Underage of Compulsory Attendance".

*Students receiving Exceptional Children Services cannot be dropped due to lack of attendance, until the Director of Exceptional Children Services is notified and procedures take place.

THOMASTON-UPSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATION

At Thomaston-Upson County Schools, the safety and security of our students and staff remain our highest priority. We continually assess and enhance our safety measures to ensure a secure environment for everyone in our schools. Our district employs a variety of safety measures; however, to protect the effectiveness of these measures and ensure the safety of our students and staff, not all safety details are shared publicly.

Access Control Systems

All buildings within the Thomaston-Upson County School System are equipped with electronic access control systems at each main entrance and other entrances used by teachers and staff. The main entrance of each school building is equipped with a camera that allows the receptionist on duty to inspect the person(s) requesting entry visually. Once student arrival concludes each morning, all entryways are locked and remain locked throughout the school day. Visitors are asked to enter the school through the main entrance, where they must interact with the receptionist before entry into the school.

Audio and Video Surveillance

Audio and video cameras are placed in various locations outside and within all Thomaston-Upson County Schools' buildings to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and guests.

District and School Safety Plans

Thomaston-Upson County Schools, in partnership with the Upson County Emergency Management System, the Thomaston-Upson County Fire Department, the Thomaston Police Department, and the Upson County Sheriff's Office, reviews and implements school and district safety plans that address inclement weather, fire hazards, unapproved school intruders, and safety issues surrounding our schools. Each school conducts monthly fire drills, safety drills, and severe weather drills throughout the school year.

OpenGate Security Systems

To help keep our schools safe, each Thomaston-Upson County Schools campus uses OpenGate security systems at main entrances. These touch-free, walk-through scanners help us detect potential threats without causing delays to your day. Students, staff, and visitors simply walk through the system when entering the building—no need to stop or empty your pockets. Handheld devices may be used as part of a secondary screening process.

To help the process run smoothly, certain items should be kept out and shown to a staff member before entering. These include but are not limited to 3-ring binders, eyeglass cases, laptops, electronic tablets, and bookbags with metal wiring. Presenting these items ahead of time helps avoid unnecessary alerts and keeps the line moving efficiently. Prohibited items such as vapes, tobacco, knives, guns, and other objects used or intended to be used for bodily harm are not allowed on campus. Possession of these items may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to law enforcement.

Visitor Check-In with ID Verification

All visitors are required to enter through a designated entrance, sign in at the front office, and present a valid photo ID. Visitors will receive a visitor's badge that must be worn visibly at all times while on school grounds. Unauthorized individuals are not permitted on school property.

School Resource Officers

Thomaston-Upson County Schools has partnered with the Upson County Sheriff's Office to provide certified and trained Sheriff Deputies as School Resource Officers (SROs) in six schools.

Asbestos Management Plan

Thomaston-Upson County Schools complies with all regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency concerning asbestos-containing materials. A copy of the Asbestos Management Plan is available in the Central Administration Offices at 205 Civic Center Drive.

Address/Telephone Number/Contact Changes

It is the policy of the Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education that accurate and complete student academic and discipline records shall be maintained for each student enrolled in the schools of this school district. Please notify your child's school when there are updates to household addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact information. Changes to information can be made in person, by visiting the school, or via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

Attendance (Absences/ Tardies/Early Dismissals)

Thomaston-Upson County Schools operates under the authority of the rules and laws set forth by the Georgia State Board of Education. Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). The responsibility of our district and schools is to provide each student with quality instruction and inform parents if their child is absent from school. Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents and guardians will be given notice of the State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1. The guidelines also note the location of the system website of the local Board of Education school attendance policy JB. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the policy by requesting signatures from parents/guardians acknowledging that they have received and understood this notice. Regular attendance is crucial for students to receive the full benefit from the educational opportunities provided to them..

General Attendance Guidelines

- Any student who is tardy or must leave school before the regular dismissal time must check in and/or out with the attendance office secretary. Otherwise, the student will be considered truant.
- If a student misses school in order to attend a non-school function, the absence will be considered as unexcused unless he/she has received prior approval from his/her building principal.
- Students participating in a contest or event will attend school for the whole day to participate. Exceptions can only be made by the building principal designee.
- A student who has been absent more than five (5) consecutive days for illness must present a physician's statement for the absences to be excused.
- Any student who is late to school must sign in with the attendance office/clerk, or school designee.
- Disciplinary actions for excessive absences, unexcused absences, tardiness, and truancies are outlined in the Progressive Discipline Attendance Matrix.
- A student will be marked absent for the entire day if they are out of school for more than half of the school day.
- After an absence, a parental note or doctor's excuse is required on the date of return stating the dates and reasons for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student. If a parental note or doctor's excuse is not provided within five days of absence, tardiness, or early dismissal, the student's absence will be marked as an unexcused absence in Infinite Campus.
- Handwritten parent notes for sickness should state the type of sickness and not just the words "was sick". If students are frequently absent or tardy, the principal may request that parents provide more information, such as medical documentation, regarding the absences, tardiness, or early check-outs. The school will excuse only five (5) days per semester, provided a written note from a parent is submitted. After this point, a doctor's note will be required for excused absences.
- Perfect Attendance: Students must be present each school day and not accumulate 10 or more unexcused tardies to school or unexcused early dismissals or a combination of both in order to receive this award at the end of the school year.

Excused Absences

The following are considered excused absences: illness, funeral, medical or dental appointment, and other absences for which permission has been granted in advance.

- Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others. The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education may require students to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence. With proper verification, a student may be eligible for hospital or homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 [Hospital/Homebound Instruction](#).
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitates absence from school. In the event of a serious illness in a student's immediate family, the Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education may require students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.
- 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.
- Observing religious holidays necessitates absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
- Any student serving as a page within the Georgia General Assembly.
- The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education permits a student, whose parent is in the military service and who has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, to be granted up to 5 excused absences per school year to visit with a parent prior to deployment or during such leave.
- 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.
- School days missed as a result of out-of-school suspension shall not be counted as unexcused for the purpose of determining student truancy, but shall be counted as unexcused for other purposes.

Unexcused Absences

The following, even with parental consent, are considered unexcused absences:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • truancies • working • missing the bus • oversleeping • shopping • car not starting • getting senior pictures taken • keeping personal appointments • visiting out-of-town (unless excused before absence) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • college visits (unless excused before absence) • needed at home (unless excused before absence) • sports activities (not including events at which the student is an eligible participant) • vacation activities (i.e., ski trips, trips to Disney World) • Other avoidable absences. |
|---|---|

If there is doubt about whether an absence will be considered excused or unexcused, check in advance with the building principal. Work missed due to unexcused absences may be made up at the discretion of the principal or designee.

Excessive Absences

Any student absent for more than seven (7) days in any one semester will be considered as having excessive absences. These absences do not include those that result from participation in school-sponsored trips.

The state law requires that pupils shall be in attendance at school every day of the school year, from age 6 to age 16. The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education reaffirms in this policy its commitment to this state mandate. The principal of each school will develop a suitable system of rewards to encourage the support and cooperation of each student in striving for perfect attendance.

It is the responsibility of the building principal or their designee to make every effort to contact the parent or guardian when a student is absent from school to determine the reason for the absence.

In addition to the legal requirement to attend school, the Board recognizes the educational benefits of regular attendance. Not only is each day's lesson important to the individual student, but the student's presence as a class participant contributes to the education of others.

Early Dismissal

A student who leaves school before the end of the school day misses valuable instructional time. Repeated or habitual early dismissal is an undesirable personal habit and disrupts the instructional process; therefore, teachers or principals will take corrective action.

Prolonged Absences Due to Illness

Students with diagnosed medical or psychiatric conditions that may impede their ability to attend school on a regular basis or be absent from school for more than 10 consecutive days may be eligible for Hospital Homebound Services (SBBOE 160-4-2-.31). See Hospital Homebound Services below.

Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences: Notification

The school system shall provide to the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student (hereinafter referred to as "parent") when the student has five unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences, and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, the school system will send written notice via first-class mail or certified mail, return receipt requested, and the school system will notify the parent by certified mail, return receipt requested. Failure to comply with compulsory attendance laws will result in a referral to the Attendance Task Force and law enforcement for the commencement of judicial proceedings.

District Attendance Matrix:

	All Absences Excused and Unexcused	5 Unexcused Absences	7 Unexcused Absences	10+ Unexcused Absences
Unexcused Absences	Parents will receive an automated (school reach message) or personal call when the student is absent from school.	Parents will receive a truancy letter detailing unexcused absences and next steps. A parent or guardian must sign the letter. If the letter is not signed and returned, an additional letter will be sent via first-class mail. The student will be referred to the school attendance support team.	School counselors will contact parents to discuss student truancy and next steps.	The student may be referred to the district social worker for 10 or more unexcused absences. The district social worker may refer students and parents to the Upson County Attendance Task Force*. A retention committee may retain students with 15 or more unexcused absences.
	All Unexcused Tardies/ Unexcused Early Dismissals			10 Unexcused Tardies/ Unexcused Early Dismissals
Unexcused Tardies/ Unexcused Early Dismissals	Parents will receive an automated (school reach message) or personal call when the student is tardy to school.			10 UNX Tardies and/or Early Dismissals = 1 UNX absence The school attendance support team will meet to discuss the educational impact of tardiness. Administration will be notified of excessive tardiness. Students with 15 or more unexcused tardies/unexcused early dismissals are not eligible for perfect attendance.

*** Ten (10) unexcused tardies and/or unexcused early dismissals will be converted to one (1) unexcused absence.** Students accruing excessive unexcused tardies, unexcused early dismissals, and unexcused absences may be referred to the Attendance Task Force for further action. The attendance task force is a committee with members from the following stakeholders: Upson County DFCS, Upson County Department of Juvenile Justice, Upson Collaborative, Upson Mental Health, TUCS schools, Upson County Sheriff's Office, and Thomaston Police Department. The attendance task force will provide recommendations for improved attendance. If neither the parent nor the student meets the recommendations, both parties will be referred to local law enforcement.

Discipline consequences for tardiness, skipping, and out-of-area will be addressed at the building level. See Code of Conduct.

Board Policy

To read the Thomaston-Upson County Schools board policies on a specific subject, please follow the steps listed below:

- Go to the system website. www.upson.k12.ga.us

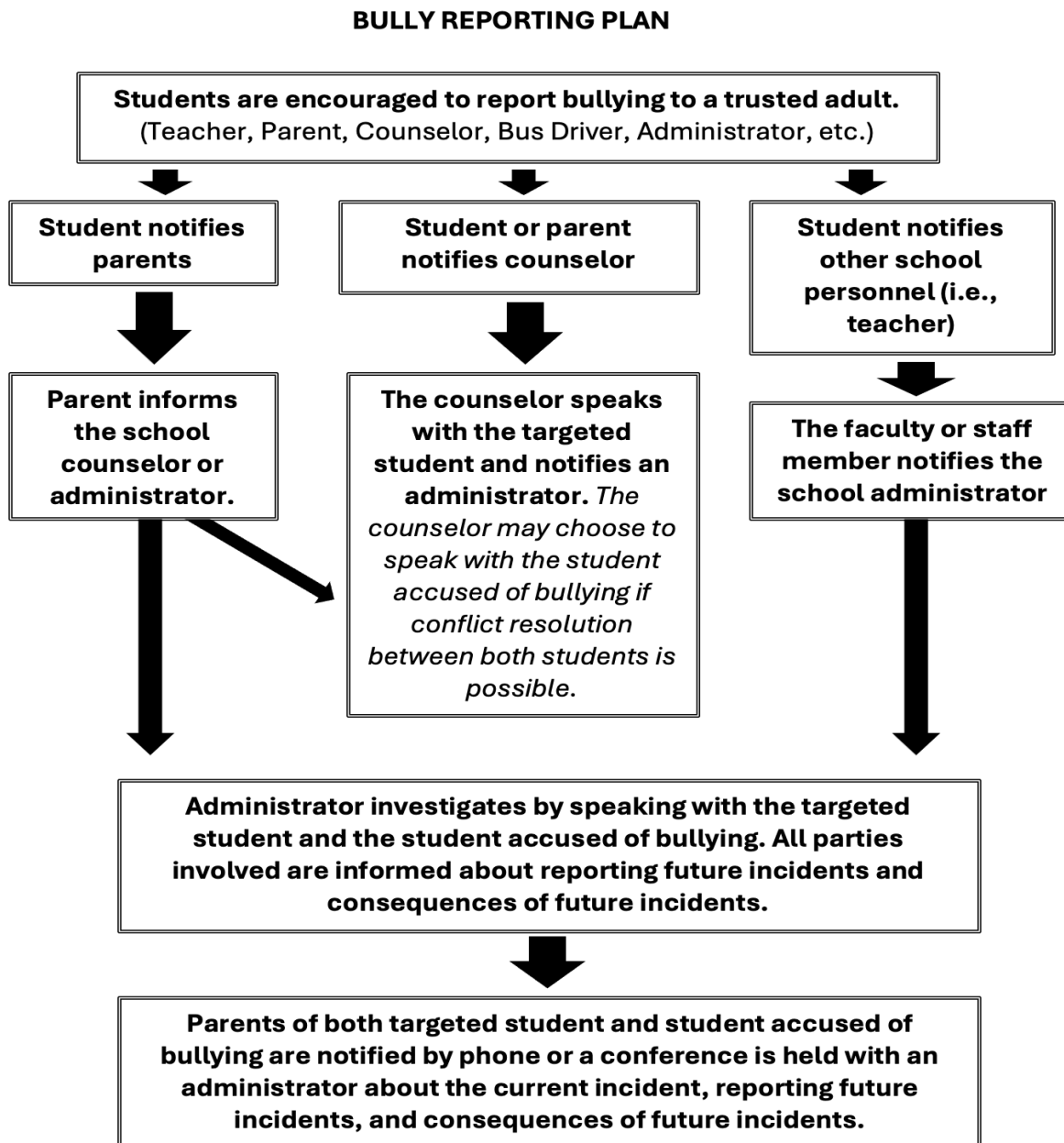
- Click on “Menu”
- Under District, click the ‘+’ beside Board of Education
- Click Board Policies
- Click Policies at the top of the page

Bullying Policy and Reporting Procedures

The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. For a complete definition of bullying and the procedures to be followed, please refer to the Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board Policy JCDAG and GA Code 20-2-751.4. Reporting procedures for each school are in the student handbook.

Bullying Procedures Flowchart - See Chart Below

The Bullying Procedures Flowchart is used by school administration in determining if the conduct in question meets the definition of “bullying” under the Georgia law. All allegations of bullying should be reported through the Principal or an administrator responsible for handling discipline. School administration must notify the parents of the victim and the parents of the student who committed the offense.



Bus Safety, Procedures, and Rules

Bus transportation is a privilege extended to students that can be revoked at any time due to disruptive or unsatisfactory conduct.* In the event of such behavior, school administrators will have the authority to suspend students from riding any Thomaston-Upson County Schools bus for a period of up to ten (10) consecutive days.

Disruptive and Unsafe Behavior

Students who behave in unsafe or disruptive ways on the school bus—such as bullying, fighting, battery, or distracting the driver—**will be put on a School Bus Behavior Contract**. This contract will include clear rules and consequences that match the student's age and the seriousness of their actions. It may consist of things like assigned seats, regular talks with parents, or losing the right to ride the bus. Parents must be involved in the creation of this contract (as required by Georgia law § 20-2-751.5 (2024)). Until the contract is made, the student won't be allowed to ride the bus. If the disruptive behavior continues, the school administrator can suspend the student from the bus for more than ten days—or even the rest of the school year—with approval from the superintendent. Disciplinary decisions for cases involving weapons, drugs, alcohol, violence, or any other offense considered to be serious will carry the same penalty as if the incident took place on the school campus.

In all cases where bus discipline problems involve students from more than one school, the administrator from each school involved will consult before bus discipline is assigned.

For the safety and well-being of our children, Thomaston-Upson County Schools' Transportation Department follows guidelines from the Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) in the bus delivery of younger students to their homes at the end of the school day.

Under DFCS guidelines:

- Children 8 years and younger cannot be left alone. Therefore, a bus driver must make visible contact with a parent or guardian before leaving the child at home.
- Children 9-12 years old can be left alone for up to two hours.
- Children 13 and older can be left alone without adult supervision.

In delivering younger children to their homes in the afternoon, bus drivers communicate with school personnel to determine safe drop-off conditions. Schools and parents should work collaboratively to establish procedures and requirements for children 13 or older who are medically fragile or have significant cognitive disabilities and require adult supervision at drop-off.

Should a bus driver deem they cannot leave a child in a safe situation, the driver will contact school personnel and/or parents or guardians. If necessary, the child will be returned to their home school.

Repetitive violation of the above DFCS guidelines may result in the following actions:

- Parent conference regarding student supervision
- Return the student to the school administration
- Communication with and/or transportation of the student to the Upson County Sheriff's Department
- Communication and referral to DFCS and/or TUCS Social Worker

Parents with questions or concerns about these guidelines may contact the TUCS Student Transportation Department, TUCS School Social Worker, or their child's school administrators.

*Transportation is a related service as defined by 34 CFR §300.34(c)(16) of the IDEA regulations and can include travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps. A child's individualized education program (IEP) Team is responsible for determining both if transportation is required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education and related services, and how the transportation services should be implemented. Transportation may also be a service documented in a child's 504 Plan.

BUS SAFETY RULES

1. Students should arrive at the designated bus stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled arrival of the bus.
2. Bus seating is the bus driver's responsibility. Students must sit in the assigned seat only and may move only with the bus driver's permission. Students must REMAIN SEATED when the bus is in motion. NO STANDING!
3. Aisles should be kept clear at all times (clear of persons and possessions).
4. Seat covers should be protected from pens or other objects that may mark or puncture them. The student, parents, or guardians will be responsible for the cost of repairs or replacement of seat covers.
5. Students should always follow the bus driver's instructions, especially in the event of an emergency.
6. Eating/drinking/tobacco products of any kind are prohibited on buses.
7. Proper behavior is a LIFE-OR-DEATH matter on a school bus! Listed below are some unacceptable behaviors that will result in referrals from the drivers and disciplinary actions by school administrators:
Immediate attention will be given to the following behaviors:
 - Disrespectful behavior or language toward the bus driver
 - Hitting/touching other students
 - Any conduct that endangers the other ridersThe following behaviors will result in the discipline process:
 - Disruptive behavior such as horseplay, shouting, or profanity
 - Handling other students' possessions without permission
 - Putting objects through windows, including hands and arms, or tossing items out the windows
8. If an unusual item must be transported to/from school for a project, assignment, or a regular class, the item should be placed where the driver instructs.

9. SKATEBOARDS AND BALLOONS ARE PROHIBITED ON SCHOOL BUSES AT ALL TIMES.
10. Students are required to bring a note signed by a school administrator or designee to get on or off the bus at any place other than their regular stop.
11. Students shall be prohibited from using any audible electronic devices during the operation of a school bus or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus's communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. The board authorizes drivers to prohibit any electronic usage by a student who is causing a disturbance with the device. Thomaston-Upson County Schools will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices.
12. Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
13. The School Dress Code will be enforced on the bus.

Note: Water is permissible on the bus during extremely hot weather at the Transportation Department's discretion.

CONSEQUENCES

Possible interventions by the driver to mitigate student behavior:

1. Mandatory seat assignments (all students)
2. Verbal reminder
3. Talked privately with the student
4. Reassigned bus seat
5. Parent/Guardian called
6. Parent/Guardian notified
7. The bus discipline form was sent to an administrator

*If transportation is provided under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a bus suspension must be treated as a suspension under 34 CFR §300.530, and all of the discipline procedures applicable to children with disabilities would apply. An LEA is not required to provide alternative transportation to a child with a disability who has been suspended from transportation for 10 school days or less unless the LEA provides alternative transportation to children without disabilities who have been similarly suspended from bus service. 34 CFR §300.530(d)(3). If a child with a disability is suspended from transportation for more than 10 school days in the same school year, and transportation is included in the child's IEP, during any subsequent suspensions, the LEA must provide transportation.

Child Custody

These provisions are provided to assist school personnel when responding to parents in most custody-related situations. It must be emphasized, however, that the provisions contained in this summary are subject to modification by court order.

According to O.C.G.A. 20-2-780, the individual who enrolls the student within Thomaston-Upson County Schools is deemed the custodial parent unless a court order or legally binding document is produced that states otherwise. In instances where a court order or legally binding document exists, it shall be the responsibility of the parent to provide a bona fide copy of the order or document to the principal or designee. If a custodial parent or guardian permits a notarized statement for the student to live with the other natural parent and that parent enrolls the child, the school will then conduct all school business with the parent who has physical custody. The custodial parent will then fall under the provisions of this rule.

Clinic and Medication

The clinic's purpose is to provide medical treatment (within their scope of practice), services required under a doctor's order, and the administration of prescribed medicines. No medication will be given by the clinic without a written, signed parent request. All prescription medication must have a written statement/authorization from a licensed physician. All medication (prescription and nonprescription) brought to school by parents and/or students must be taken to the clinic immediately upon arriving on campus with a note from the parent/guardian authorizing the dispensing of the medicine. The medicine should be in the original, up-to-date pharmaceutical container, clearly labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the time for each dose. No more than a 30-day supply of the medication can be stored in the clinic. At the prescribed time for dosage, the student should come to the clinic for the nurse to dispense the medicine. The nurse/designee is the only person certified to distribute medicine. According to policy JGCD, a student for whom the school has supporting medical documentation on file may carry at all times, with parental/guardian permission, inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine for allergic reactions, and all necessary supplies and equipment to perform monitoring and treatment functions authorized by the student's diabetes medical management plan while in school or at a school-sponsored activity. Students are not permitted to dispense medicine, including cough drops, to other students.

If a student becomes too ill to remain in class, the school nurse will attempt to contact a parent or guardian by phone and recommend that they come to school to pick up their child. Parents and guardians should update their child's contact information form, ensuring they can be reached if their children are injured or ill. Bus transportation cannot be provided to children who are sick. If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school. A student who contracts a contagious disease or condition, such as pink eye, chickenpox, ringworm, impetigo, or pediculosis (head lice) will be sent home from school and must remain home until the condition or disease is corrected.

Chromebook Policy

Thomaston-Upson County Schools (TUCS) provides Chromebooks to students for educational purposes. Chromebooks are the property of TUCS and are intended for educational use only. Students are not allowed to use TUCS Chromebooks for personal, commercial, business use, or political or religious reasons.

Before a Chromebook is assigned to a student, the student and/or legal guardian must sign an acknowledgment form stating that they have read and agreed to the school system's Chromebook policy.

Students who are assigned a Chromebook must take full responsibility for its basic care, security, and reporting of any device problems, breakage, or damage immediately. The device must be kept safe and secure both on and off school premises.

If a student loses possession of the device for any reason or if it is destroyed or damaged while in the student's care, the student is responsible for the replacement cost of the device. **Purposeful vandalism and/or damage of a Chromebook while in the care of the student will result in a \$150 replacement cost. The replacement fee for a charger will be \$20. The replacement fee for headphones will be \$10.** Failure to pay these costs may result in a loss of participation eligibility in non-academic activities such as clubs, sports, field day, the graduation ceremony, and other extracurricular events. This includes loss of use due to theft, fire, flood, lightning, or any other cause.

By following these guidelines, TUCS students can maximize the use of their Chromebooks and ensure they are utilized responsibly for educational purposes. A detailed version of Thomaston-Upson County Schools' Chromebook Policy can be found at www.upson.k12.ga.us.

Complaints of Discrimination/Harassment

COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT

The School District does not discriminate based on 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 (Civil Rights Act of 1964) Coordinator is:

Dr. Amy Miller, Deputy Superintendent

Address: 205 Civic Center Drive, Thomaston, Georgia 30286

Phone Number: 706-647-9621

email: amiller@upson.k12.ga.us

The Title IX Coordinator and the Sports Equity Coordinator:

Dr. Jeff Kelly, Executive Director of Human Resources and Student Safety

Address: 205 Civic Center Drive, Thomaston, Georgia 30286

Phone Number: 706-647-9621

email: jkelly@upson.k12.ga.us

The Section 504 Coordinator:

Dr. Tiffany Taylor, Director of Student Services and Section 504

Address: 205 Civic Center Drive, Thomaston, Georgia 30286

Phone Number: 706-647-9621

email: ttaylor@upson.k12.ga.us

The Exceptional Children Services/Special Education Coordinator:

Jenna Dunaway, Director of Exceptional Children Services

Address: 205 Civic Center Drive, Thomaston, Georgia 30286

Phone Number: 706-647-9621

email: jdunaway@upson.k12.ga.us

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 (Equity in Sports) is located on the District website at www.upson.k12.ga.us

Counseling Services

The counseling program in our schools encompasses a range of services and activities, including individual and group counseling, parent and teacher consultation, guidance for the group and classroom advisory programs, information services, referral assistance to other community programs and services, pathway completion plans, and student testing. The primary services of the school counselor are to provide direct support and assistance to students within the school. The counselors are certified professionals with training in human development, learning theory, counseling and mental health, tests and measurement, career development, research, and other applicable areas. If needed, please call your child's counselor to arrange an appointment.

As a service, the TUCS counseling department offers a variety of mental health services:

- A social-emotional school counselor at Upson-Lee Alternative School provides mental health and wellness services and programs that foster pro-social skills to students in the alternative setting.
- Certified Play Therapy to provide play therapy to K-2 students. Play therapy is an alternative approach to counseling that incorporates "student play" to assess student emotions.
- 9 school-based counselors to provide individual counseling, group counseling, and targeted classroom instruction to meet student needs.
- Mental health counselors will provide specific, research-based therapeutic services for our students with trauma, a diagnosed mental illness, or social-emotional needs.

Drug Free/Tobacco Free Schools

System policy prohibits the use of all tobacco products everywhere, by everyone, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, while on school property. If a student is found guilty of selling or distributing drugs, they will be expelled for a minimum of one year. All policies concerning drug offenses are listed in the Code of Conduct. The tobacco policy includes the possession and use of vapes and vape/JUUL accessories.

Emergency Information Forms

It is the policy of the Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education that accurate and complete student records shall be maintained for each student enrolled in the schools of this school district. Please notify your child's school when there are updates to household addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact information. Changes to information can be made in person, by visiting the school, or via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

The Georgia Department of Education requires presentation of evidence of date of birth at any time that a student enters a Georgia Public School System. Additionally, the school district requires proof of residency, a valid photo ID of the parent or guardian, a certificate of immunization, and other supporting documents. The Thomaston-Upson County School System requires a copy of this evidence to be included in the student record for any enrolled student. All registration requirements are uploaded to the student's documents within Infinite Campus. Students who are new to Thomaston-Upson County Schools or returning after being withdrawn from the school system are required to complete the registration process with the registrar located at each school or online using Infinite Campus Online Registration. Students transferring within the district, between elementary schools, are not required to complete the registration process. However, parents are expected to regularly update their information within the parent portal to keep the school informed of any changes to their contact details, including addresses and phone numbers.

Enrollment of Students by Parents or Legal Custodians (per O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670(b))

The parent or legal custodian of a student seeking permanent enrollment in a grade higher than the third grade in any receiving school in this state shall, as a prerequisite to such permanent enrollment, execute a document:

- 1) Disclosing to the receiving school whether the student:
 - a) Has even been adjudicated delinquent of a class A or B designated felony, including date of adjudication, offense, jurisdiction, and sentence imposed
 - b) Is currently serving a short- or long-term suspension, expulsion, including the reason and the term of discipline
 - c) Is currently subject to a notice of disciplinary hearing
 - d) Is currently or has ever been subject to:
 - i) Notice of report of criminal action
 - ii) Notice of chronic disciplinary problem
 - iii) Discipline or behavior correction plan
 - iv) Report of the commission of a prohibited act (aggravated assault or battery, sexual offenses, illegal drug offenses, weapon offenses)
- 2) Either:
 - a) Present a certified copy of critical records from previous school(s) attended during the last 24 months; or
 - b) Receive written confirmation from receiving school that it has received the **critical records (records listed in 1.d., including academic, attendance, disciplinary, records of adjudication of a Class A or B felony, IEPs, and psychological evaluations)**

Enrollment of Students by State Agencies

Any transferring student in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) or the Department of Human Services (DHS), through its Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), shall be immediately admitted to a receiving school, even if records required for enrollment cannot be produced, to ensure educational stability and continuity. All records shall be transferred to the receiving school administrator within ten school business days by the local school superintendent or his or her designee, as applicable, of the school that such transferring student last attended.

Provisional Enrollment (per O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670(b))

A student may be provisionally enrolled in a receiving school for not more than ten school days on a conditional basis; provided, however, that such enrollment shall not commence until the next school day after such student's parent executes a document:

- Disclosing the same information regarding delinquency/discipline as permanent enrollment; and
- Providing the name and address of each sending school the student attended during the previous 24 months and authorizing the immediate release of such student's critical records to the receiving school.

If the receiving school does not receive critical records from each sending school, it may temporarily assign the student to remote learning until the critical records are received or the case management consultation is completed.

If a provisionally enrolled student is found to be ineligible (because of an outstanding disciplinary order), the student shall be dismissed until they become eligible.

Right of Enrolling Parent or Legal Guardian to Review and Correct Records (per O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670(b))

Each time educational records are transferred to a receiving school, the parent/legal guardian shall receive written notice from the receiving school:

- Parents can request copies within five (5) school business days.
- Within five (5) school business days of receipt, the parent or legal guardian may request a meeting with the principal or a designee of the sending or receiving school to correct the content of the records.
- Parties can mutually agree to hold a meeting outside of the five (5) day period.

Withdrawals for Students

A) Request for Withdrawal

To withdraw a student from the Thomaston-Upson County School System, **the parent/legal guardian who enrolled the student must fill out a withdrawal form with the school registrar, indicating the child will withdraw.**

The parent who enrolled the student in the school system is allowed to withdraw the student from the school system.

- 1) Only formal withdrawal forms or records requests are recognized by the state as acceptable forms of withdrawal.
 - 2) A parent may elect to withdraw the student by email, but they must submit a signed TU withdrawal form with the effective date and their signature.
- B) Students Subject to Compulsory School Attendance (Absent for 10 Consecutive Unexcused Days)**
Students who are not in attendance and their parent/legal guardian has not filled out the documentation for withdrawal shall be marked as an unexcused absence for each day they are not in attendance. Students (over the age of 5) who miss 10 consecutive unexcused days may be dropped for lack of attendance, provided the school has adhered to the guidelines of the school attendance matrix. Students withdrawn for this reason should receive an exit code "R: Removed for Lack of Attendance." Students (5 and younger) may be withdrawn using the exit code "5: Underage of Compulsory Attendance."
- C) Students Absent for 30 Consecutive Days**

When a student doesn't attend public school where they are enrolled for thirty consecutive days, and:

- 1) The parent or guardian of such a student does not notify the school of such a student's withdrawal from such school;
 - 2) The parent or guardian of such a student does not notify the school of such student's enrollment or intent to enroll in a home study program or another school;
- D) Such a student is withdrawn from a public school without a declaration filed pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-690; or
- E) Such a student is 16 years of age or older and stops attending such school without completing the conference required under subsection (e) of Code Section 20-2-690.1

*Students receiving Exceptional Children Services cannot be dropped due to lack of attendance until the Director of Exceptional Children Services is notified and the required procedures have taken place.

Exceptional Children Services Program

Thomaston-Upson County Schools Program for Exceptional Children is implemented in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that all children with disabilities are entitled to a free, appropriate public education to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. Part B of the IDEA provides educational guidelines for public schools serving students aged 3-21, which include six principles: Individualized Education Program (IEP), Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Appropriate Evaluation, Parent and Teacher Participation, and Procedural Safeguards. Thomaston-Upson County Schools provides exceptional children's services to those students who meet eligibility requirements based on comprehensive evaluations. The State of Georgia establishes categories of eligibility according to requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Students will be exited from the Exceptional Children Program when meeting one (1) of the following criteria below:

- Determination of ineligibility based on a comprehensive evaluation and decision of an IEP Team to include Prior Written Notice;
- Written parent revocation of services and Prior Written Notice (PWN) to end specialized and/or related services;
- Receipt of a regular education high school diploma or Georgia alternate diploma; OR,
- Reaching the age of 22 or, if school is not in session, the last day of services before the 22nd birthday.

Students with an IEP who age out may participate in the annual graduation ceremony for the appropriate school term.

Thomaston-Upson County Schools' students eligible for the Exceptional Children Program are also served through several off-campus, Georgia-accredited schools such as:

- Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
- Georgia Academy for the Blind

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Supports (GNETS)

Service available within the continuum of supports for LEAs to consider when determining the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities, ages 5-21. GNETS services are an option in the continuum of supports that prevent children from requiring residential or more restrictive placement.

Students receiving services through GNETS are referred by their local school system through the Individual Education Program (IEP) process. GNETS provides comprehensive educational and therapeutic support services to students who exhibit intense social, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges with a severity, frequency, or duration such that the provision of education and related services in the general education environment has not enabled him or her to benefit educationally based on the IEP. AIM Academy is the GNETS program within the Thomaston-Upson County School System.

Georgia Special Needs School (GSNS) Choice/Scholarship Options (SB10)

Under a state law passed by the Georgia Legislature in 2007, parents of students who receive exceptional children services may request to transfer their child to another public or private school in Georgia, provided that their child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and has been enrolled for a full academic year in a Georgia public school. Please see the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) website (www.gadoe.org) for complete student eligibility criteria. Three options are described below.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria for the GSNS Program, a parent/guardian has the right to request a transfer from a student's current public school to:

- Another public school within their district of residence; or
- Another public school district outside their district of residence; or
- One of the three state schools for the blind or deaf, or
- A private school authorized to participate in the GSNS Program.

Funds received through the GSNS Program can only be used to pay for tuition and fees at a private school authorized by the State Board of Education to participate in the program. Funds cannot be used to pay the costs of out-of-district tuition, charter schools, or other options available under public school choice. Transportation under all school choice options is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Additional information can be found at this site: <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx>

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal privacy law that provides parents with certain protections regarding their children's education records, including report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. As a parent, you have the right to review your child's education records and to request changes under limited circumstances. To protect your child's privacy, the law generally requires schools to ask for written consent before disclosing your child's personally identifiable information to individuals other than you. For more information, visit the U.S. Dept of Education website at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/brochures/parents.html>.

FERPA requires Thomaston-Upson County Schools, with certain exceptions, to obtain your written consent before the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Thomaston-Upson County Schools, or your child's school, may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised your child's school to the contrary following school system procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Thomaston-Upson County Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in specific school publications.

Examples include the annual yearbook, honor roll, or other recognition lists, as well as directory information, which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. This type of information can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings - unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. (1) The Solomon Amendment, which the DOE determined to supercede FERPA, obligates LEAs to release to all five branches of military for recruitment name, address, telephone, year of birth, level of education, academic major, degrees received, educational institution in which the student was most recently enrolled for students 17 and older.

Suppose you do not want Thomaston-Upson County Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent. In that case, you must notify your child's school in writing, designating the information you do not want released, or come by the school and sign a "Do Not Release" form. The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name, address, and telephone number;
- Student's date and place of birth;
- Student's email address;
- Student's participation in clubs and sports;
- The weight and height of a student if he or she is a member of an athletic team;
- Dates of attendance at the school where the student is enrolled;
- Awards received during the time of enrollment.
- Photographs; and,
- Grade Level.

Footnotes: 1. These laws are: Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), the education bill, and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (P.L. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the Nation's armed forces.

Georgia Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA)

Parents and students should become familiar with Georgia's Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act, or TAADRA (Georgia Code Section 40-5-22). The law requires local school districts to certify that a student **is enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school** to meet the TAADRA requirements to obtain or retain a Georgia learner's permit or driver's license. More information about TAADRA, including forms and implementation guidelines, is available on the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) website.

Health Records

Georgia code O.C.G.A. 20-2-771 requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school have a current Georgia Certificate of Immunization on file. Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school. Please note that the vaccination record must be on an official form (Form 3231) provided by the Georgia Department of Human Resources. The responsible official for the school or facility may grant a 30-day calendar waiver of the certification requirement for a justified reason. The waiver may be extended from the date of first admittance or first attendance, whichever is earlier, for up to 90 calendar days if the student is a transfer student who moves from an out-of-state school system to a Georgia school system or is a student entering kindergarten or first grade from out of state. However, documentation must be on file from the health department or a physician stating that an immunization sequence has been started and can be completed within the 90-day waiver period. **The waiver may not be extended, and the child shall not be permitted to attend any school or facility unless the child submits a completed Georgia Certificate of Immunization.** Additionally, students entering Georgia public schools for the first time are required to provide an eye, ear, and dental certificate at the time of registration.

Hospital/Homebound Services

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, whether physical or psychiatric, prevent them from attending school for a limited period. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis, radiation/chemotherapy, or students with other serious health conditions). Students must be enrolled in a public school in Georgia to be eligible for HHB services. HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are, by design, temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by the licensed physician who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented.

Thomaston-Upson County Schools will provide hospital/homebound services to students when the requirements of the law, including but not limited to Georgia Rules and Regulations 160-4-2.31, have been met, and after approval has been granted by the school official designated by the Superintendent. Any student or parent desiring to request hospital/homebound services shall fill out all referral forms provided by the Thomaston-Upson County School System and provide such medical referrals and releases of records as requested. Some students may not be eligible to receive hospital/homebound services, including those who may endanger the health and safety of the instructor or other students with whom the instructor may come into contact, and those who do not meet the eligibility standards outlined in applicable law. Please contact your child's counselor for additional information.

Internet Use

Thomaston-Upson County Schools encourages students to use the Internet as a learning and research tool. All students are required to sign and return an Acceptable Use Policy Form upon enrollment in the Thomaston-Upson County School System. The contract must be signed by both student and parent only after thoroughly reading the terms and conditions of the Thomaston-Upson County School System Acceptable Use Policy. Internet access is guarded by a web filtering software to help prevent access to inappropriate areas of the Internet. In addition, students are closely monitored when using the Internet. Unauthorized use of Internet sites may result in suspension of Internet use and/or disciplinary measures as outlined in the school system's Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Conduct. A copy of the Acceptable Use Policy can be found at: <https://www.upson.k12.ga.us/page/technology>

Under Georgia Senate Bill 351, effective July 1, 2025, the following policies apply:

- The use of social media on school devices and networks during the instructional day is strictly prohibited.

- Instruction on digital citizenship and online safety will be included in the curriculum.
- Violations may result in disciplinary action and/or restricted access to school technology resources.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in schools can provide numerous educational benefits, but it must be used responsibly and ethically under the acceptable use policy to ensure the privacy, safety, and well-being of students, teachers, and staff. AI tools are intended for academic use only and require teacher approval, as well as compliance with District and school policies, including the Code of Conduct.

Moment of Reflection

In compliance with Georgia Law (SB396, amending O.C.G.A. 20-2-1050), at the opening of school on every school day, a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than sixty seconds will be conducted with the participation of all the pupils. This moment of quiet reflection is not intended to be a religious service or exercise. Still, it shall be considered as an opportunity for silent reflection on the activities of the day. Teachers and administrators shall not suggest or imply that students should or should not use the moment of reflection for prayer, nor shall they deny to any student the right to use it for a moment of quiet prayer. Students and/or staff may not, under any circumstances, use the moment of silent reflection to pray audibly, singly or in unison.

Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (Student Support Team/Response to Intervention)

The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (MTSS) program, which includes the principles of several academic, behavioral, developmental, and functional programs such as Response to Intervention (RTI), Student Support Team (SST), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), gathers data from multiple sources to determine:

- Are our kids learning and progressing?
- How do we know what they are learning and how they are progressing?
- And most importantly, what are we prepared to do when they do not learn, make adequate progress, or already know what is to be learned?

Student academic, behavioral, developmental, and functional concerns are addressed through a four-tiered process that systematically develops and delivers instructional and behavioral interventions. The essential components of the process include the following:

- Providing scientific, research-based instruction and interventions
- Monitoring progress in response to these changes in instruction and interventions
- Using this information to shape instruction and make educational decisions

Non-Resident Student Policy

The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education will accept non-resident students when maximum class size requirements allow. Non-resident students will be charged annual tuition not to exceed the per-pupil amount of local tax funds used to supplement state FTE funds. The Superintendent shall set a yearly tuition fee. Transportation will not be provided for non-resident students. Exempt students will not be charged tuition.

Criteria for Acceptance of Non-resident Students

1. History of good behavior, good attendance, and passing grades.
2. Students can be accommodated by the current instructional program services.
3. Must provide the following documents in acceptable form before enrollment can be considered:
 - a. Complete transcript from previous school.
 - b. Complete disciplinary record.
 - c. Complete attendance record.

The continued enrollment of non-resident students in all schools within the school system shall be conditioned upon the following criteria:

- a) Consistent attendance with no excessive unexcused or excused absenteeism; no excessive unexcused or excused tardies; and no excessive unexcused or excused early releases;
- b) Satisfactory discipline.

If a non-resident student becomes a disciplinary or attendance problem (including tardiness and early releases) at school, the principal may revoke the student's privilege to attend school in the Thomaston-Upson County School System without the necessity of convening a disciplinary tribunal.

Non-resident students may also be removed from the Thomaston-Upson County School System for falsification and/or misrepresentation of information during the application process or for other good and sufficient cause.

Non-resident students are ineligible for Pre-K enrollment. According to Bright from the Start guidelines, all Pre-K students must reside in Upson County.

Non-Solicitation Policy

Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education policies GAI and JKA prohibit solicitation on school grounds. These policies intend to ensure non-interference with the educational activities of the schools. Flyers, coupons, pamphlets, catalogs, etc., from private, for-profit businesses, organizations, and/or individuals may not be distributed to students or staff. Additionally, no school employees are permitted to display items for sale on school property. Exceptions include: 1) School-sponsored, student organization-sponsored, or parent organization-sponsored fundraisers where a portion of the sales go to the school, student, or parent organization; 2) Official Thomaston-Upson County Schools' Partners in Education who have received Superintendent approval for distribution of discounted or free offers to employees and/or students. These policies can be accessed on the school system's website at www.upson.k12.ga.us.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Thomaston-Upson County Schools provides equal opportunity to students and staff and does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

Dr. Jeff Kelly, the Title IX and Sports Equity Coordinator, Mrs. Jenna Dunaway, Director of Exceptional Children Services and ADA Coordinator, and Dr. Tiffany Taylor, 504 Coordinator, may be contacted at:

Thomaston-Upson County School System
205 Civic Center Drive
Thomaston, GA 30286
(706) 647-9621

Parent Policy

The goal of the Thomaston-Upson County Schools Family Engagement Program is to promote an effective home and school partnership. The Thomaston-Upson County School System affirms and assures the right of parents to be involved in the education of their children. A copy of the Parent Policy is sent home at the beginning of each school year.

Parents' Right to Know

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

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

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualifications, please contact the school's principal.

Upson-Lee Prekindergarten
706-646-4729
Upson-Lee Primary School
706-647-7516
Upson-Lee Elementary School
706-647-3676

Upson-Lee Middle School
706-647-6256
Upson-Lee High School
706-647-8171
Upson-Lee Alternative School
706-647-5738

Physical Restraint Guidelines

The District complies with state requirements related to restraint and seclusion as set out in Georgia SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.35. Consistent with that rule, physical restraint will be used only in situations in which the student is in immediate danger to himself/herself or others and/or the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other less intensive de-escalation techniques. A parent or guardian will be notified in writing each time his/her child has been restrained. The District maintains written policies and procedures governing the use of restraint.

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is an evidence-based, three-tiered framework to create a positive school climate in which students learn and grow. The core principles guiding PBIS include the understanding that we can and should:

- Effectively teach appropriate behavior to all children.
- Intervene early before unwanted behaviors escalate.
- Use research-based, scientifically validated interventions whenever possible.
- Monitor student progress.

PBIS is a proactive approach that schools use to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. The focus of PBIS is prevention, not punishment. At its heart, PBIS calls on schools to teach students positive behavior strategies, just as they would teach any other subject, such as reading or math. Appropriate school-wide behaviors for specific areas (such as classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium, etc.) are taught and displayed using a PBIS Matrix. Positive behavior is recognized and rewarded using school-based incentives.

Our primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when an individual student's behavior conflicts with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations, and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Code of Conduct and to support it in their daily communication with their children.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA is a federal law that affords certain rights to parents of minor students regarding surveys that ask personal questions. For more information, please visit: <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra>.

Thomaston-Upson County Schools will adhere to all federal requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).

School Nutrition Program

The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Nutrition Program is an integral part of our educational system. More than 7,000 nutritious, well-balanced meals are served by our professional staff each day to students, faculty members, and visitors. Menus are planned to incorporate the USDA dietary guidelines, which include offering fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as increasing daily fiber intake and reducing total fat and sodium content. All school facilities provide

breakfast and lunch service. Monthly menus are posted on our system website. Daily menus are available through the Thomaston-Upson County Schools' App, available through the Apple App Store or Google Play. According to our Local Wellness Policy, students are not permitted to bring commercial fast food items to school. We strongly encourage our students to participate in our School Nutrition Program. Thomaston-Upson County Schools will continue to operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2025-2026 school year. All enrolled students are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at no charge to their household each day of the 2025-2026 school year.

SY 25-26 Meal Prices	Breakfast	Lunch
TU Faculty/Staff	\$2.75	\$4.75
Parents/Visitors	\$4.25	\$5.75

Section 504

Section 504 is an abbreviation for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This federal civil rights law prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funding. Section 504 guarantees that qualified disabled individuals receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This compliance is overseen by the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to:

1. have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
2. have a record of such an impairment, or
3. be regarded as having such an impairment.

Thomaston-Upson County Schools does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in any student program. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all accompanying regulations (TU Policy JAA). The district intends to ensure that students who are disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services.

Notice of Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Parent/Student Rights

Any student, 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. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system's central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards, Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504, and TU Section 504 Grievance-Complaint form may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

Severe Weather: Tornado Protocol

Watch:

Students may be checked out or picked up at school during a Tornado Watch.

Warning:

Due to safety concerns for students and staff, students may not be checked out or picked up at school during a Tornado Warning. If a Tornado Warning occurs during release time on a school day, students will be held at school until it is deemed safe by the National Weather Service or the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

Student Support Team

Each school is required to have a Student Support Team (SST). The SST is an interdisciplinary teaching team that identifies, plans, and recommends alternative instructional strategies for students who are experiencing academic, social, or behavioral difficulties in school. The SST should be an integral part of the regular education program. Student Support Team (SST): a multi-disciplinary team that utilizes a problem-solving process to investigate the educational needs of students who are experiencing academic and/or social/behavioral difficulties. SST, which is required in every Georgia public school, utilizes a data-driven process to plan individualized supports and interventions and to assess their effectiveness.

Visitors in the Building and Classrooms

Who May Visit: The right to observe a child's instructional program during classroom time resides solely with a child's parent, legal guardian, or foster parent and does not extend to grandparents, other interested close relatives, third-party agencies, or caregivers.

Who May Be Observed: The sole purpose of a classroom visit by a parent is to observe their student and the instructional program being presented. At no time should a parent's motive for or focus of a classroom visit be to observe another student or students in the classroom. If the Principal has knowledge of or suspects that the focus of a parent's classroom visit is to observe another student, he/she reserves the right to deny a requested visit or to end a visit in progress.

Scheduling: Visits must be scheduled through the Principal for a time and date convenient to both the parent and the teacher. The parental observation date shall be within a reasonable time frame following the initial request. A request for a specific date must be made at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled event. No visits will be allowed while students are participating in assessments, quizzes, or tests.

Duration: To minimize potential interruptions and distractions during instructional time, the Principal reserves the right to limit the duration of classroom observations.

Conduct During Classroom Visitation: Parents visiting classrooms should arrange their schedules to enter and exit the classroom in a manner that would not interrupt the instructional activities in progress. While visiting the class, the teacher will designate an area for parents to sit, generally in the back of the classroom. (Parents are asked NOT to sit with their students as this could create an unnecessary disruption for other students.) Once in the classroom and seated, parents are asked to remain seated and refrain from interacting with students or the teacher unless the classroom teacher initiates the interaction. Unnecessary noise and/or movement must be kept to a minimum. Parents wishing to discuss their student's behavior after observing them during class should schedule a parent-teacher conference. Parents who fail to observe the stated guidelines during their visit may be asked to leave the room if their presence or conduct unduly interferes with the orderly operation of the classroom. Any concerns or complaints may be addressed directly to the classroom teacher after regular school hours or to the Principal.

No Audio or Video Taping of Classroom: Video and/or audio recording of classroom visits by the parent or guardian is prohibited. Electronic devices that could be used for video or audio recording should not be visible during the visit. Violation of this guideline can result in dismissal from the classroom and/or school site.

School Administration: The Principal or their designee is required to be present in the room during the parent observation to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Wellness Program

The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education acknowledges the importance of a learning environment that fosters healthy habits among students. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience.

THOMASTON-UPSON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT STUDENT INFRACTIONS AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Note: In accordance with disciplinary procedures of the Thomaston-Upson County School System, and as required by Georgia Code (20-2-736), this publication of student behavior infractions and required or recommended dispositions is submitted for the information of school personnel, students, and parents.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of each school within the Thomaston-Upson County School System is to provide the best possible learning opportunities. Our standards of student behavior during school hours, on school property, and at school-related functions are designed to create clear expectations that students will behave in a manner that facilitates a learning environment for themselves and their peers.

We expect students to:

1. Respect each other
2. Respect school district employees
3. Obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board of Education
4. Obey the rules established by individual schools

Good order and discipline can be described as the absence of distractions and disturbances that interfere with the optimal functioning of the student, the classroom, the school, school-related functions, and the safe operation of school buses. It is also characterized by a friendly yet businesslike rapport in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward mutually agreed-upon goals. We appreciate your cooperation in sharing the responsibility for maintaining a proper learning environment.

Included in this Code of Conduct are prohibited behaviors and consequences for such behaviors. The Thomaston-Upson County Schools 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. § 20-2-736 and Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education Policy JCDA – Student Code of Conduct.

ADDITIONAL BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

The District may impose campus, classroom, or club/organization rules in addition to those found in the student handbook. These rules may be listed in the student and campus handbooks, be posted or distributed in classrooms, or be published in extracurricular handbooks, state or national organization bylaws, and/or constitutions. Sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities may require and enforce additional standards of conduct for student participation in extracurricular activities.

Organizational standards of behavior concerning an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of behavior that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student, including but not limited, to the student being removed from participation in extracurricular activities, exclusion from school honors, suspension, and expulsion for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct governs students' behavior on school grounds; off school grounds at a school activity; off school grounds at a non-school activity, but where the misconduct leads to a disruption of school or any other violation of the Student Code of Conduct; in route to and from schools, or any school-sponsored activity; on the bus; and at the bus stop.

INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

SECTION I: PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Schools and the school system will utilize a progressive discipline process to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, as well as consideration given to each student's previous discipline history and other relative factors; and that all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed.

SECTION II: INVESTIGATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. A teacher must document a student's violation of the student code of conduct within one school day of the incident. The report will be filed with the principal (or designee) and shall describe the student's behavior.

2. Following an appropriate investigation of the alleged infraction, the principal (or designee) will determine the disposition.
3. Within a timely manner after determining a disposition, the principal (or designee) will send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information relative to the student support services being utilized or the disciplinary action taken upon completion of the investigation. The principal (or designee) will make a reasonable attempt to confirm receipt of such written notification by the student's parents or guardians. Written notification will include information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal (or designee).
4. The principal (or designee) will notify the referring teacher of the action taken.

SECTION III: DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS RELATIVE TO ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

In all cases, the rights of individuals involved will be ensured and protected. Within that statement, however, students and parents/guardians must recognize that the due process rights of students during administrative investigations are defined to the proposed dispositions to be imposed by the school's administration. Namely, if a principal (or designee) is planning to impose a punishment amounting to less than a ten-day suspension, he/she has three responsibilities to the student (*Goss v. Lopez*, 1975):

1. Notify the student of the charge.
2. Explain the evidence collected; and,
3. Extend an opportunity to the student to respond to that charge.

If the principal (or designee) is seeking to impose a punishment that will exceed a ten-day suspension, he/she must also afford the student a due process discipline hearing before a panel or hearing officer.

SECTION IV: STUDENT SEARCHES

To maintain order and discipline on school property or property used by the school or School System, and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may conduct searches of both school and personal property as provided for in laws, procedures, and policies. Additionally, school authorities may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in said searches.

Student vehicles located on or near campus, as well as student possessions such as pocketbooks, book bags, school lockers, desks, containers, and other school property, may be subject to random inspection and search at any time without further notice to parents. Such searches may be conducted by school authorities or police canines. An individual student may be searched if there is reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or in violation of school rules.

SECTION V: ILLEGAL ACTS

Parents and students should be aware that in some instances, an offense may constitute a violation of Georgia Law. As a result of any violation of Georgia law, law enforcement, having jurisdiction, may impose additional sanctions/consequences.

SECTION VI: REPORTING OF THREATENING BEHAVIOR OR ILLEGAL/SUSPICIOUS ITEMS AT SCHOOL

Any threat (expressed or implied) by any individual that, if carried out, would pose a potential danger to the life and safety of students and/or staff members or the destruction of property should be regarded and treated seriously. Any student who receives or has knowledge of information concerning such a threat should immediately report that information to a school administrator or staff member.

Students should notify an administrator or staff member immediately when they find or hear information regarding illegal or suspicious items, dangerous items, or other items banned from school on a Thomaston-Upson County Schools campus or school bus. Students are advised not to pick up or handle illegal, dangerous, prohibited, or unidentified items, or items not belonging to them.

SECTION VII: SUSPENSION/EXPULSION OF STUDENTS WITH IDEA SERVICES

1. **Guidelines for suspension/expulsion of students receiving Exceptional Children Services:** Students receiving-Exceptional Children Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) can be suspended out-of-school (OSS) or removed from the classroom for in-school-suspension (ISS) for a total of 10 consecutive or cumulative school days in a school year without a consideration of whether the behavior is related or not to the student's disability. If school administration is imposing consequences to a student being served under IDEA that exceeds removals of 10 cumulative school days in a school year or is recommending a long-term suspension or expulsion, the School System will convene a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) to determine if the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability. If the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability OR the conduct in question was a direct result of the system's failure to implement the student's IEP, the student may not be suspended from school. If the behavior is found not to be related to the student's disability, the School System may impose the recommended discipline; however, the student who is served in Exceptional Children Services will continue to receive educational services. The student's Individual Education Program (IEP) committee will determine the location of the education services.

School administrators should contact the Director of Exceptional Children Services in cases involving a dispute regarding a student's record of disability before considering suspension or expulsion as a disciplinary consequence.

2. **Tribunal guidelines for students receiving Exceptional Children Services:** Students receiving Exceptional Children Services are afforded the same right to a disciplinary due process hearing before a tribunal as nondisabled students, where there is a recommendation for suspension/expulsion to exceed 10 school days.
3. **Tribunal guidelines for students holding a "Section 504 Plan:"**
A tribunal for a student holding a "Section 504 Plan" will only be held if:
 - a. A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) reviews the student's plan and determines that the behavior exhibited by the student resulting in the discipline infraction is NOT a manifestation of the student's disability AND the district followed the Section 504 Plan: or,
The student maintains his/her innocence. In these two cases, the discipline should proceed in the same manner as prescribed for a student receiving Exceptional Children Services, except the role of the IEP committee will be replaced with the student's Student Support Team (SST).

Note: Parents should be aware that state and/or federal law may require modified disciplinary actions for Exceptional Children Services students.

SECTION VIII: UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION AND VIOLENT CRIMINAL OFFENSES

Major offenses, including but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses, can lead to schools being named as an “Unsafe School” according to the provisions of the State Board Rule 160-4-8.16, UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION (USCO). Additionally, under USCO provisions, School System guidelines are in place to facilitate the timely and appropriate transfer of students who are victims of “violent criminal offenses” and/or students enrolled in schools deemed “persistently dangerous” (as determined by the same State Board Rule).

SECTION IX: DISCIPLINING OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Students shall be disciplined for engaging in off-campus conduct that poses a potential danger to persons or property at the school or disrupts the educational process.

Discipline may include, but is not limited to, change of placement, suspension, or expulsion. Off-campus misconduct for which a student shall be disciplined includes, but is not limited to, any off-campus conduct that:

1. Is prohibited by the Georgia or United States criminal codes;
2. Is punishable as a felony or would be punishable as a felony if committed by an adult; and
3. Is conduct for which a student has been arrested, indicted, adjudicated to have committed, or convicted. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(c).

Students who engage in off-campus behavior resulting in a felony charge validated by law enforcement will receive:

1. A charge letter from the district explaining the charge and disciplinary process; and,
2. Notice of a tribunal hearing to determine disciplinary action and student placement.*
*Students served with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan or a Section 504 Program plan will receive a Manifestation Determination Review before the proposed tribunal hearing.

SECTION X: POST-INCARCERATION SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Upon notification by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) that a student will be coming or returning from youth detention centers, incarceration, or similar facilities, the student shall be enrolled in his/her home school as opposed to an alternative educational setting unless the Student Support Team, consisting of the building principal, school counselor, Exceptional Children Services’ teacher (if applicable), MTSS Coordinator, the student and his parent/guardian/foster parent/other person, a DJJ counselor, or a local DJJ Community Service Officer and respective DJJ Juvenile Parole and Probation Specialist, concludes that the best placement for the child would be the alternative setting. Any placement made pursuant to an IEP team shall take precedence. The case manager (i.e., counselor, Exceptional Children Services teacher, or MTSS Coordinator) shall consult the Student Support Team within 5 days to determine whether transition or other services are necessary for the student. (GADOE rule 160-4-8.17). This meeting will take place at the student’s home school.

SECTION XI: DEFINITIONS OF DISCIPLINARY / EDUCATIONAL TERMS

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM: (Grades 6-12) May be an alternative to external suspension or expulsion. Students in the alternative program are not permitted to participate in school-sponsored activities, including athletic events, extracurricular activities, and graduation ceremonies. Under certain circumstances, bus transportation to the alternative program may be denied at the discretion of school authorities. The Alternative Program is located at Upson-Lee Alternative School.

COUNSELING: Thomaston-Upson County Schools has counseling services in each school. The school counselors assist in efforts to help students focus on academic, personal, social, and career development, enabling them to achieve their goals and succeed. Counselors provide guidance regarding making wise choices and preparing students to lead fulfilling and responsible lives. Counseling is provided through classroom lessons, small groups, and individual counseling sessions as needed.

DETENTION: A requirement that the student report to a specific school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed or to receive specific instruction in behavior modification. Detention may require the student’s attendance before school, after school, or during scheduled class or school activity time if school officials deem removal of the student from his/her regular school schedule essential to the well-being of the student or school.

HEARING OFFICER/PANEL: A person or persons that, by law and through an appointment of the Superintendent, may hear predetermined student discipline proceedings. This person or persons would be authorized to rule on discipline cases when there is a recommendation for suspension/expulsion for more than nine school days. Hearing/Tribunal panel members are required to participate in annual training.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA): IDEA is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, Exceptional Children Services, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from birth to age 21 in cases that involve 13 specified categories of disability.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP): IEP is a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with State Board Rule 160-4-7-.06.

POSSESSION: For purposes of this Policy and Code, possession shall be defined as the actual control or manual custody of anything which may be the subject of property for one’s use, either as the owner or as the proprietor of a qualified right in it and either held personally or by another, who exercises it in one’s place and name. This definition shall encompass the concept of actual possession as well as constructive possession. It shall extend to items of contraband held personally by a student or maintained by a student in a space or spaces under the student’s control, including, but not limited to, purses, book bags, lockers, and vehicles.

PRINCIPAL’S DISCRETION: When a disposition notes that schools may have “principal’s discretion” in dealing with an infraction, that distinction should also be interpreted as a “principal’s, assistant principal’s, or principal’s designee’s discretion.” Some examples of Principal’s discretion could include, but are not limited to: Administrative Detention, Check-in Check-out, Behavior Intervention Group, Counselor referral, Parent Conference, Phone Conference, Behavior Plan.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE: The degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity and/or the number of occurrences of the behavior.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST): The Student Support Team (SST) is a multidisciplinary team that utilizes a problem-solving process to investigate the educational needs of students experiencing academic and/or social and behavioral difficulties. SST, which is required in every Georgia public school, uses a data-driven process to plan individualized supports and interventions and evaluate their effectiveness.

SUSPENSIONS: The removal of a student from class, school, or school-sponsored events for a specified period of time. Suspensions may also include the removal of privileges, such as bus transportation, student parking, or other opportunities provided by the school or the School System. Student suspensions are typically applied as either short-term or long-term suspensions, depending on the severity of the violation(s). **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS** are suspensions for less than ten school days. **LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS** are for greater than nine school days and require a due-process hearing (tribunal) before being implemented.

1. **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION:** Temporary removal from classes by placing students in a designated area. Students will continue to do classroom work and receive credit.
2. **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION:** Denial to a student of the right to attend school. Absences will be registered as excused absences. Students who have been externally suspended are not permitted on any Thomaston-Upson County Schools campus or at any school function while under suspension. Alternative school students may, as determined by a tribunal, be granted transportation shuttle privileges to and from home. Externally suspended students who return to school or attend a school function while under expulsion or suspension may be considered to have criminally trespassed and may be prosecuted accordingly if they have not obtained and carry written permission from the Principal.
3. **SUSPENSION OF BUS PRIVILEGES:** Denial of the privilege of school System bus transportation as a result of the safety of students, bus drivers, and/or materials being threatened. Discipline will be administered according to procedures in this handbook.
4. **SUSPENSION OF PARKING PRIVILEGES:** Parking is a privilege bestowed by permit, which may be suspended or revoked at the Principal's discretion. Suspended and expelled students are denied parking privileges for the term of their suspension or expulsion.

EXPULSIONS: Removal of students from the school system permanently, or for an extended period of time beyond the current semester. The expulsion of a student requires a due-process hearing (tribunal), as explained below. Expulsion by a tribunal from a TUCS school may be accompanied by an opportunity to attend the Alternative Program. A student expelled from a TUCS school and allowed to enroll in an Alternative Program is not eligible to participate in extra-curricular or co-curricular programs or activities at the school from which they are expelled.

TRIBUNAL/DISCIPLINARY HEARING: In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751 through O.C.G.A. § 20-2-759, the definition of tribunal/disciplinary hearing is a due process hearing afforded to students where there is a recommendation for suspension/expulsion for longer than nine school days. A tribunal panel has the authority to suspend students from school for an extended period or place them in the Alternative Program. All tribunals must be held no later than ten days after the beginning of the student's suspension unless: (1) the parent/guardian requests, in writing, an extension to the established deadline; (2) parent agrees to maintain student's status until tribunal has been completed; (3) both school and parent accept this extension/continuance. Any teacher who is called as a witness by the school system shall be given notice no later than three days before the hearing. The Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board of Education will observe Georgia law in developing and implementing disciplinary hearings held by a disciplinary hearing officer, including the ability to honor disciplinary orders of private schools and other public schools/school systems pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2.

UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION (USCO): The process of allowing students who attend a school identified as a "persistently dangerous" public school or students who become victims of a violent criminal offense while at school to transfer to a safe public school.

SECTION XII: AMENDING THE DISCIPLINE CODE

Additions or changes in the student infraction codes and the corresponding dispositions may be made as deemed necessary. If this becomes necessary, appropriate announcements will be made to all students.

SECTION XIII: REVIEW OF LOCAL BOARD POLICIES RELATIVE TO STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Current Thomaston-Upson County Schools Board Policies regarding Student Discipline are available for review on the School System's website at www.upson.k12.ga.us.

SECTION XIV: LEVELS OF DISCIPLINE

The Code of Conduct is generally organized into three (3) categories of prohibited behaviors: Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. However, students and parents should note that the circumstances of particular violations may warrant more severe consequences, even for the first offense. The School District reserves the right, in administration's sole and exclusive discretion, to take all action necessary to protect its students, provide a safe and secure learning environment, and to ensure the orderly operation of all educational facilities, including without limitation treating a violation as a higher level violation and/or providing for more severe consequences. Additional information regarding prohibited behaviors and disciplinary actions follows these sections.

Level 1:

Minor acts of misconduct that interfere with the good order of the school. Level 1 violations may represent a failure to demonstrate universally accepted expectations or social skills. It is the responsibility of all staff to address minor violations as soon as possible, within the environment where the misbehavior occurred. Teachers will record minor classroom behaviors on **Student Incident Reports (SIRs)** and assign consequences determined by the teacher. Once a student receives 4 SIRs, the teacher will complete an office referral form. The accumulation of multiple Level 1 violations could result in more severe consequences.

Level 2:

Intermediate acts of misconduct. Level 2 violations are generally mid-level infractions. Repeated (two or more) violations of any intermediate infraction can result in that violation being considered a Level 3 violation.

Level 3:

Severe acts of misconduct, including, but not limited to, repeated misbehaviors of a similar nature, serious disruptions of the school environment, threats to health, safety, or property, and other acts of serious misconduct. Level 3 violations are generally major infractions and are serious safety violations. Level 3 violations may result in a referral to a Disciplinary Hearing. Administrators will notify the appropriate district personnel, school resource officers, and law enforcement or state agencies as required by law.

SECTION XV: STUDENT CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Academic Dishonesty: Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assignments, or exams, including plagiarism, cheating, falsifying records, or the unapproved use of Artificial Intelligence.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: Administrative Discretion	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 3 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: Administrative Discretion	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1 - 3 days Maximum: OSS for 1 - 2 days
3 or more Violations	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: Administrative Discretion	Minimum: ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 7 days

Battery: Intentional physical contact or aggression, including: kicking, headbutting, biting, scratching, pinching, pushing, hair pulling, spitting, or contact from items thrown with the intent of causing physical harm. This also includes non-confrontational reckless contact that results in a physical injury.

Intentional battery of school personnel may result in greater consequences. (Note: The key difference between battery and fighting is that fighting involves mutual participation.)

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS 1- 3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days	Minimum: Period Only ISS 1- 3 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: Period Only ISS 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal

Bullying: In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, bullying means 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;
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:
 - i. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1;
 - ii. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - iii. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening education environment; or
 - iv. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	OSS for 3 days	OSS for 3 days
2 nd Violation	OSS for 5 days	OSS for 5 days
3 or More Violations	OSS for 7 days w/required SST meeting	OSS for 10 days with referral to tribunal

Computer Trespass: Using school equipment or wifi to engage in/access unauthorized activities such as social networks, chat sites, recording, cheating, and illegal conduct such as fraud, theft, piracy, scams, and phishing. Use of a school computer for anything other than instructional purposes or unauthorized use of a computer or computer network to delete, obstruct, interrupt, alter, damage, or in any way cause the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s), or data.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 2 days	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 3 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 3 days	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 3 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3 days/Removal of Technology Privileges Maximum: OSS for 1 day/Removal of Technology Privileges	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3 days/Removal of Technology Privileges Maximum: OSS for 5 days/Removal of Technology Privileges

Disorderly Conduct: Any act that disrupts or interferes with the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff, or others. This includes blurting out, sustained loud talking, yelling, screaming, using materials to make excessive noise, sustained out-of-seat behavior, intentionally inciting or instigating others to violate the code of conduct, and engaging in verbal disagreements with others. (Includes disruptive behaviors on school buses).

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 3 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 3 days	Minimum: Period Only ISS 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: Period Only ISS 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting

Electronic Smoking Device: The intentional or unintentional possession and/or distribution of any device used to deliver nicotine, or any other substance intended for human consumption that a person may use to simulate smoking through inhalation of vapor or aerosol from the device. Such devices include those manufactured, distributed, marketed, or sold as an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, electronic hookah, vape pen, electronic nicotine delivery system, or any cartridge or other component of the device or related product.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days	Minimum: ISS for 1 day & Complete Vaping Course Maximum: OSS for 2 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days	Minimum: ISS for 2- 3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: OSS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days	Minimum: OSS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days

Fighting: Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and intent to harm (Note: The key difference between fighting and battery is that fighting involves mutual participation.)

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: ISS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days	Minimum: OSS for 3 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
2 nd Violation	Minimum: ISS for 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/Parent Meeting	Minimum: OSS for 5 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
3 or More Violations	OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal

Other – Attendance Related: Repeated or excessive attendance offenses, including out of area, elopement (running away from assigned area), failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, parking violations, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions related to attendance. **Excessive tardiness and early dismissals for grades 6-12 students will be addressed using the school portion of the ULMS and ULHS Student Handbook.**

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 1 day	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 2 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS – 1 day Maximum: ISS for 2-3 days	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1 day Maximum: ISS for 1-3 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 2-3 days Maximum: OSS for 1 day	Minimum: OSS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 2-3 days

Other – Dress Code Violation: Violation of the school dress code that includes standards for appropriate school attire.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
All Violations	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: Administrative Discretion	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: Administrative Discretion

Other – Possession of Unapproved Items: The use or possession of any unauthorized item, such as gadgets, toy weapons, fireworks, matches, lighters, incendiary devices, that are disruptive to the school environment. (Note: The use of fireworks or incendiary devices must be coded as Arson.)

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days w/parent meeting	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 3 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 3 days w/parent meeting	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1-3 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 2-3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting

Other – Student Incivility: Insubordination or disrespect to staff members or other students; includes but is not limited to arguing beyond a civil conversation, refusal to follow school staff member instructions, hitting or striking others with playful intent, horseplay with or without unintended injury, use of vulgar or inappropriate language, stealing (value less than \$25), and misrepresentation of the truth.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days w/parent meeting	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 3 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS – 1 day Maximum: OSS for 3 days w/parent meeting	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS for up to 3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting

Repeated Offenses: Collection of **Student Incident Reports (SIRs)** not previously assigned a state reportable action that occur on a single day or across multiple school days that lead to a state reportable disciplinary action.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Administrative Warning	Administrative Warning
2 nd Violation	Period Only ISS for 1 day	Period Only ISS for 3 days

3 or More Violations	Minimum: ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting
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Sexual Harassment: Non-physical and unwelcome sexual advances, lewd gestures or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature; requests for sexual favors; gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment (includes inappropriate remarks regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy).

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: ISS for 1- 3 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: OSS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
3 or More Violations	OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal

Sex Offenses: Unlawful sexual behaviors such as sexual contact without force or threat of force, possession of sexually explicit images, and engaging in sexual acts on school grounds or during school activities (can be consensual).

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: ISS for 2-3 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
3 or More Violations	Minimum: OSS for 1-3 days w/parent meeting Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: OSS for 3 days w/parent meeting Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal

Threat/Intimidation: Nonsexual, unsolicited harassment through written, verbal, or electronic form that creates a feeling of discomfort, humiliation, or mental distress. Any threat through written or verbal language or act which creates a fear of harm and/or conveys a serious expression of intent to harm or violence without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: OSS for 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	Minimum: OSS for 3-5 days Maximum: OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal
3 or More Violations	OSS for 5 days w/required SST meeting	OSS for 10 days w/possible referral to tribunal

Tobacco: Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on transportation to and from school.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days	Minimum: ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 2 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS 1-3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days	Minimum: ISS for 2-3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days

3 or More Violations	Minimum: OSS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days	Minimum: OSS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 5 days
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Vandalism: The willful and/or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property without consent. *Damage to school property (i.e., Chromebooks) could also result in financial retribution.

Violation	Grades K-5	Grades 6-12
1 st Violation	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: ISS for 2 days	Minimum: Administrative Warning Maximum: OSS for 2 days
2 nd Violation	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 1 day Maximum: OSS for 1 day	Minimum: ISS for 2-3 days Maximum: OSS for 3 days
3 or More Violations	Minimum: Period Only ISS for 2-3 days Maximum: OSS for 1 day	Minimum: OSS for 1-3 days Maximum: Principal Discretion

The following violations are the most egregious acts of misconduct and generally constitute a serious violation of the law (for example, conduct which would be considered a serious felony criminal act if the student were an adult) and pose a significant safety risk or result in serious bodily injury. The School District reserves the right, in administration's sole and exclusive discretion, to take all action necessary to protect its students, to provide a safe and secure learning environment, and to ensure the orderly operation of all educational facilities. School-level administration will consult with district-level administration to determine appropriate consequences.

- **Alcohol:** Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or use of beverages or substances represented as alcohol. Students under the influence or intoxicated due to alcohol are subject to disciplinary action.
- **Arson:** Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary devices. (Note: Possession of fireworks or incendiary devices must be reported as "Possession of Unapproved Items.")
- **Breaking and Entering:** Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft). (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.)
- **Drugs, Except Alcohol and Tobacco:** Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession (intentional or unintentional), transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics, or any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school.*
- **Gang-Related:** Possession or display of identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire related to criminal gang activity. Verbal or nonverbal communication regarding solicitation, membership, or affiliation with a gang. Vandalism of school or private property, threats and intimidation, extortion, or harassment on behalf of a gang (O.C.G.A. § 16-15-3)
- **Homicide:** Killing of one human being by another.
- **Kidnapping:** The unlawful and forceful abduction, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will.
- **Larceny/Theft:** The unlawful taking of property (valued at \$25 or more) belonging to another person or entity (e.g., school) without threat, violence, or bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between larceny/theft and robbery is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)
- **Motor Vehicle Theft:** Theft or attempted theft of any motor vehicle
- **Other – Firearms:** Firearms other than handguns, rifles, or shotguns as defined in 18 USC 921. Includes any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas; any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. *
- **Robbery:** The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. (Note: The key difference between robbery and larceny/theft is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)
- **Serious Bodily Injury:** The term "serious bodily injury" means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.*

- **Sexual Battery:** Penetration against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent; touching of private body parts of another person either through human contact or using an object forcibly or against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent.
- **Trespassing:** Entering or remaining on a public school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry. (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.)
- **Violence Against a Teacher:** Intentional physical attack or physical contact against a staff member resulting in bodily harm.
- **Weapons – Handgun:** Possession of a firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired using a single hand; and any combination of parts from which a firearm described above can be assembled. *
- **Weapons – Knife:** The possession, use, or intention to use any type of knife.*
- **Weapons – Other:** The possession, use, or intention to use any instrument or object that is used or intended to be used in a manner that may inflict bodily harm (does not include knives or firearms).*
- **Weapons – Rifle/Shotgun:** The term "rifle" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger. The term "shotgun" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger. *

Under IDEA, three special circumstances can lead to a student served in the Exceptional Children Services program to be moved to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, even if the conduct is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. These circumstances include:

- carrying or possessing a weapon on a school campus or at a school function
- knowingly possessing, using, selling, or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance or illegal drugs, and
- inflicting serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function

Removing the child for these offenses does not require parental consent or agreement, nor does it require a tribunal hearing.

THOMASTON-UPSON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM Student Activity Code of Conduct

I. Introduction

Thomaston-Upson County Schools has determined that participation in extracurricular activities (i.e., athletics, student officers, student council, homecoming court, clubs, and or interscholastic activities) is a privilege for students enrolled in the school system. A student participating in such activities is a school leader, and, with leadership comes additional responsibility, so students must adhere to the standards and expectations contained in the School System's Activity Code of Conduct. As such, if a student violates these standards, schools may withdraw the privilege of participating in these activities, regardless of whether the violation occurred at a school-related or non-school-related activity. Schools may also withdraw the privilege of participating in these activities if the student's violations occur outside of the scope of the activity's "season" or beyond the scope of the school day/year.

II. Student Infractions and Standards of Behavior

Student Infractions: Any student who commits the following infractions may be suspended or permanently dismissed from the team:

1. Hazing other students—school clubs and student organizations will not use hazing or degradation of individual dignity.
2. Missing practice, rehearsal, or activities (unless excused by the coach or sponsor);
3. Truancy and/or skipping classes;
4. Acting in an unsportsmanlike manner when representing the school;
5. Violating team curfews (as established by the coach or sponsor);
6. Any behavior that results in discipline by the school administration, and,
7. Any behavior that, in the opinion of the administration, reflects negatively on the team, activity, athletic program, or school.

Standards and Expectations for Behavior: Students participating in interscholastic/extracurricular activities must comply with the following standards and expectations for behavior:

1. Establishing and promoting a positive self-image for the program, school, and School System.
2. Exhibiting good sportsmanship.
3. Supporting team/activity rules developed by the activity's coaches or sponsors.
4. Adhering to the School System's Code of Student Conduct.
5. Observing all standards and guidelines established by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Constitution and bylaws.
6. Obeying local, State, and Federal laws governing behavior and conduct.*

Note: Provisions for dealing with starred () items above are contained in Section V of this document.*

III. Dispositions for Student Infractions and Standards of Behavior

Dispositions for student infractions and violations of standards and expectations of behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Additional practice or conditioning time
- Conferencing between the sponsor/parent and the sponsor/student athlete

- Loss of position or awards privileges
- Suspension and/or removal from team(s)
- Spectators who are removed from any after-school function may be subject to loss of admittance to other functions. Spectators will be subject to the Code of Conduct for behavior.

IV. Suspensions for Student Infractions and Standards of Behavior

Applying Suspensions: Relative to suspensions, progressive discipline processes will be utilized to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, as well as consideration given to each student's previous discipline history and other relevant factors.

Reporting Suspensions: Parents or guardians will be notified of the student's suspension. A suspension report will be filed with the Superintendent or designee.

V. Dealing with Student Arrests

Reporting of Misdemeanor or Felony Arrests: A student (or his/her parent/guardian) is responsible for informing a school official, who may include the Principal, Athletic Director, or his/her Head Coach or sponsor, of misconduct which results in a misdemeanor or felony arrest. This report must be submitted within five calendar days of the arrest; otherwise, the student may face disciplinary action, up to and including partial or permanent suspension.

Confirming Student Arrests: Student arrests verified through a reliable source (school administrator, teacher, coach/sponsor, staff member, parent of the involved student, law enforcement, etc.) will be thoroughly investigated by the school administration or its designee.

Investigations arising from student arrests will be reviewed by a panel comprised of staff from the offending student's school, to include, but not be limited to the following: a school administrator, the school's athletic director, the coach/sponsor of the student, one additional coach/sponsor (as selected by the Principal), and one teacher (as selected by the Principal). It will be the role of this panel to review all information available because of the investigation and recommend potential dispositions for any confirmed infraction to the Principal for his/her consideration. Ultimately, it will be the principal's responsibility to administer discipline. The student may present a written response to the alleged infractions to the panel, but will not be present at the panel hearing. The student's parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the panel's decisions.

The school reserves the right to suspend and/or permanently dismiss a student from all extracurricular and interscholastic programs for the remainder of their school career for misconduct that could result in the arrest or conviction of specific misdemeanor or felony crimes.

Addressing Felony Arrests and/or Convictions: Felony arrests constitute an immediate suspension from activities. Relative to that arrest, any subsequent felony conviction of a student may result in a permanent dismissal from activities.

Addressing Misdemeanor Arrests and/or Convictions: Misdemeanor arrests and/or convictions that will cause suspensions from activities may include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Disruption of school or school events
- Threats of violence or acts of violence against school employees or students
- Sexual Offenses
- Weapons Offenses
- Alcohol or Drug Offenses

VI. Duration of Code of Conduct

The Student Activity Code of Conduct will be in effect year-round.

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