

2024-2025
Ware County Middle Schools

*Student
Handbook*





Welcome!

On behalf of the Ware County School District, welcome to the 2024-2025 school year. You are part of an exceptionally talented student body. Together we will strive for excellence.

This student handbook provides students and parents with a simple guide for understanding the basic operating procedures and policies of the Ware County School District. Please review the student handbook with your student throughout the school year.

We are extremely proud of the district's continued commitment to high academic standards and increasing student achievement. Our middle school offers exceptional opportunities to participate in activities outside the classroom that add value inside the classroom. Each year, our students succeed in every arena: the classroom, the performing arts, the athletic fields, CTAE programs, and extra-curricular activities.

Please visit the district website (www.ware.k12.ga.us) and the middle school website for the latest news and information. Please contact your child's teacher or principal if you have questions or concerns.

The combined efforts of students, parents, and staff will ensure a positive and successful learning experience. We look forward to a successful 2024-2025 school year.

Sincerely,

Bert Smith

Superintendent of Schools

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Nondiscrimination Clause

The Ware County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or gender in employment decisions or educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent, or other individuals who believe 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 to 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 and Title IX Coordinator and Sports Equity Coordinator is the Director of Student Services and Community Relations, 1301 Bailey Street, 912-283-8656.

The Section 504 and Americans Disability Act Coordinator is the Director of Special Education, 1301 Bailey Street, 912-287-2306

Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Ware County School District Policy GAAA/JAA (Nondiscriminatory Policy) or under Policy IDFA (Gender Equity in Sports) is located on the Ware County School System website.

Foreword

This Student/Parent Handbook contains information for students and parents of middle-grade students in the Ware County School System. Parents are encouraged to read this handbook and review the information with their children. The rules and regulations of the middle school have been designed to protect the well-being and rights of students and school personnel in order to ensure a quality education. However, disagreement with a policy or procedure will not be grounds for ignoring or failing to comply with this area of school life. The handbook verification form confirms receipt of this handbook, which is a part of the census verification process.

Since it is not possible for this handbook to address all issues that arise during the school year, parents and students should understand that local school administrators will use their professional judgment to make decisions on specific situations as they occur.

Safe Schools

The staff and administration in the Middle Schools of Ware County are making every effort possible to maintain our facilities as safe schools. Our endeavor to create a safe environment is not only dependent on staff and administration but also on parents, students, and the community.

Action Steps for Students

Students are asked to talk to their teachers, administrators, parents, and/or counselor about anything that might affect the safety of our school by reporting threats, intimidation, weapon possession, drug selling, gang activity, graffiti, and vandalism. Students may also call the anonymous safety hotline established by the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation at **1-877-729-7867. (1-877-SAY-STOP).**

Encouraging students to call **1-877-SAY-STOP** is an effective way to detect a potentially violent act before it is committed. The **1-877-SAY-STOP** toll-free hotline was created by the Georgia Department of Education so that students can anonymously report anyone who has a weapon or who has threatened to bring a weapon to school. The **1-877-SAY-STOP** hotline will be housed at the Georgia Department of Education, manned by a certified safety expert, and supervised by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Coordinator. The hotline hours will be Monday through Friday (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.). After 5 p.m. all calls will be forwarded to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. **Callers will NOT be asked to reveal their identities.**

What is Anonymous Alerts?

The Anonymous Alerts anti-bullying and safety app reporting system helps combat bullying and other negative activity in Ware County Schools by empowering students and families to speak up. Social and peer pressure are some of the hardest obstacles for students to overcome.

The system allows for 1-way or 2-way anonymous encrypted communications between submitters (students, parents, or community members) and district administration and/or school staff. Users of the system have the option to remain anonymous or reveal their identity when submitting a report.

How Does it Work?

To use this revolutionary new app, students, parents, or other school personnel can simply visit the Ware County Schools website and click on the “Anonymous Alerts” button or text link to submit a report expressing their concern. Anonymous Alerts® mobile applications can be downloaded directly from the Apple, Google Play, or Chrome stores.

Informational posters explaining how to use the app are displayed throughout the schools and offices in the district.

IN AN EMERGENCY, ALWAYS CALL 911!

How Does the Hotline Work?

Upon receiving an incident report, the safety expert will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and school superintendent. The superintendent will be asked to notify the Georgia Department of Education regarding the subsequent actions taken in conjunction with each call, as well as the outcome of each call. The safety expert will also answer questions about school safety.

Tips for Students:

- Read the student handbook and know the school's code of conduct.
- Model the responsible behaviors that are outlined in the behavior code.
- Avoid being part of a crowd when a fight breaks out and refrain from teasing, bullying, and intimidating peers and/or videoing a fight or confrontation.
- Be a role model- take personal responsibility by reacting to anger without physically or verbally harming others.
- Always respect others and respect that they may be different than you.

Tips for Parents:

- Discuss the school's discipline policy with your child. Show your support for the rules and help your child understand the reasons for them.
- Talk with your child about the violence he or she sees on television, in video games, and possibly in the neighborhood. Help your child understand the consequences of violence.
- Help your child find ways to show anger that do not involve verbally or physically hurting others.
- Help your child understand the value of accepting individual differences.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child even when it is tough.
- Listen to your child if he or she shares concerns about friends who may be exhibiting troubling behaviors. Share this information with a trusted professional, such as a school psychologist, school counselor, principal, or teacher.

Educational Philosophy

The faculty and staff at the middle school believe that the main priority of our school is to provide learning opportunities based on the student's individual needs, abilities, and interests, thus helping individual students attain intellectual, academic, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Because of the uniqueness of the middle school student, the faculty and staff recognize the need to provide a flexible school curriculum that is an integrating link from the elementary school to the high school.

We also assume the responsibility of initiative and leadership through team efforts. These efforts maximize teacher strengths and help us recognize and preserve the dignity and worth of each student. Effective communication between parents, students, teachers, administration, and citizens of our community is a major catalyst for increasing proficiency in academic skills, growth toward self-autonomy and development of positive attitudes and ideals in our educational setting. We believe the total educational process becomes a cooperative venture when community, school, and other related institutions are utilized to their fullest.

Middle School Objectives:

1. To help students develop the power to think clearly, logically, and critically in decision-making and problem-solving situations.
2. To provide appropriate experiences which will develop students' appreciation of self, others, and surroundings.
3. To offer a flexible program of educational and social experiences that will enable students to participate (function adequately).
4. To facilitate aspirations whereby students can strive for academic excellence.
5. To stimulate and develop positive attitudes for continued learning throughout high school and life.
6. To provide experiences that will facilitate a smooth transition from middle school to high school.
7. To involve community agencies, resources, and other related institutions in making and implementing decisions related to our institution.
8. To maintain a more effective line of communication between administrators, parents, teachers, and community.

Middle School Grading System

The Ware County School System uses Infinite Campus for annual updates through the annual updates through the Census Verification process. Families acknowledge receipt of the Student Handbook, including the Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy, upon Student Registration and during yearly Census Verification. The Student Handbook is available for review on our website, and documentation of receipt is stored under the student's profile on Infinite Campus.

2024-2025 Grading Periods:

- 1st Semester
 - 1st Nine Weeks = August 8 - October 7
 - 2nd Nine Weeks = October 8 - December 18
- 2nd Semester
 - 3rd Nine Weeks = January 6 – March 12
 - 4th Nine Weeks = March 13 – May 21

Grading System

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
F	Below 70- not passing

Parent Portal

Parents may access their child's grades and attendance via Infinite Campus and find information on the school system website www.ware.k12.ga.us.

Board of Education Members

District 1	Mrs. Alisa "Toni" Nelson	Board Member	912-285-8011	atnelson84@gmail.com
District 2	Ms. Karen Ethridge	Board Member	912-285-9937	k.ethridge381@att.net
District 3	Mr. Edward L. Tyre	Board Member	912-614-0520	btyre@ware.k12.ga.us
District 4	Mr. Rusty Ganas	Board Member	912-285-2475	rganas@bellsouth.net
District 5	Mr. Denton Dial	Board Chair	912-337-1693	dentondial@att.net
District 6	Mrs. Brandi Waters	Board Member	912-406-2297	brandi.waters@ware.k12.ga.us
District 7	Mr. Barry Deas	Board Vice-Chair	912-285-7073	barrydeas@bellsouth.net

Waycross Middle

700 Central Avenue
Waycross, GA 31501
912-287-2334

Mr. David Hitt, Principal

Dr. Gina Howell, Assistant Principal

Mr. Harold McClain, Assistant Principal

Dr. Latiyla Williams, Assistant Principal

Athletic Director: 912-287-2334

Band Room: 912-287-2056

Clinic: 912-284-0258

Media Center: 912-287-2332

School Nutrition: 912-287-2330

Special Education: 912-287-2333

Ware County Middle

2301 Cherokee Street
Waycross, GA 31503
912-287-2341

Dr. Shelli Tyre, Principal

Mr. Hildrick Garrison, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Amanda Lankford, 6th Grade Principal

Ms. Hannah Bennett, 7th Grade Principal

Dr. Adriuna Johnson, 8th Grade Principal

Band Room: 912-287-2331

Field House: 912-287-2396

Guidance: 912-287-2342

School Nutrition: 912-287-2343

Attendance Policy

Attending school regularly is very important if students want to succeed in school. Georgia law requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school unless they have a lawful reason to be absent. In addition, students under the age of six (6) who have been on roll for twenty (20) or more days fall under the provision of the Georgia Mandatory Attendance Law 20-2-150(c). State policy defines the school year as 180 attendance days.

Students who reach five (5) days of unexcused absences during the school year will be considered truant. The legal penalties for truancy include referral of students to Juvenile Court and referral of parents to State Court. Any Georgia resident who has control or charge of a child who is convicted on violating mandatory school attendance requirements will be subject to a fine of not less than \$25.00 and not more than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties per absence.

For all other students, normal school attendance policies remain in effect.

Waycross Middle School Arrival & Dismissal Times

Buses will drop off and pick up students on the St. Mary's Street side of the campus. Cars are not allowed to enter the bus area. Students who arrive by bus are to walk directly into the gym. In the afternoon, bus riders will be dismissed to the bus loading area and will wait in the gym for late buses. Students must remain in their assigned area and follow instructions given by school personnel. Food, drinks, gum, and any other items that are not school-related are not allowed in the bus waiting area and will be confiscated. Inappropriate behavior may result in a loss of bus riding privileges for a determined amount of time and/or assignment of consequences from the student code of conduct. Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus.

The only approved drop-off and pick-up area for car rides is the covered walkway past the faculty parking. Parents are asked to enter from Central Avenue, be alert, and follow directions given by duty personnel while driving on campus. Students should not be dropped off prior to 7:15 a.m. or picked up later than 3:50 p.m. Students who are consistently picked up after 3:50 p.m. will be required to ride a bus home. To ensure your child's presence in class by 7:50 a.m., please arrive several minutes earlier to afford extra time for slower traffic flow.

The Ware County Board of Education is not responsible for the supervision and safety of students prior to the beginning of the school day or after the end of the school day for certain schools. The Ware County Board of Education does not expect its staff to exercise charge over students who are left at the school campus before the beginning of the school day or who are not picked up after school in a timely manner after the end of school. Failure to pick up your child may result in a report to the DFACS.

Walkers should use extreme caution as they leave the campus, as there are no crossing guards on the streets near Waycross Middle. The only crosswalk available near the school is located on Central Avenue near the corner of Central Avenue and Satilla Avenue. Students are to use the sidewalks at all times and are expected to leave the campus immediately upon dismissal. All bike riders will adhere to the same rules as walkers. Students must walk their bikes while on campus. No skateboards, skates, hoverboards, etc. may be used on campus. Students are not allowed to loiter around the area during arrival and dismissal.

Ware County Middle School Arrival & Dismissal Times

Students may be dropped off beginning at 7:45 a.m. Upon arrival to school, students will report to their appropriate grade-level hallway. Breakfast will be available to students who wish to eat. The school day begins at 8:20 a.m., and students not present by this time will be considered tardy. The school day ends at 3:30 p.m.

Car riders should be dropped off at the side of the building and enter through the doors near the cafeteria. Students arriving after 8:20 a.m. should be dropped off at the front main entrance and must sign in as tardy. Car rider dismissal is also in this location.

The Ware County Board of Education is not responsible for the supervision and safety of students prior to the beginning of the school day or after the end of the school day for certain schools. The Ware County Board of Education does not expect its staff to exercise charge over students who are left at the school campus before the beginning of the school day or who are not picked up after school in a timely manner after the end of school. Failure to pick up your child may result in a report to the DFACS.

Admission & Assignment to Schools

1. Students residing in Ware County must attend school on the campus which is appropriate for the school zone in which they reside. A map of the attendance zones is posted on the system website.
2. Whenever a family moves out of a school attendance zone after the school year begins, the student may complete the nine-week grading period at that school if parents provide transportation. If a family moves during the last half of the school year from one school zone to another zone within Ware County, the student may remain at the original school for the remainder of the school year if the parent provides transportation in a timely manner that conforms to established arrival and pick up times for other students. This shall not apply if such a student has chronic disciplinary or attendance problems. The student must enroll in the school assigned to his attendance zone at the beginning of the subsequent school year.

Through school choice, parents may elect to enroll their child in a school outside of their attendance zone if such school has classroom space available after its assigned students have been enrolled. However, the home school must have the enrollment to grant the release. The Board of Education shall notify parents by July 1 of each year regarding which schools have available space. The window of time to apply for Intra-district transfer is the month of February of each school year. If parents elect to enroll their child in a school outside their attendance zone, the parent is responsible for transporting their child to and from school. A student who is allowed to transfer to another school under the school choice provision may continue to attend such school until the student completes all grades of that specific school as long as they remain a resident of Ware County and meet academic and behavioral standards.

Attendance Procedures

Absences/Tardies/Early Check-Outs

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes on time and each day. On the **FIRST DAY** students return to school from an absence, parents should provide the school with a written note explaining the reason for the absence. The note should include the date(s) of the absence, the reason(s) for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student. If students are frequently absent and tardy, the principal may ask the parent to provide more information, such as medical documentation, about the absences, tardies, and early checkouts. Only **five (5)** handwritten notes will be accepted from parents per semester. No notes will be accepted after three (3) days (72 hours).

Additionally, parents may be required to attend a District Attendance Panel Meeting if their child accumulates seven (7) unexcused absences or twenty (20) unexcused tardies/checkouts.

Please see the section titled “District Attendance Panel Meeting” in this handbook for more information.

Tardies means the failure by a student to be in the assigned classroom or instructional space at the assigned time without a valid excuse or arriving at school after the morning tardy bell (check appropriate school’s bell schedule).

Absence means the non-attendance by a student in an approved regularly scheduled class or activity, regardless of the reason for such non-attendance. An exception is when a student participates in an approved activity (such as, but not limited to: a field trip, academic competition, or approved athletic event), he/she may be excused from school, counted present, and shall be responsible for any work missed during the time he/she is away from school.

Check-in Procedures

Any student who arrives at school after the tardy bell should report directly to the front office to obtain a late pass. Parents must sign in to students who arrive at school after the tardy bell. Students arriving after the tardy bell are considered tardy. Please refer to EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED ABSENCES to see acceptable reasons (as they reasons also apply to excused and unexcused tardies).

Check-out Procedures

When students arrive on campus, they are under the authority of school administrators and must abide by proper checkout procedures if they leave school. Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds, once they have arrived on the campus, at any time during the day without a permit from the school office. **When a student is to be excused for a portion of the school day, the student shall be released only to a legal parent or guardian, to a person properly identified to school authorities, or upon written request or verified telephone call from the parents.**

For early checkouts, parents should bring a note to the principal's office for approval. The note should state the reason for dismissal. Parents must go to the school office to sign out their child. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours. Parents should not check out students for the purpose of avoiding car rider traffic. Handwritten parent notes will count against the five-note policy.

A parent or an authorized person indicated on the student's registration form or file must be present to sign a student out of school. Phone contact must be made with a parent or guardian before a student can be checked out by an unauthorized person. Administrative approval is required for all checkouts.

Students are expected to remain in class and any checkout should be limited to medical reasons or one of the excused reasons listed in the Handbook under the heading of Absences. **Excessive early checkouts are discouraged since these interrupts the educational process of a student and an entire class. Students may not check out for lunch.** In order to be counted as present for the day, a student must be in attendance through or ½ of the school day. Students cannot be checked out after 3:00 p.m. without an appointment card from their doctor. The front office is very busy during this time of the day and would appreciate your help.

If a student must leave the campus because of illness, a doctor's appointment, or a verified emergency, he or she must do one of the following:

1. A student who becomes ill comes to the clinic, and the nurse will call his/her parent or legal guardian to check him/her out. Teachers will be notified, and the student's parent/guardian must sign out before leaving campus.
2. When checking out, the student must bring a note explaining the reason for the checkout upon returning to school (or within 3 days of the check-out) if the absence is to be considered one of the excused absences and complies with the reasons an absence can be considered excused.

Excused Absences, Tardies, Early Checkouts

Absences, tardies, and early checkouts will be excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness that would endanger the student's health or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in the student's immediate family which would reasonably necessitate absence from school in the determination of the principal or his/her designee.
3. A scheduled medical, dental, or eye examination.
4. Attendance of non-school activities or functions authorized by the superintendent or designee.
5. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
6. An order of a governmental agency, such as a court order or a pre-induction physical exam for military service.
7. Attendance upon a trip or event having significant educational value, provided the principal is notified of the absence in advance, and he/she determines the trip or event has significant educational value.
8. To visit with a parent serving in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard. If such parent has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, a student shall be granted excused absences, up to five (5) school days per school year, for the purpose of visiting/attending military-related events.
9. Extreme circumstances that cannot be resolved outside school hours; parent or guardian must request and receive approval from the principal or designated representative.
10. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the Ware County Board of Education to have merit-based circumstances.

A student who serves as a Page of the General Assembly during the school year shall be counted present at school in the same manner as an educational field trip.

***Jessie's Law:** HB 0314 states a foster care student (served by DFCS) who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school.*

After five handwritten parent notes per semester, parents will be required to present appropriate medical, governmental, or court documentation for the purpose of validating the absence. After exhausting the five handwritten notes, the subsequent absence will be categorized as unexcused unless proper documentation is received within the three (3) day (72-hour) time period.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and can result in a penalty as imposed by Georgia's compulsory attendance law. Any absence not covered in (1)-(10) above shall be declared unexcused. It is the policy of the Ware County Board of Education that no unexcused absences are allowed. Any student who reaches ten (10) unexcused absences will have truancy charges filed against the parent and/or child (twelve years of age or older). If the parent keeps their child out for other reasons, such absence shall be deemed unlawful and, therefore, unexcused. Classwork missed due to an unexcused absence must be made up within three (3) days. For any absence beyond five (5) days, the parents shall be required to provide medical, governmental, or court documentation.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

If a student is marked with an unexcused absence for the school day, the student will not be allowed to participate in or attend extracurricular activities scheduled for the same day that the student is absent.

Policy to Reduce Unexcused Absences

1. The Ware County School System will make a parent contact as stated below and document it in Infinite Campus when a student accumulates 3 absences, 5 absences, 7 absences, and 10 absences.
2. If a student has three (3) days absent, a parent/guardian will be contacted via phone or note home by the classroom teacher, Community Service Provider, and/or counselor. Upon reach three (3) unexcused absences, the Community Service Provider will receive a referral, initiate contact and document in Infinite Campus.
3. At five (5) unexcused absences, a referral will be sent to the school social worker, who will initiate contact and log into Infinite Campus. In addition, a letter will be mailed home by the school notifying the parent of the student's missed days and compulsory attendance law.
4. Any student who has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences the parent/guardian will be invited to attend an Attendance Review Panel (ARP) meeting at the school. Parents whose student has reach five (5) unexcused absences will be asked to sign an Attendance Agreement form.
5. At seven (7) unexcused absences, a letter will be mailed home by the Community Service Provider inviting the parent to a District Attendance Review Panel meeting (DARP).
6. At nine (9) unexcused absences, a letter will be sent from the Student Services Department notifying the parent of the consequences of not sending their student(s) to school.
7. The Attendance Review Panel will consist of the parent, counselor, Community Service Provider, and social worker. At the panel meeting, the counselor will present the case and review interventions and history. A contract will be developed to assist the student and parent with attendance. A copy of the contract will be developed to assist the student and parent with attendance. A copy of the contract will be distributed to the student's cumulative folder, central file in social worker's office, and to the parent. If the terms of the contract are not met, the parent will be referred to the District Attendance Task Force or the District Attendance Review Panel (DARP). District Attendance Task Force or DARP are the final steps in the intervention process of assisting parents before charges will be filed in State or Juvenile Court.
8. Once a student reaches ten (10) unexcused absences, Ware County Schools will file charges against the parent in state court for truancy.

The school social worker or community service provider will work with the student and family in order to address the attendance problem. Student Service personnel shall involve agencies and services such as mental health, social service agencies, school nurse, student and parent groups, truancy panel, and Department of Family and Children Services. **If interventions are unsuccessful, a complaint shall be filed in the appropriate court of law.** Prior to any action to commence judicial proceedings to impose a penalty for violating this subsection on a parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children, a school system shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by certified mail, return receipt requested. Any and all interventions and contact will be documented in Infinite Campus.

1. **Parental Notification-** The Ware County School System will notify the parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of the student when such student has three (3), five (5), and seven (7) unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense.
2. **Notification by Mail-** After two reasonable attempts (via phone contacts or home visit) to notify the parent, guardian, or another person who has charge of the student, the Ware County School System will send a written notice via first class mail. The Ware County School System requires that all its public schools provide the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.
3. **Statement of Receipt-** By September 1 of the new school year or within thirty (30) school days of a student's enrollment in the Ware County School System, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in school must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.

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

Excessive Absences

The following provisions apply to absences during a school year:

1. Days students are absent due to out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused absences for the purposes of determining truancy (S.B.O.E. 160-5-1.10).
2. Unexcused Absences: After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused absences without response, the school shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by first class mail. The letter is to include a copy of the Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1).

Absences During Testing

Testing make-up days are allotted for students who have excused absences, including religious holidays, or those who have unexpected/unplanned absences. Re-testing must take place within the testing window.

Centralized Registration and Enrollment

Centralized Registration

Ware County Schools is committed to making the enrollment and registration process as efficient for families as possible by offering one central location for families to enroll all students at one time. Centralized Registration is located at the Ware County Board of Education, 1301 Bailey Street, in Waycross, GA.

Families who are enrolling for the first time or returning to the system can complete the registration process completely online by using a personal device or visiting one of our computer kiosks. Those who need assistance with the process are invited to make an appointment with a Registration Specialist.

Intradistrict transfers (moving within Ware County School zones) will be handled at the school level. Please visit the new school for which your address is zoned with a current proof of residence and be prepared to update the student's census information. Please contact the school your student will be attending if additional information is needed.

All students, whether they are new or returning, will complete census verification each year. This process is completed online using Infinite Campus Parent Portal, including, but not limited to, the student/parent handbook acknowledgement, Internet User Agreement, McKinney Vento, Occupational Survey, school and district Title I documents (Right to Know, Parent and Family Engagement, and School-Parent Compact), Opt Out of Clubs/Media, Compulsory Attendance law, and more.

Infinite Campus Portal

Ware County Schools value partnerships with our families and open communication regarding student progress. Infinite Campus Parent Portal is a tool for parents to remain engaged in their student's educational and academic progress. First-time users of the Parent Portal are required to create an account. Please visit www.ware.k12.ga.us > Menu > Community > Parent Portal > Parent Portal Account Creation. You will need one student's current grade level, 5-digit student number, the last four digits of the Social Security number, and date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy).

Infinite Campus Parent Portal includes:

1. Census Verification Annual Update- Update/verify household information and emergency contacts and verify/sign all required beginning-of-the-year paperwork (handbook, compulsory attendance, school and district Title I documents, Occupational Survey, McKinney Vento, and more).
*Must be completed annually by a parent or guardian in the household. Census Verification updates all students in the household using the same application.
2. View Progress reports, report cards, student grades for every assignment, and in-progress grades for every course.
3. View assignment information, including missing assignments.
4. View attendance.
5. View school and district announcements and more!

Enrollment Procedures

Students shall be admitted to a Ware County School provided they meet the requirements listed below:

1. The student and parent/guardian must reside in the school attendance zone.
2. A certified birth certificate (Certificate of Live Birth) must be presented when a child enrolls in kindergarten for the first time.
3. A child's complete Georgia Immunization Record is required.
4. Records from the last school attended should be presented. A student who attempts to enroll during the time in which that student is subject to disciplinary action from another school or school system may be refused enrollment until the original disciplinary action is fulfilled.
5. The school is authorized by Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-150(d)) to request the child's Social Security number to be used as a means of reporting student information to the Georgia Department of Education for funding or statistical purposes. No students shall be denied enrollment for failure to provide a Social Security number or for declining to apply for one. A parent or guardian may sign a form stating that the individual does not wish to provide a Social Security number and an alternate student number will be assigned. The student's Social Security number and an alternate student number will be assigned. The student's Social Security number will become part of the student's record to be treated with the same confidentiality as other student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
6. Proof of Residency is required upon enrollment to verify school attendance.
7. Enrollment of New Students from High-Risk Areas

Prior to enrollment, new families to Ware County Schools from areas or countries with travel advisories for the Coronavirus, as identified by the CDC or the US Department of State, should call 912-283-8656 or email Mandy Harper at mandy.harper@ware.k12.ga.us for further instructions. District administration will work with community health officials to determine the appropriate registration and attendance plan for those students. Families arriving from high-risk areas should not visit school or district facilities but should interact with the district by telephone or email.

Proof of Residence

To enroll in Ware County Schools, a student must reside in Ware County with a natural parent or legal guardian, or the student must be under the care of a state agency with placement in Ware County. Proof of residence is required when a student initially enrolls in a school, whenever a change of residence occurs, or anytime proof of residency is requested by a school official.

The principal or his/her designee will accept the following records as proof of residency:

1. A valid and current residential lease or rental agreement for property located in Ware County, Georgia, together with a *current electric* or gas bill or a letter from the utility provider verifying the existence of a current electric or gas account. The electric or gas bill or letter of service must be dated within the last sixty (60) days. The lease or rental agreement must identify the parent of the student as the tenant who is fiscally responsible for the payment of the lease. Parents listed as mere occupants of a stated residence are not considered tenants of the property for the purposes of enrollment. All records must include the name and street address of the parent and service addresses must be plainly visible on the electric or gas bill or letter of service provided as proof;

OR

2. A current residential property tax statement or settlement statement and a current electric or gas bill or letter of service from said company. The electric or gas bill or letter of service must be dated within the last sixty (60) days. Parents not listed in ownership documents who are willing to provide evidence of their legal relationship to the property owner may submit legal documents for consideration as an authorized representative of the titleholder. All records must include the name and street address of the parent, and service addresses must be plainly visible on the electric or gas bill or letter of service provided as proof;

OR

3. A Ware County Schools Affidavit of Residency. A parent who resides full time in Ware County but is unable to provide the consistent records listed above may complete a *Ware County Schools Affidavit of Residency*. The affidavit shall be completed in the presence of the Director of Student Services or assigned designee and signed by the parent in the presence of a notary public. In addition, the legal owner or authorized tenant of the property where the student and parent reside may complete and sign the affidavit with school system personnel and provide the documentation required as proof of residence as noted above in sections (1) and (2). The legal owner or authorized tenant of the property may also complete the affidavit and acquire notarization at another location, but it is the parent's responsibility to deliver the original paperwork and the required proof of residence as noted above in sections (1) and (2) to school system personnel along with their documentation. The affidavit will be in effect until the parent provides proof of residence as required by this policy, but no longer than the end of the current school year.

All such documents must be in the name of the student's parent and must consistently identify that individual with the property address of the residence.

Proof of residence is subject to investigation. Students enrolled under false information are illegally enrolled and will be withdrawn from school immediately. Parents/guardians may be charged tuition for the period of time their child is illegally enrolled. Knowingly and willfully providing false information regarding proof of residence violates state law and may subject one to fines and/or imprisonment. For additional information, please contact the Student Services Department.

Social Security Number

At the time of enrollment in Ware County Schools, parents are asked to voluntarily provide, a copy of the child's Social Security Card. However, no student shall be denied enrollment in Ware County School District for declining to provide a Social Security Number or declining to apply for such a number. A parent/guardian may submit a Statement of Objection (waiver) in lieu of a copy of the student's Social Security Card. Failure to provide the Social Security Card or Statement of Objection (waiver) will not bar or delay a child's enrollment in school; however, parents are strongly encouraged to read the uses of the Social Security number within the school system and make an educated decision as to whether or not to provide a Social Security Card. A list of the uses of the Social Security number and Statement of Objection (waiver) can be obtained at the school.

Physical Examination & Immunization

Upon initial enrollment in a Georgia public school, parents must provide a certificate that their child has completed a nutritional exam and an eye, ear, and dental examination (Georgia Form 3300). All new students enrolling into Ware County Schools (K-12) and all current students rising to the 6th grade must have obtained two (2) doses of the MMR (Measles and Mumps) and Varicella (Chicken Pox) vaccines. In addition, effective July 1, 2014, Georgia Law requires children born on or after January 1, 2002, and entering or transferring into 7th grade and new entrants into a Georgia school grades 8th through 12th to have received one dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine unless the child has an exemption. **Georgia law requires immunizations to be listed on the Georgia Certificate of Immunization.** Parents can obtain a Georgia Certificate of Immunization (**Georgia Form 3231**) from their physician or from the Ware County Health Department.

Parents may request, in writing, a temporary waiver of Georgia's immunization requirements for a justified reason, including, but not limited to, medical reasons and/or religious reasons. Parents requesting a temporary waiver based on medical reasons must provide the school district with a Georgia Certificate of Immunization (Georgia Form 3231) from the local board of health or treating physician certifying that immunization is undesirable. The medical exemption must be renewed yearly. Parents requesting a temporary waiver due to religious reasons must provide the school district with a sworn Affidavit of Religious Conflict with Immunization Requirements form.

Grade Placement

If acceptable documentation for determining grade placement is not presented at the time students are enrolled, **students will be temporarily assigned to a grade until a determination as to final grade placement** can be made. Students transferred from Home schools or unaccredited schools must take grade placement tests, which will be administered by the Ware County Board of Education.

Withdrawing from School

If it should become necessary to move out of your middle school district, you should inform your teachers and the guidance secretary at least three days before your last expected date at school. A parent/guardian must come to the school to make this withdrawal.

Administrators in the Ware County School System are authorized to withdraw a student who:

- Has missed more than ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absences (administrators need to make a valiant effort to determine cause(s) of absence;
- Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and
- Is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Attendance Office

Individual students who have situations necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must be present for one-half of the instruction day to be counted present for the day. However, the student will be counted absent from those classes that are missed due to the late arrival or early dismissal.

When a student is to be excused for a portion of the school day, the student shall be released only to a legal parent or guardian, to a person properly identified to school authorities, or upon written request or verified telephone call from the parents.

District Attendance Panel Meeting

As required by law, the Ware County Schools District Attendance Panel Protocol provides a progressive discipline, parental notification, and parental involvement process for truant students before referring the students and/or parents to state or other courts having jurisdiction. Excessive unexcused tardies/early checkouts may also be addressed through the same process.

Guidelines for the District Attendance Panel Protocol include but are not limited to, contact by mail or phone to parents at three (3), five (5), and seven (7) unexcused absences. Students who arrive to school late and check out (unexcused) may receive written notification from the school as to the possible consequences of their actions. At seven (7) unexcused absences or twenty (20) unexcused tardies/early checkouts, parents may be required to attend a District Attendance Panel Meeting at the Ware County Schools Administrative Offices.

Although the above guidelines are generally progressive in nature, Ware County Schools reserves the right to refer students and their parents to the District Attendance Panel Meeting or court prosecution at any time, especially when a student and/or parent's conduct is non-compliant and/or disruptive to the learning environment.

Make-up Work

Students are responsible for planning to receive missed assignments. Assignments with a due date that occurs during a student's absence should be turned in immediately upon a student's return to school.

Students should complete assignments in a timely manner; the teacher has the discretion to lower the student's grade if assignments are not turned in a timely manner. A student has three (3) days to make up work for each day missed, up to a maximum of fourteen calendar days. If a student is absent on test day and has missed no instruction, he/she should be prepared to make up the test on the day he/she returns.

Absences due to suspension from school are considered unexcused. Students assigned out-of-school suspension (OSS) will be allowed to make up work upon return to school.

School Activities- If a student is out of class to participate in a school function, he/she is not counted absent. The student should check with the teacher ahead of time for the assignment and have the assignments ready upon returning to school unless directed otherwise by the teacher.

Perfect Attendance

A student qualifies for Perfect Attendance Awards when he/she has not been absent.

Full School Day

To be marked present for the full school day, a student must be in attendance for one-half or more of the school day.

Rewards for Good Attendance

Countywide recognition for good attendance comes in the form of rewards. Individual schools may offer various incentives to students for good attendance.

Tardiness- Per Semester

A student is tardy when he or she enters the classroom after the tardy bell rings. The accumulation of unexcused tardies will warrant disciplinary action.

Tardy to school- students who are late to school must sign in at the front office. Parents must be present to sign their students into school if tardy.

- 1st -6th unexcused tardy- warning
- 7th -11th unexcused tardy- detention
- 12th & above unexcused tardy- ISS

Tardy to class- unexcused- any tardy without a teacher's note

- 1st tardy to class- warning issued by the teacher
- 2nd tardy to class- 10-minute detention served with teacher and parent contacted
- 3rd tardy to class- lunch detention (teacher assigns)
- 4th tardy to class- referral to administration

Notification and Discipline Consequences for Unexcused Tardiness

- As soon as possible after the third (3rd) tardy, designated school personnel shall send written notification of the number of tardies to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) reminding them of the importance of regular attendance.
- As soon as possible after the seventh (7th) tardy, the designated school personnel shall send written notification of the number of tardies to the student, parent(s) or guardian(s) expressing concern about the impact of excessive tardies on the student's education.
- As soon as possible after the twelfth (12th) tardy, designated school personnel shall notify the Community Service Provider, who will make parent contact by way of phone or home visit in an attempt to eliminate tardies.
- As soon as possible after the twentieth (20th) tardy, designated school personnel shall notify the school counselor, who will schedule the parent for the Attendance Review Panel.
- When a student reaches twelve (12) unexcused tardies, the student may receive ISS.

Thrillshare

Thrillshare is a communication software product available at both middle schools. It serves many roles in communicating with parents about school. Therefore, it is vital that the office be notified if your telephone number changes. The system will record whether the call was delivered, interrupted, or unanswered and will provide a written record should any questions arise. Messages about upcoming events, school fines, and information concerning any group on a school trip can be communicated to your home. The superintendent, under the advisement of the Board of Education Chairman or Vice-Chairman, may close, delay opening, or order early or late dismissal of schools in the event of hazardous weather, epidemics, or other emergencies that threaten the safety or health of students or staff members.

Parental Notification of Student Withdrawal

The principal or his/her designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance. The school system is authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the local superintendent or the superintendent's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system and the school has received a request for records that the student is enrolled in a public, private, or home study program.

McKinney-Vento

The term “homeless children and youths” is defined as provided in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (the Act).

In accordance with the Act, every child of a homeless individual and every homeless child or youth shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students. The District shall assign and admit a child or youth who is homeless to a District school regardless of residence or whether the parent or student is able to produce records normally required for enrollment. The Superintendent shall appoint a liaison for homeless children and youths.

The School District will work with homeless children and youths and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths not currently attending school in a manner that will not stigmatize or segregate them on the basis of their status as homeless. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including transportation services, Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I and similar state or local programs, educational programs for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, career and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs. Appropriate secondary education and support services will be provided to ensure that homeless youths receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

The Superintendent or designee will review and revise as necessary regulations or procedures that may be barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths. In reviewing and revising such regulations or procedures, the District will consider issues of transportation, immunization, residence, birth certificates, transfer of school records, and other documents required for enrollment.

Anyone having a concern or complaint regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a homeless child or youth should first present it orally and informally to the District homeless liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as defined in the state plan for the education of homeless children and youths.

Any student who attends the Ware County School System and has been identified as homeless will be provided district services for which they are eligible to include the following:

- Immediate enrollment into school
- Assistance with obtaining records; birth certificates, school records immunizations, proof of residency, etc.
- Transportation to and from the school based on the student’s address, or the school of origin should the student have to move during the school year the student qualified for McKinney Vento services
- Access to all services received by their non-homeless counterparts
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness, segregation based on a student’s status as homeless is prohibited
- Assistance with school supplies
- Assistance with tutoring, special education, and English language learner resources.
- Assist student so they can participate in sports, field trips, and school activities regardless of their ability to pay or provide their own transportation.

- Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, and similar state and local programs, educational programs for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, career and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.
- Appropriate secondary education and support services will be provided to ensure that homeless youths receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

If after enrollment, it is determined that a student is not homeless as defined in the law, the school district will follow the policies that are in place to address other forms of fraud.

Overview

The law indicates that the LEA liaison shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through the coordination of activities with other entities and agencies.
- Homeless children and youth enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools of the LEA.
- Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which such families, children and youth are eligible, including preschool programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
- The parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where such children and teens receive services under this Act, such as schools and family shelters.
- The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that the youth has a right to attend.

What is Homelessness?

For local schools to comply with legislation related to serving student experiencing homelessness, they must identify eligible students. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth (twenty-one years of age and younger) as:

1. Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; includes-
 - a. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - b. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - c. Children and youth who are living in cars, or substandard housing;
 - d. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Frequently Used Terms

Unaccompanied youth – including youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include youth living on the streets, or in other inadequate housing and children or youth denied housing by their families a school-age unwed mother. They have the same rights as other students experiencing homelessness to enroll, attend, and succeed in public school The primary causes of homelessness among unaccompanied youth are physical and sexual abuse by a parent or guardian, neglect, parental substance abuse, and family conflict.

Doubled up – children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons (family/friends) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, similar reasons. Usually, these families are in jeopardy of losing this temporary living situation at any time. They are not on the lease/mortgage and household living items are not accompanying the family. If these families were not allowed to stay with family/friends they would possibly be in shelters or motels.

Shelters – a place of temporary residency for homeless persons

Hotels/Motels – an establishment providing accommodations usually lodging that is considered weekly rate housing

Substandard housing – without electricity, water, or heat

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Sandra Osburn, Homeless Liaison, at 912-238-8656.

Code of Conduct- For All Middle School Students in the Ware County Schools

It is the purpose of the Ware County School District to operate each school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend the schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, the Ware County Board of Education has adopted a policy that requires all schools to adopt codes of conduct that require students to conduct themselves at all times in order to facilitate a learning environment for themselves and other students. These standards for behavior require students to respect each other and school district employees, to obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board, and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within the district.

The school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations, and rules set forth in this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school activity, function, or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system.

Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus that is felonious or that may pose a threat to the school's learning environment or the safety of students and employees.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

Authority of the Principal

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures that he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

Parental Involvement- Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers, and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communication through personal contacts is extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as ongoing opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

Parents and students should contact the principal of the school if specific questions arise related to the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct specifies within its standards of behavior various violations of the Code which may result in a school staff member's request that a parent or guardian come to the school for a conference. Parents are encouraged to visit the schools regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and behavior.

Georgia law mandates that any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call to the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite the parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

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

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

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior will, reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. All Ware County Schools implement a site-based PBIS framework that is specific to their site.

Behavior Which Will Result in Disciplinary Procedures

The degree of discipline imposed will be in accordance with the progressive discipline process.

- **Possession, purchase of, sale, use in any amount, distribution, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, a hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverage, or another intoxicant.** *Penalty as prescribed by Ware County Board of Education policy: A recommendation for suspension for the remainder of the semester and loss of credit for coursework shall be made to a disciplinary tribunal. For a first offence, the building administrator may, but is not required to, reduce the suspension to 10 days if the student seeks an evaluation from a board-approved intervention or treatment program and follows the recommendations of the program.*
- **Possession, distribution, purchase of, attempted sale, or sale of substances represented as drugs or alcohol.** *Same penalty as described above.*
- **Sale, attempted sale, purchase of, distribution of a student, or being under the influence of a prescription, or over-the-counter drug.** *The procedures for such medications at school are listed in the student handbook.*
- **Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous instrument: A student shall not possess, use, handle, or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon.** *Students who possess firearms or materials, i.e., bullets, shotgun shells, etc., on campus, will be subject to a minimum of one calendar year suspension and will be referred to law enforcement officials. Ware County Board of Education policy prohibits all knives of any blade length and toy weapons.*
- **Assault, including threats of bodily harm and/or sexual assault, of teachers, administrators, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.** *Immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon teacher or other school personnel; possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.*
- **Battery, including sexual battery, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.** *Immediate suspension and automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon teacher or other school personnel. As required by section code 20-2-752, an alleged violation of the student code of conduct where the principal recommends a suspension or expulsion longer than ten school days or an alleged assault or battery by a student of upon any teacher or other school official or employee, if such teacher or other school official or employee so requests. Possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon another student or a person attending a school-related function. If a tribunal determines that a student has committed an act of physical violence resulting in substantial physical injury to a teacher, state law provides for the suspension of the student from all public-school programs, including alternative education programs for the remainder of the school quarter or semester.*
- **Fighting**
- **Disrespectful conduct toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.**
- **Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature.**

- **Damaging or defacing personal property or school property (vandalism)** *State law provide for referral to a disciplinary tribunal for substantial damages alleged to be intentionally caused by a student on school premises to personal property belonging to a teacher, other school official, employee, or student, if, in the discretion of the school principal, the alleged damage could justify the expulsion or long-term suspension of the student.*
- **Theft**
- **Extortion or attempted extortion**
- **Possession and/or use of fireworks or any explosive**
- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat**
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives; disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff**
- **Classroom and school disturbances**
- **Bus misbehavior**
- **Violation of school dress code**
- **Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words (spoken or written) or indecent exposure**
- **Usage during school hours of pocket pager, cell phone or electronic communication device, except for health or other unusual reasons approved by the Board of Education**
- **Inappropriate public displays of affection**
- **Inciting, advising, or counseling of others engaged in prohibited acts will be subject to disciplinary action.**
- **Gambling or possession of gambling devices.**
- **Giving false information to school officials or altering school documents.**
- **Cheating on school assignments**
- **Unexcused absence, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission.**
- **Rules for attendance, tardiness, and checkout procedures are in the student handbook.**
- **Being in an unauthorized area**
- **Bullying** *Georgia law mandates that upon a finding that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall, at a minimum, be assigned to an alternative school.*
- **Criminal law violations** *A student who has committed a violation of the criminal laws and whose presence on the school campus may endanger the safety of other students or cause substantial disruption to the school operation may be subject to disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, short-term suspension and referral to a disciplinary tribunal.*

O.C.G.A. 20-2-738 – The Superintendent shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom, including establishing and disseminating procedures. Local board policy shall require the filing of a report by a teacher documenting a student’s violation of the student code of conduct which repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher’s ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student’s classmates to learn within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior. The report shall be filed with the principal or principal’s designee, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or principal’s designee shall, within one day of receiving such report, send to the student’s parents or guardians a copy of the report, and information regarding how the principal or principal’s designee may be contacted. The principal or principal’s designee shall send written notification to the teacher and to the student’s parents or guardians of the student support services being utilized or the disciplinary action taken within one school day and shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm receipt of such written notification by the student’s parents or guardians. Written notification shall include information regarding how the student’s parents or guardians may contact the principal or principal’s designee.

Definition of Terms

Assault: Any serious threat or attempt to physically harm another person or any act that reasonably places another person in fear of physical harm. (Example: threatening language or swinging at someone in an attempt to strike)

Battery: Intentionally making physical contact with another person in an insulting, offensive, or provoking manner or in a way that physically harms the other person (Example: when one physically attacks or “beats up on” another person). This term should be used only when the intent is to do bodily harm and the attack is serious enough to warrant calling law enforcement or bringing in security.

Bullying: In accordance with Georgia law, bullying is defined as (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:

- a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
- b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education;
- c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school?

Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student: A student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics that interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur.

Corporal Punishment: Physical punishment of a student by a school official in the presence of another school official.

Detention: A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after school. Students are given one day's warning so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.

Disciplinary Tribunal: A panel of three school officials appointed by the Board of Education to sit as fact finders and judges with respect to student disciplinary matters.

Dress Code: The current dress code is explained in the student handbook.

Drug: The term drug does not include prescriptions issued to the individual, aspirin or similar medications and/or cold medications that are taken according to product use recommendations and board policy. Caffeine pills are considered drugs. All medications that are to be taken at school must be brought by an adult (parent) to the appropriate staff person responsible for administering them in containers clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication and the appropriate dosage.

Expulsion: Suspension of a student from a public school beyond the current school quarter or semester. Only a disciplinary tribunal may take such action.

Extortion: Obtaining money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

Fighting: Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and no major injury. This term does not include verbal confrontations, tussles, or other minor confrontations.

Fireworks: The term "fireworks" means any combustible or explosive composition or any substance of combination of substances or articles prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation, as well as articles containing any explosive or flammable compound and tablets and other devices containing an explosive substance.

Gambling: Engaging in a game or contest in which the outcome is dependent upon chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value.

In-School Suspension: Removal of a student from class(es) or regular school program and assignment of that student to an alternative program isolated from peers. A student assigned to ISS will not be able to attend any school function or participate in any extracurricular activity (athletic practice or competition, band, etc.) on the days for which he/she is assigned ISS.

Search and seizure: Students and parents are hereby notified that school officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Student book bags, purses, school lockers, desks, and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags or lockers. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities that occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus, at the discretion of administrators.

Suspension: Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed 10 days (short-term) or for a period greater than 10 days (long-term, which may be imposed only by a disciplinary tribunal). During the period of suspension, the student is excluded from all school-sponsored activities including practices, competitive events, and/or activities sponsored by the school or its employees. For the purposes of the districtwide attendance protocol, suspensions shall not be considered unexcused absences. Any student who serves a short-term suspension out of school shall be allowed to make up missed assignments and tests. It shall be the student's responsibility to obtain the missed work from the teacher(s) and complete the work within three (3) days of returning to school.

Theft: The offense of taking or misappropriating any property, of another with the intention of depriving that person of the property, regardless of the manner in which the property is taken or appropriated.

Waiver: A waiver is an agreement not to contest whether a student has committed an infraction of the Code of Conduct and the acceptance of consequences in lieu of a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal.

Ware County's Alternative Program: Ware County alternative education program will provide instructional and support services for chronic disciplinary problem students in grades 6-12 whose behavioral characteristics have been detrimental to the educational process of the student(s) or to the safe and orderly operation of the school. It is the preferred policy of the Ware County Board of Education that disruptive students are placed in an alternative educational setting in lieu of being suspended long term or expelled.

Weapons: The term weapon is defined as any object that is or may be used to inflict bodily injury or to place another in fear for personal safety or well-being. The following things may be defined as dangerous weapons: any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind; any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapons; any stun gun or taser; bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any dirk, any other knife, straight-edge razor or razor blade; spring stick, metal knuckles, chains, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nunchaku, or fighting chain, throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind.

Cumulative Discipline Offenses

These offenses have been identified as major misbehaviors that are grossly detrimental to the orderly school process. These offenses will be tracked for the student's entire middle school career:

- Physical Assault or Battery on Teachers, Administrators, and other school personnel
- Physical Assault or Battery of other Students
- Fighting
- Illegal Substances
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Beepers or Electronic Communication Devices
- Pepper/Mace Spray
- Tobacco/e-cigarette
- Sexual Harassment/Sexual Misconduct
- Weapons

Progressive Discipline Procedures

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a **progressive discipline process**. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will consider the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

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

Classroom teachers have the authority and responsibility to handle minor acts of misconduct, which interfere with orderly classroom procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, or a student's own learning process. Teachers and other professional staff members may use discipline management techniques appropriate for the situation, which include, but are not limited to, detention, loss of privileges, isolation, parent conference, or assignment of the development of a written or graphic representation that reflects the understanding of the specific misbehavior, the nature of the expected behavior, and/or the related character trait.

The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with classroom behavior. The bus driver is responsible for the safety of all who ride the bus, and students are expected to comply with instructions given by the bus driver. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats, either temporarily or permanently, and to establish rules for safety and proper behavior on the bus. Bus students are not to leave the school grounds before or after school without permission.

The following disciplinary actions may be imposed by school administrators for any violation of this Code of Conduct:

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Notification of Parents
- Loss of Privileges
- Isolation or Time Out
- Temporary Removal from Class or Activity
- Parent Conference
- Corporal Punishment
- Detention/Saturday School/Community Service
- Short-term Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials.
- Parents, if you do not wish corporal punishment to be administered to your child, please file a letter with the principal stating your desires within the first ten (10) days after the beginning of each school term.

The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

Appropriate disciplinary action is based on the level of offense for each referral. However, a referral to the alternative school can be made at any time after a student has been placed on a discipline contract.

Disciplinary Hearing (Tribunal)

The Disciplinary Hearing Officer as appointed by the Ware County Board of Education, is authorized to hear disciplinary matters. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary here within, the Disciplinary Officer has the authority to select an appropriate panel for tribunals. The decision of the tribunals can be a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion of any student found to have violated the Code of Conduct. If a hearing is called, the student will be suspended from school until the tribunal can be held. The tribunal will be scheduled within then (10) school days after the beginning of the suspension unless the parent and school mutually agree to an extension or the conduct of the student or parent cause a delay beyond said ten (10) day period.

Prior to the tribunal, students and parents will receive a notice to include the following:

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

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

At the hearing, students and parents will have the right to present witnesses and evidence, to examine any and all witnesses presented, and to have an attorney, at the parent's expense, to represent the student. The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer may be appealed by submitting a written noticed of appeal to the Superintendent within twenty (20) calendar days from the date the decision is made.

A student disciplinary hearing is formal, although the strict rules of evidence as applied in a court do not apply in a disciplinary tribunal hearing. The panel selected by the Disciplinary Hearing Officer will determine the innocence or guilt of a student accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct. The local board of education shall ensure initially trained student disciplinary hearing officers and disciplinary tribunal or panel members undergo continuing education so as to continue to serve in such capacity.

The local board of education shall observe Georgia law in developing and implementing disciplinary hearings held by a disciplinary hearing officer, disciplinary panel, or disciplinary tribunal pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-751 through 20-2-759 including the ability to honor disciplinary orders of private schools and other public schools/systems pursuant to O.C.G.A 20-2-751.2.

The discipline plan infractions listed on the following pages are aligned with the state discipline matrix. The administration makes the determinations of the category and level. At the administrator's discretion, ISS at Ware County Learning Center may be substituted for OSS assignments.

Middle Schools in Ware County Discipline Plan- Level of Offenses

Level	Infraction	Referral	Disposition
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer trespassing (minor-internet use without permission, games, social networking sites, non-instructional without teacher permission) (33) Profanity, obscene words, gestures, or materials (Minor) (33) 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense 4 th Offense 5 th Offense 6 th Offense	1 day ISS or SAT School 1 day ISS or SAT School ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days OSS- 2 days OSS 3 days/behavior contract
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disorderly Conduct- creating or contributing to a mild disturbance that disrupts the normal operation of the school or classroom. It may include horse playing, mild profanity, inappropriate gestures, or materials. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense 4 th Offense 5 th Offense 6 th Offense	SAT School/1 day ISS SAT School/1 day ISS ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days/Behavior Contract
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Incivility- insubordination or use of inappropriate language not directed toward school staff; might include disrespect, disregard of directions 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense 4 th Offense 5 th Offense 6 th Offense	SAT School/1 day ISS SAT School/1 day ISS ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days/Behavior Contract
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gum or food violation (33) 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense & following	Lunch Det/Detention- 2 days Lunch Det/Detention- Week ISS/Saturday School
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possession/use of electronic device 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense & following	The device taken, turned into the office and must be picked up by a parent/guardian. Device taken, turned into office, held 7 calendar days, must be picked up by a parent/guardian.
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism (32) 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense & following	ZERO and P/C ZERO and ISS- 2 days ZERO and ISS- 3 days and Parent Conference
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery- intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in no bodily injuries 	1st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 1 day OSS- 3 days Move to Level 3

Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fighting- a physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in no bodily injuries (mutual participation). 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 3 days OSS- 5 days OSS- 7 days/ Level 3
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larceny/Theft- the unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$0 and \$20. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 3 days ISS- 5 days OSS- 2 days
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Harassment- comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes or suggestive jokes that are not directed towards specific individuals. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 1 day OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Offenses- inappropriate public displays of affection (PDA), public groping, or inappropriate bodily contact. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days OSS- 1 day
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying- first offense of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4. 	1 st Offense	ISS- 3 days
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Related- repeated or <u>excessive unexcused</u> absences or tardies; including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving class without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 1 day ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possession of Unapproved Items- the possession of very unauthorized item. This does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 1 day ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alteration/Forgery misrepresentation on school forms (33) 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 1 day ISS- 2 days ISS- 3 days
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arson- attempt to commit arson or transporting or possessing incendiary devices to school; includes but is not limited to the use of fireworks. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense	OSS- 5 days OSS- 10 days/Hearing
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disorderly Conduct- creating or contributing to the moderate disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 3 days ISS- 5 days OSS- 1 day

	<p>environment but does not pose a threat to the health or safety of others; may represent a repeat action such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leaving campus without permission - Poppers and stink bombs - Rude and disrespectful behavior (major) - Use of profane, vulgar or obscene language or gestures (major towards student) - Inciting or videoing a fight or other major school disruption 		
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaging school employee private property (20) 	<p>1st Offense 2nd Offense</p>	<p>OSS- 5 days & restitution OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing</p>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4, teasing, racial, sexually abusive comments towards another student (no contact contract) (29) cyberbullying 	<p>1st Offense 2nd Offense 3rd Offense</p>	<p>ISS- 3 days OSS- 3 days OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing</p>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Trespassing- viewing messages or images containing pornography or obscene language 	<p>1st Offense 2nd Offense 3rd Offense</p>	<p>OSS- 3 days OSS- 5 days</p>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gang-Related (35)- any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire that engage in criminal activity. • Offense- Wearing of possessing gang-related apparel; communicating either verbally or non-verbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang. 	<p>1st Offense 2nd Offense 3rd Offense</p>	<p>ISS- 3 days OSS- 3 days OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing</p>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gambling on school property or at a school function (33) 	<p>1st Offense 2nd Offense 3rd Offense 4th Offense</p>	<p>ISS- 3 days OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing</p>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISS Disruption 	<p>1st Offense 2nd Offense 3rd Offense 4th Offense & following</p>	<p>OSS- 1 day OSS- 2 days OSS- 2 days OSS- 2 days</p>

Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession or use of tobacco paraphernalia or tobacco products, or tobacco product substitute(s), e-cigarette or e-cigarette look-alikes, hookahs and hookah look-alikes, vapes, and juuls. Counseling recommended and/or administrator may require. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense & subsequent Offenses	OSS- 1 day OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal to relinquish an electronic device upon request. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense & following	ISS- 2 days ISS- 1 day OSS- 2 days & possible behavior contract
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs except alcohol and tobacco- any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense	ISS- 3 days OSS- 3 days
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting- a physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 5 days OSS- 7 days Move to Level 3
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larceny/Theft- the unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value up to \$250. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 5 days OSS- 7 days Move to Level 3
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Harassment (15) – Non-physical and unwelcome sexual advances, lewd gestures or verbal conduct, or communication of a sexual nature; request for sexual favors; gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment. • Offense- comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes, suggestive jokes, or lewd gestures that are directed towards specific individuals or groups of individuals. • Examples: Includes but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes; leering. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 3 days OSS- 5 days OSS- 10 days

Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Offenses (16) – unlawful sexual behavior, sexual contact without force or threat of force, or possession of sexually explicit images; can be consensual Offense- inappropriate sexually-based behavior including but not limited to sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts: Examples: sexting; lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 3 days OSS- 5 days OSS- 10 days
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threat/Intimidation – physical, verbal, or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense	OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trespassing – entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days Move to Level 3
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vandalism – participating in the minor destruction, damage, or defacement of school property or private property without permission. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ISS- 3 days/Restitution OSS- 2 days/Restitution Move to Level 3
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons (knife) – possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate 	1 st Offense	OSS 10 days/hearing
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons (other) – possession of a weapon, other than a knife or firearm, or a simile of a weapon that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. 	1 st Offense	OSS 10 days/hearing
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Dishonesty – intentional plagiarism or cheating on a minor classroom assignment or project. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	ZERO and ISS- 1 day ZERO and ISS- 2 days ZERO and ISS- 3 days (Parent Conference)
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Incivility – blatant insubordination or the use of inappropriate language directed towards school staff or peers; intentional misrepresentation of the truth. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 5 days OSS- 7 days Move to Level 3

Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to Identify / False ID 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days OSS- 5 days
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol – violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages, or substances represented as alcohol. Alcohol – possession of alcohol and/or under the influence. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threat/Intimidation – physical, verbal, or electronic threat which creates fear of harm including displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Fire Alarm (33) 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arson – intentional damage as a result of arson-related activity or the use of an incendiary device. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assault of School Employee (03) 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery (03) – intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack on school personnel; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on battery three or more times during the same school year. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breaking and Entering 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Trespassing (MAJOR) – any person who uses a computer or computer network with knowledge that such use is without authority and with the intention of: Cyber Bullying, Altering or Damaging the computer network, or computer program, sending messages or images containing pornography or obscene language, change or vandalize files or data of others, computer invasion, computer forgery, or computer password disclosure. (05) 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Law Violations 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorderly Conduct – creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the school environment or poses a threat to the health and safety of others. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on disorderly conduct three or more times during the same school year. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs except alcohol and tobacco – unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics or under the influence. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evade- School personnel (35) • Failure to comply with Search & Seizure 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homicide • Kidnapping (10) 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indecent Exposure, Sex Acts (16) 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larceny Theft, Theft (11) – the unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value exceeding \$250. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on larceny/theft three or more times during the same school year. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major School Disruption (33) • Molestation or Rape, Sexual Battery (16) • Robbery Extortion (13) (<i>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.</i>) 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tobacco – distribution and/or selling of tobacco, or tobacco product substitute(s), e-cigarette or e-cigarette look-alikes, hookah or hookah look-alikes; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on tobacco/e-cigarettes three or more times during the same school year. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense 4 th Offense & following	OSS- 2 days OSS- 3 days OSS- 3 days OSS- 5 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gang-Related (35) – any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire that engage in criminal activity. Offense – the solicitation of others for gang membership, the defacing of school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans, threatening or intimidating on behalf of a gang, the requirement or payment for protection or insurance through a gang. <i>It should be used for students who display a pattern of violating any other person related to gang activity.</i> 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fighting (08) – a physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in severe bodily injuries. Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on fighting three or more times during the same school year. 	1 st Offense 2 nd Offense 3 rd Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Harassment (15) – physical or non-physical and sexual advances; requests for sexual favors, Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on sexual harassment three or more times during the same school year. Examples: see above. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Offenses (16) – engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or during school activities. Examples – oral, anal, or vaginal penetration; pimping; prostitution; indecent exposure of private body parts. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Dishonesty – intentional plagiarism or cheating on a major exam, statewide assessment or project, or the falsification of school records (including forgery) 	3 rd Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying – repeated acts, as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4, occurring on school property or school possession that is a willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, or apparent means to do so, any display of force that puts the victim in fear of harm, any written, verbal, or physical act that threatens, harasses, or intimidates; causes another person physical harm; interferes with a student’s education; so severe and pervasive intimidated or threatens the educational environment. 	3 rd Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Firearms – intentional or unintentional possession or use of any firearms other than rifle, shotgun, or handguns (including starter pistols) and any other destructive device which includes explosives. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious Bodily Injury – infliction of “bodily harm” that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes a substantial risk of death. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Incivility – blatant and repeated insubordination or intentional misrepresentation of the truth; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing

	violating the school policy related to student incivility.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vandalism – participation in the willful/malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of school property or private property without permission; Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on vandalism three or more times during the same school year. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons (knife) – intentional possession, use or intention to use a knife or knife-like item with the intent to harm or intimidate. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons (other) – intentional possessions and use of any weapon, other than a knife or firearm, in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons (handgun/rifle/shotgun) – intentional or unintentional possession or use of a handgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. 	1 st Offense	OSS- 10 days/Tribunal Hearing

The administration always reserves the right to meet and agree on dispositions when punishment is not based on a school discipline plan.

The penalties listed above are general guidelines. Therefore, at the administrator's discretion, more or less severe punishment may be applied, e.g., such as criminal charges may be used in extreme cases.

Detention

An administrator or teacher may assign a student detention as a result of being tardy to class or as a result of a school rule violation.

Saturday School Detention

The administrative team may offer Saturday School as an alternative to suspension. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from Saturday School and should pick up their child promptly at the designated dismissal time. Students are expected to be respectful and follow all school rules.

Community Service

Community Service may be used as a method of dealing with a behavior infraction. Students assigned to community service will take part in beautifying the school and campus under the supervision of a staff member.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

In-school suspension will be used as one method of dealing with disruptive behavior. Students are assigned to ISS by an administrator. This disciplinary procedure allows students to be counted present at school but isolates them from daily school activities. Students follow a strict classroom work schedule in which they are required to complete assignments from their regular classroom teachers and the in-school suspension teacher. Students are isolated from all other students throughout the day and are restricted from participation in all athletic and other extra-curricular activities from the time they report to ISS until the end of school on their last day of ISS. Students may participate in athletics or extracurricular activities in the afternoon or evening of their last day of ISS. ISS classes are held on campus. Students must obey all ISS rules or out-of-assignment before returning to the regular classroom.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

A principal or assistant principal may suspend a student out of school for violation of school rules or for any other act of misconduct or insubordination for a period not exceeding ten (10) school days.

In-School and Out-of-School Rules for Students

A student assigned to ISS or OSS by an administrator for school rule violations must comply with the following regulations:

1. The parents will be notified if at all possible at the time of the disciplinary action and/or before the student is to return to school.
2. The student is prohibited from taking part in any school-sponsored activity from the time the suspension begins until the end of school on their last day of ISS.
3. The student may **NOT** participate as a member of an extracurricular team or group from the time the suspension begins until the end of school on their last day of ISS.
4. Students assigned to ISS should report directly to the ISS instructor/classroom. Any student assigned to ISS who is found loitering inside the main school building may be subject to further disciplinary action.
5. When a student is assigned to ISS, the student may **NOT** return to the classroom until **ALL** assigned ISS days are served and **ALL** work assigned during ISS is completed.
6. Students who do not receive permission from the school administration to be on campus during OSS will be subject to Trespassing charges.
7. Students suspended from Out-of-School (OSS) will be allowed to make up schoolwork. It shall be the student's responsibility to initiate the make-up work process at the convenience of the teacher(s).

Before a student is suspended for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. ***If the student is suspended, the student's parents will be notified if possible.*** School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence surrounding a situation necessitates their involvement or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal as outlined in the Ware County Board of Education policies.

In the event that a student is referred to a disciplinary tribunal, parents or the student may elect not to contest whether the student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or student waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved also by the tribunal facilitator from the superintendent's office.

Gang Related Activity

The Board recognizes the harm done by the presence and activities of gangs in the public schools exceed the immediate consequences of such activities such as violence and destruction of property. Gang activities also create an atmosphere of intimidation in the entire school community. Both the immediate consequences of gang activity and the secondary effects are disruptive and obstructive to the process of education and school activities. It is therefore the policy of the Board of Education that gangs and gang activities are prohibited in the Ware County School System, according to the following:

- a. *Definition:* For purposes of this policy, a "gang" is any group of two or more persons whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts or acts in violation of disciplinary rules of the school district. "Gang Related Activity" includes but is not limited to the prohibited conduct set forth below.
- b. *Prohibitions:* No student on or about school property or at any school activity shall:
 - Wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other items that evidences or reflects membership in or affiliation with any gang;
 - Engage in any act, either verbal or nonverbal, including gestures or handshakes, showing membership or affiliation with any gang.
 - Engage in any act in furtherance of the interests of any gang or gang activity, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Soliciting membership in, or affiliation with, any gang;
 - ii. Soliciting any person to pay for "protection," or threatening any person, explicitly or implicitly, with violence or with any other illegal or prohibited act;
 - iii. Painting, writing, or otherwise inscribing gang-related graffiti, messages, symbols, or signs, on school property;
 - iv. Engaging in violence, extortion, or any other illegal act or other violation of school policy;
 - v. Soliciting any person to engage in physical violence against any other person.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide professional development training that helps staff to identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately to gang behavior. Staff shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources.

Violations of Policy: Students who violate this policy shall be subject to the full range of school disciplinary measures, in addition to applicable criminal and civil penalties.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress and groom themselves in such a way as to reflect high standards of neatness, cleanliness, and good taste. All students should be modestly dressed **and** in a manner that does not disrupt the operation of the school anywhere in the building or in the classroom. **Administrators will decide of appropriate dress in the case of any uncertainty or dispute.** (The athletic department will determine the appropriate dress for students involved directly in a physical education class.)

ACCEPTABLE

- Students shall give proper attention to personal cleanliness and neatness of dress.
- Shirts/blouses/dresses/tops with or without sleeves.
- Backless shoes except for rubber shower shoes.
- **Pants/skirts worn at the natural waistline.**
- **Knee-length shorts/skirts/dresses** cannot be shorter than 4 inches (large index card 4x6 held horizontally) above the knee while standing.
- Piercings must not impair or disrupt the educational environment.
- **Leggings-** shirts must cover front end and back end and come to mid-thigh. No mesh, see through, or flesh tone leggings are allowed. Undergarments cannot show through leggings.
- **Joggers are permissible.** No sleepwear or see-through joggers.
- **Jeans with rips above the knee,** must not show any skin or undergarments underneath rips. (Can wear leggings underneath.) Pants with **large holes are not permissible.** Discretion will be used by administration or designee when holes are created accidentally.

UNACCEPTABLE

- Hats, athletic headbands, bandanas, or any other headgear.
- Combs/picks/curlers
- Outerwear (jackets, hoodies, etc.) with no school appropriate shirt underneath.
- See-through garments (if sheer top is worn, then under shirt must completely meet school dress code)
- Halter tops/tube tops/crop tops/tank tops/racer back tops/spaghetti straps
- Muscle shirts
- Low-cut/revealing tops or blouses
- Visible undergarments
- Vulgar and/or inappropriate designs and language
- Mini-skirts/dresses
- Gang-related attire or identifying features
- Pajamas, bedroom shoes, soft rubber shower shoes
- Sagging pants, baggy pants
- **Any other extreme in dress that is deemed inappropriate by the administration.**
- Any clothing fad, article of clothing, or non-traditional manner of wearing clothing that is distractive of the instructional process and/or the routine operation of the school.

Administrative Principal's Judgment:

- Clothing considered inappropriate because of tightness.
- Writing on clothing that is considered vulgar or in bad taste.
- Any clothing, jewelry, or style which tends to create a disturbance on campus.

Students will be given three options to correct the violation:

1. Borrow or change into clothes that will comply with the dress code.
2. Wait in ISS UNTIL PROBLEM IS CORRECTED. The student will call home for someone to deliver to the school the appropriate attire for the student (unexcused absence from class while waiting in the ISS).
3. Check out to go home to change into attire that will comply with the dress code (unexcused absence).

STUDENT MUST REMAIN IN ISS UNTIL VIOLATION IS CORRECTED.

School Policies & Procedures

Accidents

Every accident in the school building, on the school grounds, at practice sessions, or at any athletic event sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the person in charge and to the school office. Parents are encouraged to purchase accident insurance at the beginning of the school year.

Athletic Eligibility

- All first year sixth graders are eligible for the first semester. Seventh and eighth graders must have met promotion requirements to be eligible for the first semester.
- Second-semester eligibility for all students is determined by first-semester grades. Students must:
 - Pass Mathematics and two out of three required academic courses (Science, ELA, SS)
 - Must pass 75% of Connection courses
 - Students who do not meet all of the above criteria and other local criteria shall be referred to the Retention Review Committee.

Students are ineligible for the 2024-2025 school year if:

- They have been retained;
- They have been academically placed; or
- They have an outstanding balance due (i.e. books, media, pictures).
- Participation may resume once the balance is paid in full.
- Summer school classes will count toward athletic eligibility.
- A student must be counted present the entire day at school on the day of participation or Friday if the activity is on Saturday unless a school official has approved otherwise.
- Students cannot participate, practice, or play until they have fully completed their ISS or OSS assignments.
- Students may not participate if they become 15 years of age or older prior to May 1st preceding their 8th grade year.

- Students may participate only one year in the 6th grade, one year in the 7th grade, and one year in the 8th grade.
- Students and parents must have completed and signed proper forms prior to the first try-out/practice day.
- Students must have a current physical on file prior to the first day of try-out/practice.

Bicycles

If you ride a bicycle to school, you are required to park it using a lock and chain in the designated area. Bicycle riders must leave the campus promptly in order to avoid traffic.

Buses

Students are expected to follow and obey the bus rules while they wait for and/or are riding on a school bus in the Ware County School System. These rules are provided to the students upon riding their assigned school bus. The parent/guardian will be advised in a timely manner in written form and/or by phone communication from the school administration if a student's misbehavior on the bus results in disciplinary action to be taken by the school administration. Students will sign for and be given a copy of the bus discipline form at the time the discipline is addressed by the school administrator.

Bus Conduct Rules for Students

It is the position of the Ware County Board of Education that the school bus is an extension of the classroom; therefore, students are expected to always be respectful of their rights and the rights of others while being transported on the bus.

Bus Conduct Rules:

1. Students will ride only on the bus they are assigned to ride.
2. Students will board their assigned bus each morning and depart their bus each afternoon at their regular stop, unless written permission is granted through the school office.
3. Students will be at their stop at the designated time and be ready to board the bus with the least possible delay.
4. Students will sit three to a seat unless otherwise directed by the Transportation Specialist or building level administrator.
5. Students will stay in their seats the entire time that the bus is in motion. There may be times when a student has to stand because of the bus capacity. At such times, the student is to stand in one place, hold the seat nearest him/her for stability and take a seat when one becomes available.
6. Students will remain orderly as to not distract the Transportation Specialist. Physical contact with others may lead to bus suspension. Fighting with other students will result in automatic bus and school suspension.
7. Students will be COMPLETELY QUIET at all RAILROAD CROSSINGS.
8. Students are not to use or possess tobacco/e-cigarette, matches, lighters, alcohol, drugs, or weapons.
9. Students will not use obscene language or gestures.
10. Willful damage or destruction of any part of the bus is prohibited. It will be the responsibility of each student and the student's parent/guardian to make restitution for such damage.
11. Students will not eat on the bus.
12. Students will not throw objects on the bus or out of the bus window.

13. Students will not extend any part of his/her body out of the window.
14. Students are permitted to carry only books and other school related projects or materials. No live animals, glass bottles, or balloons will be permitted on the bus. Large band instruments or school related projects/materials will be placed as designated by the Transportation Specialist.
15. No items will be sold on the bus.
16. The Transportation Specialist may select certain students for safety training to be used in the event of an emergency. All students are required to cooperate during any emergency situation.
17. Transportation Specialists will use the "Bus Conduct Form" to report any misconduct on the bus and parents will receive a copy of the report. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Director/designee to use his/her discretion in deciding when the offense should be reported to a building level administrator. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the Transportation Director/designee or school administrator regarding their child's misbehavior.
18. The Transportation Director/designee and/or building level administrators have the authority to suspend the riding privileges of students who are disciplinary problems on the bus. The period of suspension will be in relation to the seriousness of the offense and other factors such as age of the students and prior history of misbehavior on the bus. When a student's riding privileges have been suspended, he/she is suspended from ALL Ware County School System buses.

New Bus Procedures

The Ware County Board of Education Transportation Department will implement a new system software from Synovia Solution.

- All students will be issued a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) scan card, which will act as their ID when boarding and leaving the school bus. The card will also contain each student's name and barcode, which enables the use as an ID card for other district related purposes.
- Students will be **required** to carry cards with them at all times and use them each time they board and exit the school bus. If a student forgets or loses their card, the driver is able to register them manually on the Mobile Data Terminal.
- Students must retain their ID cards from year to year

Replacement Cards: If a student loses his or her card the replacement fee will be \$5.00. Parent must come to the Transportation Department and pay for the replacement card. In addition, students may request replacement ID cards as follows:

- High School and Middle School students may request a replacement card from the Transportation Department.
- Elementary students may request a replacement card from their bus driver.
- The new card will not be issued until the replacement fee is paid.
-

If a Student Does NOT have their CARD, the following guidelines will be followed:

- 1st Time: Bus Driver will punch in the student's ID number (2 Days to purchase card)
- 2nd Time Bus Driver will punch in the Student's ID number and the student cannot ride until another card is purchased.
- 3rdOffense Student: The student will not be able to board the bus until they have a replacement card

RFID Card issuing schedule: Newly registered students, as well as those entering Kindergarten, 6th and 9th grade will receive new ID cards yearly.

Bus Discipline Policy

In an effort to improve bus safety, Ware County Schools is implementing a clear new plan of consequences for bus misbehavior. All bus referrals and consequences are cumulative within one academic school year.

Offense #	Consequence
1st Referral	2 days bus suspension
2nd Referral	3 days bus suspension
3rd Referral	5 days bus suspension
4th Referral	5 days bus suspension
5th Referral	10 days bus suspension
6th Referral	20 days bus suspension
7th Referral	Bus suspension for the remainder of the school year.

This discipline policy serves as a guideline. The administrator may use his/her discretion when disciplining the student based on the severity/circumstances involved in the incident.

Bus Safety Curriculum

- Always walk on the sidewalk to the bus stop; never run. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left facing traffic.
- Go to the bus stop about five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. While at the bus stop, wait quietly in a safe place well away from the road. Do not run and play while waiting.
- Enter the bus in a line with younger students in front. Hold the handrail while going up and down the stairs.
- When entering the bus, go directly to a seat. Remain seated and face forward during the entire ride.
- Always speak quietly on the bus so the driver will not be distracted. Always be silent when a bus comes to a railroad crossing so the driver can hear if a train is coming.
- Never throw things on the bus or out the windows. Keep the aisles clear at all times. Feet should be directly in front of you on the floor and book bags should be kept on your lap.
- Never play with the emergency exits. Large instruments or sports equipment should not block the aisle or emergency exits. If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- Hands should be kept to yourself at all times while riding on the bus. Fighting and picking on others creates a dangerous bus ride.
- If you leave something on the bus, never return to the bus to get it. The driver may not see you come back and she may begin moving the bus. Make sure that drawstrings and other loose objects are secure before getting off the bus so that they do not get caught on the handrail or the door.
- Respect the "Danger Zone" which surrounds all sides of the bus. The "Danger Zone" is ten feet wide on all sides of the bus. Always remain 10 steps away from the bus to be out of the "Danger Zone" and where the driver can see you.
- Always cross the street in front of the bus. Never go behind the bus. If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you attempt to pick it up, so they will know where you are.
- Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the car with a stranger. Always go straight home and tell your parents if a stranger tries to talk to you or pick you up.

Electronics

All electronics should be turned off and put away during school hours (7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.). Bring-your- own-device device initiatives only allow the use of personal technology in the instructional setting. Any student who violates this policy during school hours will be subject to disciplinary action. The principal or designee of each school is authorized to provide for exceptions to this policy and for disciplinary actions for the use of cell phones in violation of the policy, such as in the case of medical emergencies or other extenuating circumstances as determined by a school administrator. An additional referral will be made for any student who refuses to give a phone to a school official at his or her request. 1st Offense - 2 days ISS, 2nd Offense - 1 day OSS, and 3rd & subsequent offenses - 2 days OSS and possible behavior contract.

The Middle Schools in Ware County will assume No Liability for lost or stolen electronic devices. The schools reserve the right to search for stolen devices. Charges may be filed, and disciplinary action will be taken. See the discipline plan on page 28.

Care of School Property

The school building and all of the equipment in it are provided, at great expense, by the citizens of Ware County through money paid by taxes. Every student should be taught the value of school property and be encouraged to develop good citizenship habits. Students who deface or destroy school property (including textbooks) will be disciplined severely. Parents and/or students will be required to pay for damages to a building or equipment if it is determined that damages were caused by carelessness, neglect, or intent. Everyone should develop pride in keeping the building clean and keeping furniture and equipment in good repair.

Cleaning of School Facilities

The district uses products confirmed by the manufacturer to kill Coronavirus and other viruses. Ware County Schools cleans and disinfects schools and facilities, including buses and technology devices, in alignment with guidance from the CDC. Schools will provide an adequate supply of soap and paper towels for student and employee use.

Clubs and Activities

School-sponsored clubs (excluding competitive interscholastic activities or events) are those under the sponsorship, direction, and control of the school that organize and meet common goals, objectives, and purposes. State law requires that parents have the right to withhold permission for their students to participate in any school-sponsored club or organization designated by them. The following school-sponsored clubs will be in operation during the school year, for which information is provided regarding the name of each club, its purpose, faculty sponsor, and a description of past or planned activities. You, as the parent/guardian, have the right to withhold in writing your permission for your student's participation in any club or organization.

A variation of clubs and organizations are established in each middle school and may include some of the following:

Academic Quiz Bowl

Academic quiz bowl is open to all students. Teams are formed at the beginning of each year. Academic quiz bowl is a game of academic competition between students in the middle grades. Our purpose is to boost student confidence and self-esteem, inspire students to excel academically, promote good citizenship, stimulate our youth's competitive spirit, and recognize student scholastic aptitude.

Band Activities

The purpose of the band program is to promote musical interest and skills. By being enrolled in band classes, students are provided the opportunity to participate in several extracurricular band activities.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)

FCA is open to all students. Meetings are held before school. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is touching millions of lives... one heart at a time. Since 1954, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been challenging athletes and coaches to use the powerful medium of athletics to impact the world for Jesus Christ reaching nearly 1.3 million people annually on the professional, college, high school, junior high, and youth levels. FCA is the largest Christian sports organization in America. FCA focuses on serving local communities by equipping, empowering and encouraging people to make a difference for Christ.

Future Farmers of America (FFA)

The FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. The FFA is open to all students. FFA consists of many career development events and experiences in the following areas: Agricultural Mechanics, Forestry, Horticulture, Leadership, and Livestock. Membership dues are required annually.

Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA)

HOSA is a national student organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education whose mission is to promote career opportunities in the healthcare industry. HOSA provides a one-of-a-kind program of leadership development and motivation for students enrolled in health science education and bio-medical science programs as well as those who are interested in pursuing careers in any of the health professions.

Math Team

Open to all students, the Math Team competes on the state level by taking a monthly test administered through the Georgia Math League.

MODEL U.N. Team

The Model United Nations team helps students learn about their world and international issues. Students learn the structure and procedures of the United Nations. They attend conferences as representatives of different nations and debate issues from the nation's point of view. Students should be interested in global affairs and willing to use their research, speaking, and writing skills. Model U.N. is open to all students.

Principal's Advisory Committee

This committee serves as a liaison among students, faculty and administration. Its purpose is to enhance the academic program of the school by encouraging the element of fun and positive esteem development through student activities and various school projects. Valuable experiences and lessons about practical situations may be fostered. Membership is composed of representatives of all school clubs and, at large, members selected by application. Scheduled meetings will be announced.

National Junior Honor Society

The purpose of the National Honor Society is to promote academic excellence. Membership in the local chapter is an honor bestowed upon a student.

National Junior Honor Society By-Laws Amendment

A. Selection of Members

- a. Section 1- To be eligible for membership, the candidate must be a member of the seventh or eighth grade. If a candidate attends the school the equivalent of one semester or less, then a recommendation from the previous school principal will be pursuant to the candidate's selection. The candidate must also meet the academic average guidelines for the current and previous year of schooling.
- b. Section 2- The candidates must have an academic subject average of at least 90 percent for the previous academic year and the first nine weeks of the current school term. Students' academic records will be reviewed to determine scholastic eligibility. Students will need to maintain a 90 or above average each semester or they will be considered an inactive member.
- c. Section 3- The candidate shall then be evaluated on the basic of service, leadership, character, and citizenship. Faculty members will be invited to make comments on candidates. Negative input about a candidate from two faculty members will be considered grounds for ineligibility. However, the actual selection decision must be made by the five appointed members of the faculty council. The faculty assessment of the candidate will remain confidential.
- d. Section 4- This selection procedure was determined by the faculty council and will be published in the school's Student-Parent Handbook.

Ware County Junior Miss

This is a beauty pageant open to female students of Ware County Middle School (no participants allowed from other schools). There are many titles/awards presented including: Ware County Junior Miss, 1st Runner-Up, 2nd Runner-Up, 3rd Runner-Up, 4th Runner-Up, Miss Congeniality, and Most Photogenic. There is a limit on the number of contestants. It is usually 30, but may go up to 35 if necessary. The yearbook staff sponsors the pageant with all proceeds helping to pay for publication costs of the yearbook.

Yearbook Staff

A yearbook staff meets and plans the yearbook to highlight special events and extracurricular activities that occur during the year.

Curriculum

The basic academic curriculum at the middle school includes the areas of English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Academic instruction is based on curriculum guides, which direct the teacher at different levels to make sure that competencies in these basic curriculum areas are completed.

Connections classes are vital parts of the curriculum. Some of the Connections courses are: Band, Chorus, Fine Arts, Health, Physical Education, Healthcare Science, Family and Consumer Sciences and Business and Computers.

Food and Drinks

Students may not bring food or drink from outside vendors into the building unless it is packaged as a part of their lunch. Items from outside vendors will NOT be delivered to students during the school day. Water is permitted in a clear plastic container. No other beverages are allowed outside of one in a lunchbox to be consumed at lunchtime. Only clear water bottles are permitted. **NO Stanley, Yeti, or any other type of isolated drink containers will be permitted.**

The purchase of drinks and snacks is a student privilege. *Classroom teachers or administrators may temporarily suspend this privilege for minor disciplinary or responsibility infractions.* Snack and drink machines do not provide a balanced diet for a school lunch. Therefore, a school lunch must be purchased or a lunch brought from home before purchasing these items. No snacks or drinks may be purchased before lunch. Students are to use the snack machines at their own risk. **No refunds.**

Driving

No middle school student will be permitted to drive to school or park a motorized vehicle on campus.

Emergency Drills

Regular emergency preparedness drills will be held throughout the school year to train students in proper action in the event of an emergency. These drills will include fire, tornado, and hurricane drills. A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan is on file in the office.

Field Trips

All students are required to ride a school bus or other transportation arranged by the school to the field trip. If a parent wants to transport the child home from the field trip, a check-out note is required before the trip begins. Siblings are not allowed on field trips. If parents bring the siblings, the student will not be considered part of the group and will be counted absent from school. As noted in the Ware County Board of Education policy GAK, all long-term volunteers (including chaperones) will be required to be fingerprinted and approved prior to accompanying students on a school sponsored event.

Flowers, Balloon, Etc.

The Middle Schools in Ware County have neither the time nor the staff to deliver flowers, balloons, or food items to students during school hours. These items will not be accepted for delivery in the school office. Please have them delivered to your home.

Guidance

The Guidance and Counseling Office provides many special services for students, parents, and teachers. Students who are having problems that are affecting their schoolwork may receive individual attention from the counselor. This service may be arranged through teachers, administrators, the counseling office secretary, a parent, or the counselor. In addition to individual guidance and counseling, the counselor provides group counseling, classroom guidance, and information for teachers and parents. The Guidance Secretary keeps permanent records on each student, test scores, and handles paperwork for students who are entering and withdrawing from the middle school. Other student services offered through the Counselor's Office include the Hospital/Homebound Program, Immunization Records, scheduling of Parent/Teacher Conferences, Maintenance of Student Permanent Record, and Enrolling and Withdrawing Students.

Hall Passes

When a teacher determines that a student has a justifiable reason for leaving the classroom, the student will be issued a hall pass (using their agenda) that states this reason. **Student agendas will be used for hall passes.** Teachers will determine and share the plan for classroom restrooms and water breaks.

Homework

Students will have assigned homework and will be expected to complete all homework assignments by the designated times.

Hospital/Homebound

Home instruction is provided for a student who is expected to be absent for an extended period of time (at least 10 school days). To be eligible for hospital / homebound educational services, a medical referral form with a specific diagnosis must be submitted to the school counselor and signed by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, or advanced practice provider (Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner) treating the specific condition. This form must be obtained at the school. Included in this form shall be a statement by the physician, psychiatrist, or advanced practice provider that the student will be absent a minimum of 10 (ten) school days, verification that the illness confines the student to the hospital, nursing facility, or home, and a statement that the student is physically able to participate in educational instruction. Students are not eligible for hospital/homebound instructional services if the absence is due to communicable disease, pregnancy (unless school attendance would endanger the life of the mother or child) if the illness does not confine them to a facility/home, or if such services are not specified in the individualized education program (IEP) of a special student. All work should be turned in within 10 (10) school days of the date of return from the hospital /homebound. Services will not take effect until the HHB form has been signed by the treating Physician and returned to school. Pregnant student guidelines allow for up to six weeks to make up schoolwork if they decide not to take the online option.

Lockers

Lockers are not used. Students are expected to keep their classroom supplies (paper, pencils, etc.) in their book bags with them. Some teachers use a classroom set of materials. Others only require students to carry a workbook. The supplies and materials needed are discussed among the grade level teachers and an effort to keep the material at a reasonable amount.

Lost & Found

We have a lost and found section at school. If books or personal items are lost, you may check to see if the item has been turned in. We suggest that you write your name on each item so that identification will be easier. Items not claimed from the lost and found section and prohibited items that have been confiscated for return to a parent are subject to be donated to charity if they have not been picked up within two weeks.

School Nutrition

The school nutrition management will appreciate your cooperation in:

1. Depositing lunch litter in trash cans.
2. Leave the table and floor around your place in a clean condition.
3. Taking **no** food from the cafeteria.
4. Keeping feet out of aisles for safety reasons.
5. Talking in a reasonable tone of voice.
6. Avoid needless movement throughout the lunchroom.
7. No fast food meals are allowed to be delivered to students at school.

Media Center

The Media Center is open for student use daily. Students should be given permission prior to visiting the media center. The Media Specialist and Media Paraprofessional are readily available to those who need assistance. Students are encouraged to visit the Media Center before school begins each day to renew books, pay fines, or conduct class-related research.

Internet Permission

An Internet permission sticker indicates to faculty and staff that a student has a signed copy of the Ware County School System Internet User's Contract on record in the Media Center. A copy of the Ware County School System Internet Acceptable Use Policy is found in the student handbook and a copy of the Ware County School System Internet User's Contract is distributed through the Language Arts classes at the beginning of the school year.

Circulation

Materials may be checked out for two weeks, and borrowers are fiscally responsible for all materials. Students who have overdue materials or who owe fines in the media center may not check out any materials until all records are clear.

Fines and Fees

Students having overdue materials or fines may check out materials once the Media Center records are cleared. A fine, not to exceed \$1.50 or five cents per day, is charged for materials that are overdue. Weekends and holidays are not counted. A fee of \$1.00 will be charged to replace each damaged or missing barcode label or Accelerated Reader label. See Student Fees, Fines, and Charges.

Damaged Materials

If any materials are unduly damaged, an amount in keeping with the damage will be charged. A rebinding fee is charged for any book returned in such condition that prohibits its circulation until it can be rebound. Students or parents should never attempt to mend materials. Instead, they should return materials to the Media Center and report the damage to the media specialist.

Loss of Media

The current replacement cost plus \$3.00 for processing is charged for any media format or equipment. If the item is returned in good repair within the current school calendar year, replacement cost less the processing fee will be reimbursed to the party responsible for the original payment. All media fees should be paid by the end of the current school calendar year.

GALILEO

GALILEO is an online statewide “library” available to the citizens of Georgia, providing additional resources to the staff and students of Georgia. The Middle School staff and students have direct access in the Media Center and all classrooms. Staff and students may access GALILEO from their homes with a PASSWORD. The password is available in the Media Center and changes quarterly.

Electronic Resources –Internet User- Acceptable Use Policy

The Ware County School System is pleased to offer Internet access to all employees and students throughout the district, as we believe the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources for teaching and learning. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in the curriculum by facilitating communications for resource sharing, innovation, and interacting with others in collaborative works and intellectual pursuits.

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in revocation of access. Students and staff who access the Internet through devices on the Ware County Schools (WCS) network are required to use the resource in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner.

In an effort to provide a safe environment for our users, WCS monitors communication and activity within the network. All devices, whether cellular, wireless, or wired, must be connected through the WCS network. It is the position of Ware County Schools that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the system. The following guidelines and protective measures have been designed to help students and staff function within the parameters of acceptable use.

General Usage Guidelines

The Ware County School System views information gathered from the Internet in the same manner as other resources identified as educational tools by the schools. Specifically, the system supports resources that will enhance the learning environment under the directed guidance of the school staff. Therefore, student access to and use of the Internet at school shall be under staff direction and will be monitored as is any other classroom activity, by staff and through the use of a filtering device to restrict, to the extent practicable, access to inappropriate materials on the Internet.

All WCS network/Internet users must:

- Respect the privacy of others and self.
- Keep all personal information about yourself or others confidential. This includes, but is not limited to, home telephone or cell phone numbers, home E-mail addresses, home addresses, pictures with name identifications, or information regarding a specific student's location at any given time.
- Refrain from sharing passwords with others or using passwords not belonging to the user.
- Respect the network as a shared resource. The user shall not deliberately attempt to degrade or disrupt system performance or to interfere with the work of others.
- Observe all laws, including copyrights, licensing agreements, and trade secret laws.

Any user violating responsible use guidelines or any other school and/or district rules or policies is subject to loss of network privileges and any other school or system disciplinary option deemed appropriate. Student violations may result in discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion. Fees and other charges may be imposed. Any unauthorized access, attempted access, or use of any network system in violation of State or Federal law shall be subject to criminal prosecution.

Internet Acceptable Use Guidelines

Internet use must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the Ware County School System. Acceptable use guidelines are provided so that users are aware of the responsibilities they accept when accessing the Internet. If a WCS user violates any of the following provisions, his or her access may be terminated. Disciplinary actions may be taken, which could result in the initiation of appropriate legal action. Responsible users may:

- Use the Internet to research or complete assigned classroom projects.
- Use the Internet to send e-mail, if required/monitored by the teacher.
- Use network and web applications maintained by the school district.
- Use collaborative educational sites.

Responsible users may not:

- Use the internet for any illegal purpose, including, but not limited to, copyright violations.
- Conduct unethical or illegal activities of any kind.
- Use proxy systems to circumvent firewall content filtering.
- Use the Internet for social networking.
- Use the Internet or other media to download/install any files or programs without the approval of the technology department, the exception being updates to programs installed by the district technology department.
- Use the Internet to "cyberbully," stalk, intimidate, or threaten another person.

- Use search engines to locate material that is not appropriate in an educational setting.
- Attempt to gain unauthorized access to any computer, electronic device, systems, networks, or programs.
- Broadcast messages or forward chain emails.
- Change workstation settings or install hardware on the network.
- View, transmit, or receive any media (text, images, movies, sound, etc.) that contain pornography, nudity, profanity, obscenity, racism, threats, or language that is harmful, offends, or tends to degrade others, is graphically violent, or is inappropriate in an educational setting.
- Change or vandalize files or data belonging to another user.
- Wastefully use finite resources such as bandwidth, disk space, and printing.
- Use the Internet for any commercial or for-profit activity, solicitations, or purchases of a personal nature.

Downloading copyrighted material requires permission from the owner of the materials and should adhere to Federal Copyright Laws- <http://www.copyright.gov>.

Network Safety and Security

The Ware County School System uses multiple filtering mechanisms to select, access, and manage the type and level of information that is most appropriate and relevant to the system's educational needs and goals, as well as to reduce legal liability. The filtering mechanisms in place use machine-based learning algorithms to continuously comb, analyze, and catalog web traffic. Human interaction is often required in the review process. All network traffic, encrypted and non-encrypted, is monitored and cataloged on all Ware County School System equipment and networks. Software, hardware, and websites that are used to bypass filtering mechanisms are prohibited on all school- owned equipment and personal equipment while connected to the Ware County School System network. These items are often referenced as proxies and anonymizers. The use of VPN tools is restricted to approved personnel only and requires written approval from the Technology Coordinator or designee. The Ware County Board of Education is not responsible for content available to users who connect their school-owned device to any network not provided by the Ware County School System.

Devices that broadcast or create their own personal networks, often called ad-hoc or wi-fi direct networks, are not permitted within the WCS wireless network.

Office 365 Education

The Ware County School System provides an Office 365 Education account to all students. The account allows students to install the latest version of the Microsoft suite of products (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) on up to five personal-use devices.

Google Apps for Education (GAFE)

The Ware County School System uses Google Apps for Education to enhance teaching and learning. GAFE is a core suite of productivity applications Google offers to schools and educational institutions. These communication and collaboration apps, such as Gmail, Calendar, Drive, Docs, and Classroom, exist in the cloud, meaning that they can be accessed from any device with an Internet connection. System administrators control access to these and dozens of other collaborative tools supported by Google through the Admin Console. Administrators have the ability to filter messages based on where they are from, where they are going, or the content they contain. WCS will use this technology protection

measure to block or filter, to the extent practicable, access to content that is obscene or harmful to minors over the network. The Ware County School System must obtain parental permission in order for users under the age of 18 to gain access to GAFE; students 18 years and older are also required to acknowledge and accept the Ware County School System's terms and conditions prior to obtaining access to technology within our schools. Under both circumstances, this may be accomplished by submitting the Ware County Schools Internet User Contract.

Student Electronic Communication Guidelines

Students will be assigned an email and network account that will be monitored by the WCS Technology Department. Users agree to abide by the following guidelines:

- Students will use their email account and network login for school-related activities only.
- Students will not share their email or network password with anyone.
- Students will not use the email account to conduct commercial or for-profit business activities.
- Students will not view or transmit any racist, sexist, pornographic, obscene, or threatening material.
- Students will not download any materials that are not related to coursework.
- Students will not upload viruses to or destroy data on the network. This is considered vandalism and will result in immediate cancellation of privileges and possible disciplinary action.

Student Due Process

The site administrator or designee will investigate allegations of student violations of the Acceptable Use Policy/Procedures. The student will be notified and provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Activities on the Internet that are in violation of the WCS Code of Conduct will be handled in accordance with the code. The student's parent(s) and appropriate legal authorities will be contacted if there is any suspicion of illegal activities.

Guidelines for Devices Issued to Students and Staff Members

School district technological resources may be provided to select students for school-related purposes. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible, efficient, and legal activities that support learning. Use of school district technological resources for political purposes or for commercial gain or profit is prohibited. Student personal use of school district technological resources for amusement or entertainment is also prohibited. School district technological resources are installed and maintained by the Technology Department. Students and employees shall not attempt to perform any installation or maintenance without the permission of the Technology Department. Under no circumstance may software purchased by the school district be copied for personal use.

Students and employees agree to comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as cheating, as stated in the Student Code of Conduct. Users must not engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing, transmitting or receiving images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages, or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive, or considered to be harmful to minors. All users must comply with Board policies on Bullying, including but not limited to IFBGE and JCDAG, when using school district technology.

Warranties

The Ware County School System makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the services it is providing. The school system will not be responsible for any damages you may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions caused by network failure or your own errors or omissions.

Supervision and Monitoring

It shall be the responsibility of all WCS staff to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet, as well as to report misuse, in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act. Procedures for enabling, disabling, or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the Technology Coordinator or designated representatives.

- Full text of the Children's Internet Protect Act: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>
- FCC regulations implementing CIPA; FCC 01-120
http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/Orders/2001/fcc01120.doc
- SLD's FAQ on E-rate certification procedures and timing
<http://www.sl.universalservice.org/reference/CIPAFaq.asp>

Vandalism

Vandalism of any type (electronic, hardware, cyber, etc.) will result in immediate cancellation of privileges and possible disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy through physical means or hacking. The use of WCS computer equipment should not be used for unauthorized access to other networks.

Acceptance

All terms and conditions as stated in this document are applicable to the Ware County School System and its employees and students. These terms and conditions reflect the entire agreement of the parties and supersede all prior oral or written agreements and understanding of the parties. These terms and conditions shall apply to the laws of the State of Georgia and the United States of America.

Parent Conferences

If you and/or your parents would like to have a conference with your teachers or an administrator, call the Guidance Office and an appointment will be made for you. Teacher conferences may be held during teacher planning, before school or after school. Administrative conferences will be scheduled at the earliest mutually convenient time for the administrator and parent.

Personal Sales/Projects

Projects involving the sale of candy must have prior approval of the administration. Personal sales, however, are prohibited. Violation of these rules will result in disciplinary action.

Physical Education & Health

Students are required to dress out for physical education (shorts, shirt, tennis shoes, white or black gym socks). Students who are not physically able to participate in physical education activities must obtain a **statement from a physician specifying the type and duration of the disability**. The administration believes that physical education is a vital part of the school program.

Presence on Campus After School Hours

Students should vacate the school campus after the last bell. Students are required to leave school immediately unless there is an adequate reason to remain. Students may remain in the building for detention, club activity, band practice, athletic activities, or tutoring. ***Students must be under the supervision of a teacher if they remain on the school grounds after school hours.***

Progress Reports

Progress Reports for all students will be electronic and available through the Parent portal at the 4 ½-week point of each grading period. (See school calendar).

Promotion and Retention

It is the expectation of the Board of Education that students enrolled in the Ware County Schools will make continuous progress. Student achievement shall be carefully and continually evaluated based on appropriate instructional and developmental goals. These goals include competency in basic skills and regular attendance.

It is further expected that every effort shall be made by the professional staff to enable each student to develop sufficient skills, behaviors, and attitudes to warrant promotion.

The Ware County Board of Education adopts this policy in accordance with O.C.G.A. §20-2-285 (Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy) that bases the placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the education setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

The Superintendent and appropriate staff shall develop rules and regulations governing the promotion, placement, and retention of students in grades K-12. Such rules and regulations shall include the following requirements:

1. Definitions and procedures consistent with those contained within State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11 PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION.
2. Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs- Student Assessment.
3. The promotion of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 shall be determined in accordance with the State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11 PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION that requires those students to achieve grade level on the state-adopted assessment. Promotion of a student shall be determined as follows:
4. No eighth-grade student shall be promoted to ninth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the state-adopted assessment in reading and mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.
5. If the parent, guardian, or teacher(s) of a student in grades 3, 5, or 8 who does not meet the promotion requirement described in Section 3 appeals the decision to retain the student, the school principal or designee shall establish a Retention Review Committee comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s),

and principal or designee. Promotion or placement of such students shall be based on a review of factors specified within the district's rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, the student's performance on the state-adopted assessment.

6. A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed for each student who does not achieve grade level performance in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the state-adopted assessment(s) whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year.
7. When a student does not perform at grade level in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the state-adopted assessment, then the following shall occur:
 - a. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the state-adopted assessment individual student scores, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student his/her below-grade-level performance on the assessment(s); the specific retest(s) to be given the student and testing dates; and the opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the state-adopted assessment.
 - b. The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity.
 - c. The student shall be retested with the appropriate section(s) of the state-adopted assessment(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and the local board of education.
 - i. When a student does not perform at grade level on the state-adopted assessment(s) in grades 3, 5, or 8 and also does not perform at grade level on a second opportunity to take the assessment, then the following shall occur:
 1. The school principal or designee shall retain the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided for in this rule.
 2. The school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher(s) regarding the decision to retain the student. The notice shall:
 - a. Describe the option of the parent, guardian, or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student.
 - b. Describe the composition and functions of the placement committee and the option of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), or principal to invite individuals who can provide information or facilitate understanding of the issues to be discussed to attend the placement committee meeting.
 - c. Include the requirement that the decision to promote the student must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), and principal or designee.
8. If the parent, guardian, or teacher(s) appeals the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee shall establish a Retention Review Committee to consider the appeal:
 - a. The committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) of the subject(s) of the state-adopted assessment or the alternative assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level.
 - b. The principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian and teacher(s) of the time and place for convening the Retention Review Committee.
 - c. The committee shall review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of

- performance on the state-adopted assessment or the alternative assessment instrument and promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends and decided to promote or retain.
- d. The decision to promote must be unanimous, and the committee must determine that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the school year.
 - e. The committee shall prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year.
 - f. The committee shall provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
9. A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the state-adopted assessment in reading and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take the state-adopted assessment in reading and/or mathematics on the second administration day(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and local board of education. Placement or promotion of these students shall follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
 10. A student's failure to take the state-adopted assessment in grades 3, 5, or 8 in reading and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and local board of education shall result in the student being retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth in this rule.
 11. For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve at the Retention Review Committee.
 12. A student who meets the minimum proficiency level on the state-adopted assessment is not automatically promoted to the next grade. In addition to any state-mandated promotion requirements, local promotion criteria have been determined by the Board to be as follows:
 - a. Grades 6-8: A middle school student shall be promoted to the next grade if he/she passes:
 - i. Mathematics and two out of the three remaining required academic courses. The required academic courses are ELA, Social Studies, and Science; and
 - ii. The equivalent of 75% of the connection courses in which the student is enrolled during the school year.
 - iii. Students who do not meet all of the above criteria and other local criteria shall be referred to the Retention Review Committee as described under numeral 4 of the policy.
 13. Appeals: There shall be no appeal of promotion/retention decisions beyond the school principal.
 14. Parents or guardians shall be notified annually that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or the program will be based on the academic achievement of the student on criterion-referenced assessments and other criteria established by the Board.
 15. The principal is responsible for interpreting the System's promotion/retention policy to the instructional staff. The teacher and principal shall be required to keep the student and parents informed of the student's progress.

Random Drug Testing Policy

The Ware Co. Board of Education believes that the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs can be detrimental to the mental, physical, and emotional health of their extracurricular students and teen drivers. The possession and use of alcohol and drugs by students are harmful and illegal. The Ware Co. Board is committed to the prevention of alcohol and drug use/abuse.

Students who are actively involved in athletic and extracurricular activities are representative of their respective schools.

By virtue of student's participation in such activities, they are frequently seen by their peers to be role models and persons to be admired. As leaders and role models, such students have a responsibility to be drug and alcohol free as well as to set a standard for their peers.

The Ware Co. Board of Education believes that the use of prohibited substance: alcohol or drugs by students who participate in extracurricular activities present a particular hazard to the health and welfare of students and those who complete with those students. The Board recognizes the intrinsic values associated with participation in extracurricular activities and encourages students to participate. However, the Board of Education is committed to the principle that students who have the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activities must agree to submit to testing for the use of prohibited substance, if selected, in accordance with this policy.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued every grading period. They will be electronic and available through the Parent Portal. End-of- the-year report cards for those students owing fines will be held until the fine is paid.

School-Based Clinic

The school houses a school health clinic with a nurse and part-time counselor from the Satilla Community Service Board is available to see students on a periodic basis. Permission slips must be on file from parents before any treatment can be administered.

- **HEAD LICE (Pediculosis)** Every year children come in contact with head lice. Head lice is highly contagious because of the ease with which it can be transmitted from one person to another. In the event we believe that your child has head lice, you will be contacted and asked to take your child to the Ware County Health Department or your family physician for a confirmed diagnosis. Although the school staff knows what to look for in case of pediculosis, we believe it is best for a qualified individual to make a confirmed diagnosis and suggest proper treatment.

Medicine

When students must take medicine at school, parents must follow the following procedures. If medications can be given at home before or after school hours, please do so. However, if medications must be given during school hours, the following procedures apply:

- A parent or legal guardian must complete and sign a *School Medication Authorization as well as have on file a School Clinic Permission Form* for all medications given at school. For prescription medications that are to be administered for more than 2 weeks, a medical doctor must also complete and sign the *School Medication Authorization*. A copy of this form is available on the website, from your school clinic, and at most physician's offices.
- A school nurse or staff member designated by the principal may administer drugs prescribed by a doctor if all of the following requirements are met: Students should not be in possession of

medications at any time on a school campus, on any school transportation vehicle, or at school-sponsored functions with the exception of physician prescribed inhalers for respiratory disorders or physician Epinephrine for severe allergies.

- A parent/legal guardian or other designated adult must bring all medication with the signed School Medication Authorization to the school clinic. Prescription medications must be clearly labeled with the physician's name, name of medication, strength, dosage, date, time for administration, and dispensing pharmacy. When medication is to be given at home and at school, ask your pharmacist to fill the prescription in 2 labeled containers, one for home and one for school.
- Enough medication for one month should be furnished at the time.
- **All over-the-counter medications and prescription medications must be in the original containers** and be FDA approved. If a child requires an over-the-counter medication which is supplied by the school clinic more than two times, the parent must furnish the medication. If a child requires an over-the-counter medication that is not listed on the standard school health permission form, the parent must furnish the medication with an individual parental permission for that medication.
- If your child has a life-threatening condition (i.e. asthma, diabetes, or allergic reaction), permission may be granted to carry medication (such as inhaler, glucose tablet, Epi-pen, or internal Insulin pump) on his or her person. Such permission will require a completed and signed School Medication Authorization form from the child's physician and parent/guardian. Students with asthma or severe allergic reactions are encouraged to keep a second inhaler or Epi-pen in the clinic for emergency use during school even if they do carry such emergency medication. This will help assure the ability of the staff to assist the student in the event the student does not have their medication on their person and is unable to instruct others where to find it. If a student has these conditions, a parent conference with the school nurses and other staff should be conducted to develop a Health Plan for the student.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for replenishing medication supplies at least six days prior to the student's medication running out.

Unused or discontinued medication must be picked up by the parent from the school clinic prior to the end of the school year. All medication left at school more than one weekday following the last day of school will be disposed of properly.

Auto-Injectable Epinephrine

Students are authorized to carry and self-administer prescription auto-injectable epinephrine provided the student's parent/guardian provide the following:

1. A written statement from a licensed physician containing the following:
 - a. A statement detailing the name of the medication, method, amount, and time schedules by which the student is to take the medication; and,
 - b. A statement confirming the student is able to self-administer auto-injectable epinephrine.
2. A written statement from the student's parent/guardian expressly acknowledging:
 - a. The parent/guardian grants the student permission to self-administer the prescription auto-injectable epinephrine as provided by the student's licensed physician;
 - b. That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed medical release that gives school

- personnel permission to consult with the student's licensed physician regarding any question that may arise with regard to the medication;
- c. That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed authorization releasing the school system, Board of Education, and its employees and agents from civil liability if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of the student self-administering auto-injectable epinephrine.
3. Parents shall provide the above statement at least annually. However, if the student's medication, dosage, frequency of administration, or reason for administration changes, the parents shall provide updated statements to the school.

Levalbuterol Sulfate for Asthma and Respiratory Diseases

The Ware County Schools do not maintain a supply of levalbuterol sulfate. However, certain school employees or agents are authorized to administer levalbuterol sulfate, if available, to a student upon the occurrence of perceived respiratory distress. Any school employee or agent who has completed training or received information provided by the Board on how to recognize the symptoms of respiratory distress and the correct method of administering levalbuterol sulfate, may:

1. Provide levalbuterol sulfate to any student, such employee, or agent believes in good faith is experiencing perceived respiratory distress for immediate self-administration; or
2. Administer levalbuterol sulfate to any student, such employee, or agent believes in good faith is experiencing a perceived respiratory distress, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for levalbuterol sulfate.

Students who need to carry prescription asthma or diabetic medication or epinephrine injectors are permitted to keep these items in their possession if a **Written Authorization for Self-Administration of Medication Form**, which contains both prior written permission from the parent and the child's treating physician's signature, as well as the child's signature has been provided to the principal of the child's school.

**Authorization for self-administration of medication (auto-injectable epinephrine or inhaler) form is available at each individual school.*

Schools may receive and store prescription auto-injectable epinephrine on behalf of students who are not able to self-administer auto-injectable epinephrine, provided the student's parent/guardian provide the following:

1. A written statement from a licensed physician containing the following:
 - a. A statement detailing the name of the medication, method, amount, and time schedules by which the student is to take the medication.
2. A written statement from the student's parent/guardian expressly acknowledging:
 - a. That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed medical release that gives school personnel permission to consult with the student's licensed physician regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication;
 - b. That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed authorization releasing the school system, Board of Education, and its employees and agents from all civil liability relating to the storing of the prescription auto-injectable epinephrine and the administration of auto-injectable epinephrine by the school system, Board of Education, and its employees and agents.
3. Parents shall provide the above statements at least annually. However, if the student's medication, dosage, frequency of administration, or reason for administration changes, the parents shall provide updated statements to the school.

At their sole discretion, employees and agents of the school system and/or Board of Education may

administer an auto-injectable epinephrine, if available and if needed, to a student, whether or not such student has a prescription for epinephrine. Any employee or agent of the school system and/or Board of Education, who in good faith, administers or chooses not to administer epinephrine to a student, shall be immune from civil liability for any such act or omission to act related to the administration of epinephrine.

Prescription medicine, including inhalers, must be in the original labeled container. The label must include the student's name, the name of the medicine, instructions for dispensing the medicine, and the doctor's name. Pharmacists can provide a duplicate-labeled container with only the dosage to be given at school. Over-the-counter medicine must be in the original container and marked with the student's name. Sample medications can only be given when accompanied by a physician's note indicating the sample is for the student's use.

Parents should pick up unused medicine from the principal or his designee. Any medicine not picked up will be discarded at the end of each school year. **Medicine will not be sent home with the student.**

Diabetes Medical Management Plan

Each school shall have employees trained in diabetes management. Such employees are not required to be healthcare professionals. The parent or guardian of each student with disabilities who seek diabetes care while at school shall submit to the school a Diabetes Medical Management Plan. The school shall review and implement the plan. A Diabetes Medical Management Plan is a document developed by the student's physician or other healthcare provider that sets out the health services, including the student's target range for blood glucose levels, needed by the student at school and is signed by the student's parent or guardian.

In accordance with the Diabetes Medical Management Plan, the school nurse or the trained diabetes personnel shall be able to perform functions including, but not limited to, responding to blood glucose levels that are outside of the student's target range, administering glucagon, administering insulin, or assisting a student in administering insulin through the insulin delivery system the student uses, providing oral diabetes medication, checking and recording blood glucose levels and ketone levels, or assisting a student with such checking and recording, and following instructions regarding meals, snacks, and physical activities.

Upon written request of a student's parent or guardian and if authorized by the student's Diabetes Medical Management Plan, a student with diabetes shall be permitted to perform blood glucose checks, administer insulin through the insulin delivery system the student uses, treat hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, and otherwise attend to the monitoring and treatment of his or her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school or school grounds, and at any school-related activity, and he or she shall be permitted to possess on his or her person at all times all necessary supplies and equipment to perform such monitoring and treatment functions.

The district shall provide information in the recognition of diabetes-related emergency situations to all bus drivers responsible for the transportation of a student with diabetes.

Student Illness/Injury

The school officials should be made aware of any unusual health problems that your child may have which might affect his/her learning. No one will be excused from physical education class unless a statement is received from a doctor specifying that there is a problem that prevents the child from participating in physical education.

- Students with contagious infections need to stay home so they will not expose others. If your child is home with a **communicable illness**, please contact the school nurse so the parent(s) of other classmates may be alerted of symptoms.
- Children must be fever free, temperature below 100.4 degrees, for 24 hours without fever medication before returning to school.
- A child with chicken pox may return to school when all of the lesions have scabbed (usually 5-7 days).
- Impetigo, ringworm, shingles, and scabies must be under treatment to return to school. In some cases, lesions may have to be covered.
- If your child has reoccurring vomiting and/or diarrhea, they must stay home.
- A child with bacterial Pink Eye (thick drainage and redness of the whites of the eyes throughout) may return to school after 24 hours of physician-prescribed treatment.
- If a child becomes ill during the day, the parents must make provisions to pick up the child from school. If the parent cannot be reached, persons listed for emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up the child.

Sexual Harassment / Sexual Misconduct

All students and staff in the Middle Schools in Ware County are expected to conduct themselves all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting as a member of the school community shall be considered to be in violation of this policy. Sexual harassment consists of repeated unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment or participation in an educational function, or
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or decisions affecting such individual's education, or
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Forms of sexual harassment include the following:

- A. Verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs:
- B. Physical harassment, such as unnecessary or offensive touching, or impeding or blocking movement; and
- C. Visual harassment, such as derogatory or offensive posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings or gestures.

Any individual who is found to be responsible for sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline; the severity of the disciplinary action will be based upon the circumstances of the infraction. Disciplinary actions may include termination of employment or, for a student offender, expulsion from school.

Legislation

HB1321 requires that every student code of conduct include information regarding falsifying reports of alleged inappropriate behavior by educators. HB 1321 directs the PSC to establish a state-mandated process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by educators. Local systems will be required to implement and follow the state-mandated process and must include the process in student and employee handbooks. The PSC must coordinate a training program on educator sexual misconduct. The program will be delivered by trained staff from the PSC, RESA's, and local systems. The superintendent of each system must ensure that all certified staff receives the training.

ANY STUDENT WHO THINKS THAT HE/SHE HAS BEEN A SUBJECT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT SHOULD NOTIFY A TEACHER, COUNSELOR, OR ADMINISTRATOR.

Student Complaints and Grievances

The Board realizes that there may be conditions in the school system that need improvement and students should have some effective means to express their concerns which will be considered and handled with fairness. Student's complaints and grievances shall be resolved through orderly processes and at the lowest possible level; however, the Board shall provide channels for eventual hearing, should circumstances dictate. Complaints and grievances shall be approached in the following manner:

1. The opportunity shall be provided any student or his/her parents to discuss with the student's teacher a decision or situation which he/she considers unjust or unfair.
2. If the matter remains unresolved, the student, his/her parents, or the teacher may bring the matter to the principal's attention for his/her consideration.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, it may be brought to the superintendent or a designee for his/her consideration.
4. Complaints that remain unresolved following any action of the superintendent may be referred in writing to the Board. The Board's decision, if it chooses to make one, shall be final.

Student Questioning by Officials

School Administrators: Principals and Assistant Principals have the responsibility and authority to question students for the purpose of maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. Though it is important to inform parents about issues of concern, parental consent is not required prior to the questioning of students.

Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS): DFCS officials investigating suspected child abuse are permitted to conduct reasonable interviews and inspections of children. Notice to parents is neither required nor desirable when the object of that investigation may be the parents. If the investigation involves suspected child abuse by individuals other than those residing in the child's household, parents will be informed that such interviews are being requested.

Guardian Ad Litem: The Guardian Ad Litem is a trained professional appointed by the court to represent the best interests of minor children in court cases. Any request to interview a student or to inspect the student's

school record should be submitted, in writing, along with court documentation establishing the Guardian Ad Litem relationship with the child.

Law Enforcement: School Resource Officers (SRO), as well as Probation Officers of the Juvenile Court, are permitted to question students at school without prior parental approval. Law enforcement officers from other agencies investigating non-school related matters may question students with the consent of the parent/guardian. Law enforcement officers who have a detention order or warrant for arrest, or states that the situation involves pursuit of a suspect linked to a felony crime may question students without parental consent.

Student Support Process

The Ware County Board of Education provides a variety of resources, which are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. School counselors, psychologists, principal and/or assistant principal along with appropriate grade level teachers make up the **Response to Intervention Team** to assist students, staff members, and parents in developing and implementing disciplinary and behavioral correction plans for students with behavioral problems or academic problems based on data collected by the teacher. Such support personnel also assist in meeting the needs of students by networking appropriate home, school, and community services to address identified student behavioral problems.

Child Find

Child Find is a process of locating, identifying, and evaluating children with disabilities to ensure they receive services to which they are entitled. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires school systems to locate and identify disabled students. Children and youth, from birth to age 21, within the Ware County School District and are suspected of having a disability, may be referred for possible services. For more information about referring a child, you may contact the department of Special Education at 912-283-8656.

Suicide Prevention

The Ware County Board of Education will act in compliance with the standards and policies set forth by the Georgia State Board of Education's policy pursuant to WCBOE JGJA the Jason Flatt Act-Georgia.

Teaming

The interdisciplinary team is a powerful organizational arrangement bridging the gap for students between self-contained classes of elementary school and departmentalized classrooms of high school. Team members frequently discuss instruction, student progress, curriculum, and behavioral problems in order to improve student productivity. Students enjoy the benefits of greater academic support and an interdisciplinary curriculum.

Telemedicine in the School

Ware County Schools has a telemedicine service called the WARE (Wellness and Resource Education) Center provided for students. The services offered are:

- Care for acute illnesses (i.e., sore throat, earache, colds, rashes, eye infections)
- Minor injuries (i.e., scrapes and muscle strains)
- Management and ongoing care of existing medical conditions (i.e., asthma, diabetes, sickle cell)
- Lab tests (i.e., drawing blood, strep tests, flu screens, urine analysis)
- Professional counseling in regard to nutrition and personal hygiene
- Mental health, substance abuse, and family-centered case management

A packet giving consent must be completed before the student can receive these services. This form must be completed only once and is different from the yearly clinic permission form. To receive information about these services, you can check with your school nurse or school guidance counselor.

Telephone

The telephone in the office is available for student use in the event of emergencies only with a hall pass from the teacher and permission from the secretary. The telephone is not to be used to call home for lunch money, forgotten assignments, athletic equipment, etc.

Only in severe cases of emergencies will phone messages be delivered to students.

Textbooks

Textbooks are available to be checked out from the media center without charge to all students and are the property of the State of Georgia. The student is responsible for proper care and use of all textbooks and other instructional materials and must pay for damage or loss.

Teachers shall request textbooks through the principal. The principal may then request approval for purchasing the textbooks through the textbook coordinator for Ware County. Upon approval by the superintendent, the coordinator shall submit the final orders to the Georgia Department of Education on the state textbook order form.

Textbooks will be selected by a committee of teachers (at least one from each school) under the guidance of the textbook coordinator and curriculum directors. Committee members will vote according to the choices of the teachers they represent.

Care and Protection of Lost or Damaged Textbooks, Library Books, or Media Materials are the Student's Responsibility.

Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

It is the policy of the Middle School to charge student fees and to recover funds for the loss or damage to School Board property or items in accordance with the State Board Policy Code JS 160-5-1-.12.

The Ware County School Board provides, free of charge, such textbooks and materials as are required for courses of instruction for each child attending public school. Library books, instructional materials, instructional equipment, and/or school issues band instruments may be provided to students at no cost as well.

The student is responsible for the proper care and use of all school issued instructional books,

instructional materials, instructional equipment, school issued uniforms, school issued band instruments, and/or any other school issued item. Any school issued item must be returned in a timely manner to the school in acceptable condition. A parent or guardian shall be required to pay the replacement cost of school-issued instructional books, instructional materials, instructional equipment, school issued uniforms, school-issued band instruments, and/or any other school issued item only in those cases where the student has lost, damaged, or defaced such item.

Students are responsible for returning to the school, in good condition, any school pictures and/or any school fund raising items that are not purchased. Such items must be paid for if not returned in good condition.

The following sanctions will be imposed against a student who fails or refuses to pay for lost, damaged, or defaced school property at the replacement cost and/or to pay fines incurred for items returned late to the media center.

1. The school will not issue any additional textbooks, library books, instructional materials, instructional equipment, school issued uniforms, school issued band equipment, and/or other school issued items until restitution is made. This will apply to the issuance of all said items for subsequent years and/or for a student who owes such fines or fees to any school within the Ware County School System.
2. The school will not allow a student to participate in extracurricular activities until restitution is made. These extracurricular activities include all sports, band, clubs, homecoming, dance, and other school related activities.
3. The student will not be allowed to participate in field trips, reward type activities, and other such in-school or out-of-school activities until restitution is made.
4. The school will not refuse to allow a student to enroll or to send records to a school in which a student is attempting to enroll because of fines owed.
5. Upon full payment, the student will be issued school instructional materials and equipment and will be allowed to resume school related and extracurricular activities.

Assurance of Access and Availability to Gifted Education Services

Gifted education services are available to students in grades K-12 who meet the eligibility criteria established by Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2.38, Education Program for Gifted Students.

After being identified through universal screening or referral by an individual, advanced learning needs are first addressed in the general education classroom by providing instructional interventions. The Response to the Intervention process allows high-achieving students access to a differentiated curriculum, flexible pacing of instruction, flexible grouping for instruction, and other appropriate interventions. After allowing sufficient time for instructional interventions to be implemented and monitored in the regular classroom, if there is compelling evidence that the interventions have not met a student's needs, the school's data review team will determine if it is appropriate to proceed with a referral for the evaluation of gifted eligibility.

For additional information about Ware County's educational services for high-achieving and gifted learners, please contact your child's principal, the gifted education coordinator at your child's school, or the Director of Student Achievement, Dr. Sonya Bennett, Gifted Program Coordinator sbennett@ware.k12.ga.us Ware County School District, 1301 Bailey Street, 287-2300.

Gifted/Advanced Content Program Continuation Policy

Continued placement in the gifted/Advanced Content program shall include satisfactory performance in all academic classes and must provide for a probationary period. The following guidelines are provided to meet these requirements.

1. Satisfactory performance shall be based on the student maintaining passing grades in gifted/advanced content subjects according to the regular standards of the system and an 85 average for the grading period.
2. Satisfactory performance in the gifted/advanced content program will be based on the recommendation of the program teachers with such recommendation to be based on required products, active participation, and regular attendance in the program.

Any student who fails to meet these continued criteria (1 and 2 above) will be placed on probation for one grading period. Parents will be notified in writing. During this time, the student will remain in gifted/advanced classes. At the end of the probationary period, the student's status regarding meeting continuation criteria will be reviewed.

Termination in the gifted/advanced content program is provided when the terms of probation are not met, or if continuation policy criteria are not met. Parents will be given written notification if the student is dismissed from the gifted program. Reentry is provided when the student meets the continuation policy after completion of at least one grading period following dismissal. ***It is the parent's responsibility to notify the Gifted/Advanced Program Lead Teacher in writing when the student's grades meet the continuation criteria.***

Local Educational Agency Parent Involvement Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) – Section 1118 Parent Involvement

Parental Involvement

The Middle Schools in Ware County affirm and assure the right of parents and legal guardians of children being served in activities funded by Title I the opportunities to participate in the planning, design, and implementation of the Title I programs and its activities. The Middle Schools in Ware County shall involve parents in the joint development of its plan under section 1112, and in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 through input received from the school improvement team, school council meetings with parent membership, and through input received from other parent meetings or written surveys. It shall also establish expectations for parent involvement through written information distributed to parents through school and classroom newsletters, parent contracts, automated phone system, the local media, and school websites.

- The Middle Schools in Ware County shall build the capacity for strong parental involvement/family engagement through a variety of activities. (Listing of activities is not all inclusive.)
- Provide information to parents in written form or through meetings on topics such as the State’s academic content standards, state and local student achievement standards/assessments, and the requirements of parent involvement under the law.
- Provide materials and training to help the parents work with their children and monitor their progress to improve their children’s achievement.
- Train educational staff in building relationships.
- Coordinate and integrate parent involvement strategies with the feeder elementary schools and other programs, to the extent feasible and appropriate by communicating directly and indirectly with these agencies through verbal and written information when needed.
- Provide information to parents in a format and to the extent feasible, in a language that parents can understand.
- Provide reasonable support for parental involvement/family engagement activities as parents may request or as the school deems appropriate or necessary.

The Middle Schools in Ware County shall conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement policy to determine whether there has been increased participation and whether there are barriers to greater participation, particularly by parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background. This data will be obtained from parent committees or school council meetings or thorough parent surveys. The Middle Schools in Ware County shall, to the extent possible, implement activities to meet the federal requirements under Title I, Part A, Section 1118. The school shall encourage and support activities that effectively involve parents and families and that place a positive impact on student success.

Parent Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

In compliance with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act, parents may request the following. The Ware County School System would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

1. Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
3. Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
4. Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualification, please contact Superintendent Bert Smith, 1301 Bailey Street, Waycross, GA 31501, (912)-283-8656.

O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 Mandatory Education for Children

This Georgia law states that all children between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school. Parents and students may be prosecuted for failing to abide by the law.

Notice to Parents/Guardians and Eligible Students of Rights Under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (the "Act"), you have a right to:

1. Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) or older, or those who are emancipated, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent will plan for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
2. Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they wanted changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support

staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as an attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school, in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The Ware County School District has designated the following information as directory information:
 - Student's name, address, and telephone number;
 - Student's date and place of birth;
 - Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
 - Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
 - Dates of attendance at the School System schools;
 - Awards received during the time enrolled in the Ware County School System;
 - Video, audio, or film images or recordings;
 - Photograph;
 - Grade level

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters or institutions of higher learning, upon request, with the name, address, and telephone numbers unless parents have advised the school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify in writing to the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 15 days after officially enrolling in school or within 15 days of the date of the release of this notice.

You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event; unless you, as a parent/guardian object in writing to your student being photographed, videotaped or interviewed to the principal of the school where your student is enrolled. You must notify the principal of your objection by the date specified above. The principal will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, your submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that your student will not be interviewed in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the Ware County Board of Education to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Notice to Parents/Guardians and Eligible Students to Rights Under Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

1. Parents and eligible students (18 or older or emancipated minors) shall be notified at the beginning of the school year of the approximate dates during the school year when any of the activities listed below are expected to be scheduled. The Board of Education has developed and adopted policies, in conjunction with parents, regarding the activities described in paragraph (1). In accordance with Board policies, prior written consent must be obtained from parents before students are required to submit to any survey that contains questions about one or more of the areas listed in subparagraph (1)(A) and that is funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education. You have the right to inspect any survey or instrument used in the collection of information under subparagraphs (1A) and (1B) before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and to opt your student out of participation in any activities described in paragraph (1) in accordance with regulations developed by the Superintendent.
 - a. The administration of any survey containing one or more of the following items:
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family
 - Sex behavior or attitudes
 - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
 - Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
 - Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
 - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
 - Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student.
 - b. Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose).
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advanced, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.
 - You may upon request, inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for your student.
 - The following activity requiring notice and consent or opt-out has been scheduled for the upcoming school year. The Ware County Schools will administer during the spring of each school year, students in identified grade levels are administered the Georgia Student Health Survey that asks students about their experience with and attitudes toward tobacco products, drugs and alcohol. Prior written consent from parents or eligible students is required for student participation in the anonymous survey. Additional information about the survey and consent forms will be provided to parents prior to the administration of the survey.

Ware County School System Section 504:

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

Parents and/or students are provided with the following rights through the implementing regulations of Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104:

1. Your child as the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child as the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic or nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child as a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system’s request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information for a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.

12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.

13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with the opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.

14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.

15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedures. 34 CFR 104.36.

16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. The address of the regional office is: Office for Civil Rights; Region IV; 61 Forsyth Street, Suite 1970; Atlanta, GA 30303.

If you have questions, need additional assistance, or want more information regarding Section 504, please contact **Mrs. Mandy Harper**, the Ware County School System's 504 coordinator at Ware County Board of Education (912)-283- 8656.

Section 504 Procedural Safeguards

1. **Overview:** Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant 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 The 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 and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.
2. **Hearing Request:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following:
 - a. The name of the student.
 - b. The address of the residence of the student.
 - c. The name of the school the student is attending.
 - d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
 - e. The requested reasons for review.
 - f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
 - g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

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

3. **Mediation:** The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.
4. **Hearing Procedures:**
 - a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievance. Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
 - b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
 - c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child’s educational records prior to the hearing.
 - d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own

- expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R.§104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
 - f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
 - g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
 - h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
 - i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
 - j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
 - k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
 - l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of the school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
 - m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. **Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
 6. **Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

Ware County School System

Complaint Procedures under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Ware County School System (WCSS) if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that WCSS is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

B. Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

- a. Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- b. Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children
- c. Title I, Part D – Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- d. Title II, Part A – Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
- e. Title III, Part A – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- f. Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- g. Title VI, Part A – Subpart I: Section 6111: State Assessment Program
- h. Title VI, Part A – Subpart I: Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments Competitive Grant Program
- i. Title VI, Part B – Subpart II: Rural and Low-Income Schools
- j. Title IX, Part E – Subpart I: Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children
- k. Title X, Part C – McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act- Education for Homeless Children and Youth

C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level

As part of its Assurances within ESSA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 within the Title I, Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA), an LEA accepting federal funds also agrees to adopt local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore, for complaints originating at the local level, a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education until every effort has been made to resolve the issue through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint with Ware County School System to no avail, the complainant must provide the Georgia Department of Education with written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue with the Ware County School System.

D. Filing a Complaint

A complaint must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that Ware County School System has violated a requirement of a federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the federal statute or regulation);
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency;
6. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position;

Once the complaint is received by the Ware County School System, it will be copied and forwarded to the appropriate Federal Program Manager.

E. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten days of receipt of the complaint, the Ware County School System (WCSS) will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

- a. The date the WCSS received the complaint.
- b. How the complainant may provide additional information.
- c. A statement of the ways in which WCSS may investigate or address the complaint.
- d. Any other pertinent information.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, WCSS will have 60 days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings.

Test Security

Any action that compromises test security or leads to the invalidation of an individual student's or a group of students' test scores will be viewed by Ware County Schools (WCS) as inappropriate. Under no circumstances may any tests be reproduced or duplicated for individual or group use unless authorized by GADOE. Failure to comply with the U.S. Copyright Laws protecting these materials could result in legal action. Any instance of violation of copyright laws must be reported immediately to the GADOE. Guidelines are in place to assist system personnel in determining which activities might compromise test security or score validity. Any concern regarding test security must be reported to WCS immediately.

**Ware County School System
Complaint Form for Federal Programs under the
Every Student Succeeds Act**

Please Print	
Name (Complainant):	
Mailing Address:	
Phone Number (home):	
Phone Number (work):	
Agency/agencies complaint is being filed against:	
Date on which violation occurred:	
Statement that the Ware County School System has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation) (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
List the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information.	
Has a complaint been filed with any other government agency? If so, provide the name of the agency.	
Please attach/enclose copies of all applicable documents supporting your position.	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:
Mail this form to: Mr. Dean Moody Federal Programs Director Ware County School System 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501	

Harassment Complaint Resolution Process (JCAC Policy)

Any person who believes they are a victim of sexual harassment or have knowledge of someone else being a victim of sexual harassment by a staff member, third party, or student at the District are encouraged to complain directly to the site administrator, school principal, school assistant principal(s), school counselor(s), or Title IX Coordinator at their school or worksite. Any District employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment should likewise report the alleged harassment to the site administrator, school principal, school assistant principal(s), school counselor(s), or Title IX Coordinator for further processing and investigation. If the complaint involves a site administrator or school-level administrator, the complaint should be filed with the administrator's direct supervisor. The direct supervisor will conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation.

For assistance with filing a complaint, including information regarding with whom a complaint should be filed, a person may contact the Title IX Coordinator at the District. The Director of Student Services has been designated by the Board as the Title IX Coordinator to handle such inquiries and may be reached at the following address:

Ware County Schools
1301 Bailey Street
Waycross, GA 31501

If interim measures are warranted during the investigation, the school/District will determine an appropriate interim measure to ensure the safety of the alleged victim and/or complainant. The determination of interim measures will be made on a case-by-case basis, will be based on available facts, and will not disproportionately impact the alleged victim and/or complainant.

Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment, grades or job assignments. Retaliation against persons who make complaints of sexual harassment is strictly prohibited.

The levels of investigation and resolution for a Sexual Harassment Complaint under this policy are as follows:

- Level 1 – Administrative Review (School Principal / Supervisor)
- Level 2 – Sexual Harassment Formal Complaint (Director of Student Services)
- Level 3 – Superintendent (or Designee) Review

The procedures for handling a Sexual Harassment Complaint are as follows:

Level 1- Administrative Review

The site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor if the complaint is against a site administrator/school principal) shall conduct an internal investigation within thirty (30) school days regarding the alleged sexual harassment. For the purposes of this policy, a "school day" is defined as any day that students are in school taking classes. The alleged victim (and/or complainant) and the accused, as well as their representatives, should submit the following when filing a complaint:

1. The names of the District employee(s), third party, and/or student(s) allegedly involved in the wrongful act;
2. A written statement of the specific allegation(s);
3. The dates of the alleged wrongful action(s);
4. The name(s) and contact information (if known) of any witness(es) to alleged wrongful act(s);
5. Any evidence to be considered;
6. A clear statement of the relief sought by the complainant and/or alleged victim.

As part of their investigation, the site administrator/school principal will, to the extent possible, interview the alleged victim/complainant and the accused. These interviews will be conducted separately in observance of the sensitivity of the subject matter. The site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor if the complaint is against a site administrator/school principal) will share the outcome of the investigation with the alleged victim/complainant and/or their parent/guardian if the complainant is a student. If the site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor if the complaint is against a site administrator/school principal) finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that sexual harassment has occurred, the site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor) will take steps in an effort to prevent the recurrence of any harassment and to correct its discriminatory effects on the victim or others, if appropriate. The complainant/victim or the accused may request, in writing, an appeal of the Level 1 decision of the Level 1.

If the complaint is resolved at the Administrative Review level, the complaint will be considered closed.

Level 2- Sexual Harassment Formal Complaint

The complainant must submit a written appeal of the Level 1 review which shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The reason for the appeal; and,
2. A clear statement of the relief sought by the complainant.

The written complaint and any additional supporting documentation must be submitted to the Office of Student Services, 1301 Bailey Street, Waycross, GA 31501, within thirty (30) days of receiving the written decision of the Level 1 review.

The Office of Student Services will designate a person to investigate and provide a written decision to the complainant within thirty (30) workdays of the date of the receipt of the complaint. For the purposes of this policy, a “work day” shall be defined as any day the administrative offices of the District are open for business.

If the complainant wishes to appeal the Level 2 decision, the complainant must submit their appeal in writing to the Office of the Superintendent, and it shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. The reason for the appeal; and
2. A clear statement of the relief sought by the complainant.

The appeal must be filed with the Office of the Superintendent within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date on the written decision letter.

Level 3- Superintendent (or designee) Review

The Superintendent (or designee) shall review the Sexual Harassment Complaint and investigation findings and provide a written decision to the grievant within thirty (30) work days of the date of receipt of the appeal. If needed, the Superintendent (or designee) may request additional information from the complainant and/or other persons involved with the complaint. The Superintendent’s decision will be final.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board’s legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated. Appropriate documentation shall be maintained on all

allegations of sexual harassment. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge.

A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.

Title IX Parent/Student Grievance Procedure

The Ware County Board of Education desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the Board prohibits unlawful discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If a student or a student's parents/guardians have a complaint/grievance alleging any action prohibited by Title IX i.e., discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment carried out by employees, other students, or third parties, he/she should discuss the matter with the principal of the school which the student attends in an attempt to resolve the grievance. If the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, he/she should discuss the matter with the Title IX Coordinator. See below for contact information.

The principal may try to resolve the grievance informally if the complainant expresses a willingness to participate in this informal process. At his/her discretion, the principal may confer with persons having knowledge of the incident that precipitated the grievance. The school and the School System will take all necessary steps to prevent any recurrence of sexual harassment and will do what is necessary to correct its discriminatory effects on those affected by it. If the complainant does not want to participate in the informal process or the informal process does not result in a satisfactory solution, the student or parent/guardian bringing the complaint may seek relief using the formal procedures outlined below. The student alleged to have carried out the harassment may also seek relief by following the procedures outlined below. These procedures apply to complaints of discrimination/harassment prohibited by Title IX. The steps below are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level for any form of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, on the basis of sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual violence is defined as infliction of physical force by a student, employee or third party, with the intent to cause injury or harm to the student.

Step I

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal or the Title IX Coordinator within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. If the harassment is so severe that the complainant is unable to make a complaint within the ten (10) calendar day time frame, the number of days within which to make the complaint may be waived to provide the student/parent making the complaint sufficient time to notify the principal or Title IX Coordinator of the complaint. Any witness or evidence should be provided at the time of the complaint. All parties involved shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The principal or designee will investigate. The parties involved will be informed of the outcome and the principal will render a written decision with ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint. If the

principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, then the process outlined above will be carried out by the building level coordinator or the district coordinator or designee.

Parties have the right to end the informal process and begin a formal process at any time.

Retaliation against an individual who reports alleged harassment or who assists in the investigation of harassment is prohibited. The District will take appropriate action against individuals who are in violation of this part of the policy.

Step II

If the Step I investigation was conducted by the Title IX Coordinator, skip Step II and proceed to Step III.

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint should be mailed to:

<p>Dr. Mandy Harper Director of Special Education and Student Services</p> <p>Ware County Board of Education 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501</p> <p>Phone: (912) 283-8656 Fax: (912) 283-8698 mharper@ware.k12.ga.us</p>
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<p>Mrs. Janice Cribbs Title IX Coordinator for Employee Matters, Director of Human Resources</p> <p>Ware County Board of Education 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501</p> <p>Phone: (912) 283-8656 Fax: (912) 283-8698 jcribbs@ware.k12.ga.us</p>
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This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the parties, complainant and alleged harasser, receives the decision from the school principal. The appeal shall include all reports and comments from Step I and a letter of appeal. The System Title IX Coordinator will initiate an investigation of the grievance and schedule a meeting with the complainant or alleged harasser to attempt resolution of the concerns. The Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting. The case is closed if the complainant is satisfied with the decision or does not wish to take further steps.

Step III

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator may appeal to the Ware County Board of Education by filing a written request for a hearing to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Office of the Superintendent
Ware County Board of Education
1301 Bailey Street
Waycross, Georgia 31501
Phone: (912) 283-8656
Fax: (912) 283-8698

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator. The request for a hearing shall state specifically the nature of the grievance, the relief sought, and the reasons why the Board should grant a hearing. If a hearing is granted, the Board of Education will hear the grievance at the next scheduled BOE meeting and render a final decision within then (10) days of the hearing. If a hearing is not granted, the parties will be notified that the decision of the Title IX Coordinator is affirmed.

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or 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.

Any student, parent or other person who believes he or she or any student has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

Complaints Procedure

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

1. Any student, employee, parent or other person with a complaint or report alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify, in writing or orally, either the principal for his/her school or the appropriate coordinator designated from time to time by the Board of Education [or by the principal]. If the complaint is oral, either the coordinator or school principal to whom the complaint is made shall promptly prepare a memorandum or written statement of the complaint as made to him or her by the complainant and shall have the complainant read and sign the memorandum or statement if it accurately reflects the complaint made. If the complaint is made to a school principal, he or she shall be responsible for notifying the appropriate coordinator of the complaint.
2. If the alleged offending individual is the coordinator or the principal, the complaint shall either be made by the complainant to the Superintendent or, if the complaint is initially made to the school principal, reported by the principal to the Superintendent. If the alleged offending individual is the Superintendent, the complaint shall be made to the designated coordinator, who shall, without further investigation, report the complaint to the Board chairperson.
3. The coordinator or his or her designee shall have fifteen work days to gather all information relevant to the complaint made, review the information, determine the facts relating to the complaint, review the action requested by the complainant, and attempt to resolve the complaint with the complainant and any other persons involved. The coordinator or designee shall prepare a written response to the complaint detailing any action to be taken in response to the complaint and the time frame in which such action will be taken and copies of this response shall be furnished to the complainant, the appropriate coordinator and the principal or his or her designee.
4. If the complaint is not resolved at the conclusion of this fifteen-day period or if the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the complainant shall have the right, within five work days of receiving a copy of the written response, to have the complaint referred to the Superintendent of Schools. If the alleged offending individual is the Superintendent, the complainant may have the complaint referred to the Board of Education, rather than the Superintendent.

5. The Superintendent shall have fifteen work days to review the complaint and the response of the coordinator or designee and attempt to resolve the complaint. The Superintendent shall furnish to the complainant a written response setting forth either his or her approval of the action recommended by the coordinator or designee or the action to be taken by the School District in response to the complaint in lieu of that recommended by the coordinator or designee and the time frame in which such action shall be taken.
6. This policy is not intended to deprive any student or parent of any right they may have to file a complaint under any other applicable policy of the local board or to contact the Office of Civil Rights or other appropriate state or federal agency with regard to any allegations that the School District has violated the statutes described above.
7. The School District shall be responsible for distributing and disseminating information relevant to this policy and procedure to students, parents and employees through appropriate procedures.
8. No reprisal shall occur as a result of reporting unlawful discrimination or harassment under this policy, and any attempt to retaliate against a complainant shall be disciplined as is appropriate.
9. The confidentiality of any individual making a complaint or report in accordance with this policy, to the extent it is reasonably possible and complies with the law, shall be protected, although the discovery of the truth and the elimination of unlawful harassment shall be the overriding consideration.

Ware County Board of Education School Asbestos Plan in Place

A management plan has been developed for friable and non-friable asbestos-containing building materials. The management plan shows the location of ACM and assumed ACM. Anyone can review or obtain a copy of the plan at the school office during regular operating hours.

“It is important to note that not all friable asbestos-containing material needs to be removed from schools,” officials said.

“Once such material has been identified, a program can be implemented to ensure that the material is maintained in good condition and that appropriate precautions are followed when the material is disturbed for any reason.”

New Visitor Safety Procedures

Clear Bag Procedure for School Events

During the school day, this clear bag rule does NOT apply to students. You can still use your regular backpack or bookbag!

To keep everyone safe at school events, Ware County Schools has a new clear bag policy. This applies to anyone (parents, guardians, visitors) coming to see events at our school (fields, buildings, etc.).

- Clear Bags Only for Events: When you come to a school event, you'll need to bring a clear bag made of plastic, vinyl, or PVC (clear material). No other type of bags are allowed.

This means you can only bring certain types of bags:

- Clear Bags Only: Your bag must be completely see-through and made of clear plastic, vinyl, or PVC (clear bag material).
- Size Matters: The bag cannot be bigger than 12 inches wide, 6 inches tall, and 12 inches deep. Think of a standard lunchbox size.
- Small Clutch Exception: You can bring a small clutch purse (no bigger than 4.5 inches wide by 6.5 inches tall) with you, even if it's not clear. It can have a strap or not.
- No Bag Check: If your bag doesn't meet these rules, we will not have a place to store it for you. Please leave it at home or in your car.

Security Note: All bags are subject to search by school staff.

Weapons Detection System

Heads Up for Parents and Visitors! (Middle & High School Only)

Anyone coming to visit our middle or high school building (parents, guardians, visitors) will need to go through a weapons detection system. This is a safety measure required for everyone entering the building.

Thank you for helping keep our events safe!