

**STUDENT  
&  
PARENT  
HANDBOOK  
2016-2017**



**Mission:** *To graduate college and career ready students*

**Vision:** *Learning Today - Leading Tomorrow!*

**523 Vineville Street**

**Fort Valley, GA 31030**

**Phone: (478) 825-5933 Fax: (478) 825-9970**

**Website: [www.peachschools.org](http://www.peachschools.org)**

August 1, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to the 2016-2017 school year. We are committed to providing the best possible learning environment for our students and understand that partnering with parents/guardians is the best possible way to reach that goal. The expectations are for students to attend school on a regular basis and conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with their own learning and achievement or that of others. Parents/guardians are asked to cooperate with us in helping our students meet these expectations.

The Student & Parent Handbook addresses attendance, grades, testing, safety, and includes Student Code of Conduct. It also contains a review of appropriate student-related Board Policies and Administrative Procedures. The Student & Parent Handbook is meant to serve as a resource for some of the most basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. Please review all parts of this Student & Parent Handbook with your child. Should you have any questions once you have reviewed the information, please do not hesitate to call your child's principal.

By working together and maintaining a spirit of cooperation, we can ensure that our students are provided opportunities that will enable Peach County School District to achieve its mission, which is: "*To graduate college and career ready students.*"

As always, thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you and your child.

*Best wishes,*

*Daryl W. Fineran, Ed.D.*

Superintendent, Peach County Schools

**PEACH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**523 Vineville Street**

**Fort Valley, GA 31030**

**Phone (478) 825-5933 Fax (478) 825-9970**

**www.peachschools.org**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**

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Dr. Virginia Dixon	Vice-Chair
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**(478) 825-5933**

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Ben Maddox	Asst. Supt. of Admin. Affairs & Operations
Dr. Wanda Stewart	Asst. Supt. of Curriculum & Instruction
Shannon Dotsikas	Director of Human Resources
Susan Perry	Director of Finance
Matoshia Grant	Director of School Nutrition
Jacob Gresham	Director of Technology Services
Mallerina Marshall	Director of Title I Programs/Assessment
	Coordinator of 6-8 Curriculum & Instruction
Dyan Evatt	Coordinator of Special Education
Stephanie Buford	Social Worker/Homeless Liaison
Sara Mason	Parent and Community Liaison
Transportation	Provided by Durham Transportation Services
<i>(Contact Ben Maddox)</i>	

## SCHOOLS

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Jason Flanders, Assistant Principal, CTAE Director  
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Fort Valley Middle School, Grades 6-8  
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Fort Valley, GA 31030  
Phone: 478-825-7409

Hunt Elementary School, Grades PK-5  
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## **HELPING YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN SCHOOL**

Parents can help make school a successful experience for their students. Consider the following recommendations to help your child have a good school year.

1. Help your child have a stress-free start to each school day. Be sure that your child gets at least eight (8) hours of sleep and provide your child with a good breakfast. Children cannot concentrate if they are tired or hungry.
2. See that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time, and promptly explain any absence or tardiness to school. Make sure your child has adequate transportation to and from extracurricular activities.
3. Provide up-to-date home, work, cellular and emergency telephone numbers to proper school authorities.
4. Listen attentively to your child as he/she talks about school. Praise your child each day for something he/she has done. Have a special place to display work your child brings home from school.
5. Encourage your child to think of school as exciting and important. Attitudes developed during the elementary school years will set the tone for your child's entire school experience.
6. Keep the lines of communication open between you and your child's teacher. Inform the teacher of any family situations that could affect your child's behavior or performance.
7. Maintain regular communication with the school authorities concerning your child's progress and conduct. Inform proper school authorities of any problem or condition, which affects your child or other children in the school.
8. Do not compare your child's progress with that of brothers and sisters or other children. Each child's abilities are unique and each has different strengths and weaknesses.
9. Provide your elementary level child with many books and pictures. Read to your child and have your child read to you.
10. Provide your child with the resources needed to complete class work and other assignments. Discuss report cards and work assignments with your child. Review your child's homework daily.
11. Help your child build confidence in his/her school and teacher. Show an interest in school through visiting and participating in PTA/PTO and club activities.
12. Set an example for your child by showing courtesy and respect for the school and school property, as well as for other parents, students and school personnel.
13. Attend all scheduled parent/teacher conferences.
14. Sign in with the front office upon arrival and departure from school, and be prepared to show identification.
15. Acknowledge receipt of the Code of Conduct by signing and returning the acknowledgment of Code of Conduct form printed in this manual.

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **Age Requirements**

To enroll in Peach County Schools, students entering Pre-K must be 4 years old on or before September 1. Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 1. First grade students must be 6 years old on or before September 1. Parents must provide a copy of their child's proof of age at the time of enrollment.

Any student who has reached the age of 18 but has not reached the age of 20 by September 1, and who has dropped out of school or withdrawn from school for one semester or more after his/her 18th birthday, must apply for admission by contacting the building principal.

Special Education students are eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs until the age of 22 or until they receive a high school diploma or special education diploma or the equivalent, whichever comes first.

### **Compulsory Attendance**

Each parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of a child between the sixth and sixteenth birthdays of such child shall enroll and send the child to a public school, private school or home study program, and such child shall be responsible for enrolling and attending such school. Any violation or suspected violation of any applicable compulsory attendance law may be reported to legal authorities.

### **Attendance Zones**

Students must attend the school in their assigned attendance zone where their custodial parents/legal guardians reside. Students may not attend schools outside of their assigned attendance zone. If parents move to a new residence within Peach County, the new residence is in a different attendance zone, and the academic year has already started, the parent/guardian must enroll the student in his/her zoned school within 30 days of moving. For additional information please contact the Administrative Affairs Department. Peach County Schools does not offer School Choice.

Peach County Non-Resident Policy outlines an application process for any out-of-county student to apply to attend a Peach County school as a tuition-paying non-resident. The application is to be completed at the school nearest the non-resident's home address via MapQuest's shortest distance. Non-resident applications are available at all schools. After completion of the application, the principal will review the student's academic, disciplinary and attendance (including tardies) records. If the principal approves and has space available, the parent will then be permitted to register the student and pay the tuition. **All full-time employees will be allowed to enroll their own child at their school of employment or their school of choice. If the employee ceases to be a full-time employee of a school outside of the employee's school attendance area where his or her child is attending, the child may continue in that school as long as space allows. Transportation for the child of an employee outside of the child's school attendance area will not be provided.** A non-resident student who is not approved by administration shall be withdrawn from the Peach County School District with notice to the parent/legal guardian and referred to the student's county of residence. Georgia law authorizes the School District to seek reimbursement from the parent/guardian for the costs of educating a non-resident student and for attorney's fees if legal action is necessary.

### **Custody**

Parents shall provide to the school a certified copy of any court order that applies to custody of the child. Student enrollment forms, as well as other official documents of the school, must be signed by the natural parent or legal guardian with whom the child resides. Educational decisions concerning the child are reserved for the enrolling parent, although both parents may be involved in the process. If there is a disagreement between the two parties, the enrolling parent's decision shall be the governing decision.

It is a crime for any person to make or attempt to make a change of legal custody of a minor child by removing the child from school without permission of the person who enrolled the child in school. This is the case even if the person attempting to remove the child has a court order granting that person custody. Change of custody must be made at an alternate location. However, court orders that specifically authorize or direct the release of custody by the school will be followed. The school will not interject itself in custody or visitation disputes between parents.

The school will give to noncustodial parents, upon request, access to all information required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the laws of Georgia unless there is a valid court order directing the school to not divulge such information. If such an order exists, a certified copy must be presented to the principal.

### **Guardianship**

If a student resides with any person other than a natural parent, a certified copy of the court documents that establish legal guardianship will be required at the time of enrollment. If the person enrolling the student does not hold legal guardianship, he/she must complete a Non-Parental Affidavit of Residence. This



document must be notarized. The student will immediately be provisionally enrolled for a period of 30 calendar days.

For more information regarding petitions for temporary guardianship, please contact the Probate Court of Peach County.

### **Proof of Residence**

To enroll in Peach County Schools a student must reside in Peach County with a natural parent or legal guardian, or the student must be under the care of a state agency. Proof of residence is required when a student initially enrolls in a school and whenever a change of residence occurs. The principal or designee will accept the following records as proof of residency:

One of the following: non-contingent sales contract, current lease/rental agreement, most recent income tax return, current Medicaid card, current residential property tax statement or bill, current warranty or quick claim deed, current home purchase agreement, current homeowner's insurance policy, third-person Affidavit of Residency (notarized) if the student's family is residing in the home or apartment of another individual.

### **AND**

One of the following: current gas bill, current water bill, current electric bill, or request for change of address from post office.

### **Investigation of Proof of Residence**

Students enrolled under false information are illegally enrolled and will be withdrawn from school.

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 fine and/or imprisonment. For additional information, please contact Director of Administrative Affairs of the Peach County Board of Education.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

*It is critical for the school to be able to contact parents at any time students are at school. The school must have the parents' current address and home, cellular and business telephone numbers.* Emergency contact persons and their telephone numbers are needed in case a parent cannot be reached. This information is required at the time of registration and whenever a change occurs with the parents' address, telephone or emergency contact information.

### **Physical Examination and Immunization**

Upon initial enrollment in a Georgia public school, parents must provide a certificate of their child's eye, ear and dental examination. This certificate may be obtained from the county health department or from a licensed physician. Documentation of a child's immunization must be provided at the time of enrollment. All new entrants to Peach County Schools (K-12) and all current students rising to the 6th grade must have obtained two doses of the MMR (Mumps) and Varicella (Chicken Pox) vaccines. Parents can obtain a Georgia Immunization Certificate from their physician or from the Peach County Health Department. Parents may submit a temporary waiver of Georgia's immunization requirements for religious or medical reasons.

### **Grade Placement**

If acceptable documentation for determining grade placement is not presented at the time the student is enrolled, the student will be temporarily assigned to a grade until determination as to final grade placement can be made.

### **Social Security Numbers**

At the time of enrollment in Peach County Schools, parents are asked to provide a copy of the child's social security card or a completed statement of objection (waiver). A statement of objection (waiver) can be obtained through the enrollment staff at each school.

### **Transfer Students**

Prior to admission, the school must receive a certified copy of the student's academic transcript and disciplinary record from the school previously attended. A student may be provisionally admitted if the name and address of the school last attended and authorization to release all academic and disciplinary records to the school are provided.

The parent must disclose at the time transfer is sought the following information:

1. Whether the student has ever been adjudicated guilty of the commission of a designated felony as defined in O.C.G.A. Section 15-11-63.
2. Whether the student is currently serving a suspension, expulsion or assignment in an alternative (Crossroads) program in the district last attended.
3. Whether the student withdrew from the district last attended in lieu of being ordered to serve a period of suspension, expulsion, or assignment in an alternative (Crossroads) program.
4. Transcripts from non-accredited schools will be considered on an individual basis. Additional information and testing may be required in order to make a determination of how much credit may be accepted from the student's previous school. School credits or work completed under an individual tutor may not be accepted for credit. Transfer credits will be validated by the student's guidance counselor.

Any student who seeks to transfer to the Peach County School District during the time the student is subject to a disciplinary order from another district for short-term suspension, long-term suspension or expulsion, or who has withdrawn from such other district in lieu of being ordered to serve a period of suspension, expulsion or assignment in an alternative (Crossroads) program shall be ineligible to attend school in the Peach County School District. Any student provisionally admitted who is found to be ineligible shall be withdrawn from enrollment.

### **Re-Admission Refusal**

The Peach County Board of Education is authorized to refuse to re-admit or enroll a student suspended or expelled for having been convicted of, or adjudicated to have committed, been indicted for, or had information filed for the commission of a felony or any delinquent act which would be a felony if committed by an adult. The student or his/her parent/guardian may request a hearing pursuant to the Public School Disciplinary Tribunal Act. A hearing officer, tribunal panel, superintendent or local board shall be authorized to place such a student, who has been denied enrollment in a local alternative program.

Any student who is subject to a disciplinary order in the Peach County School District who withdraws from school and then seeks to re-enter any school in this school district shall remain subject to such disciplinary order for any period of time remaining on such order at the time of the student's withdrawal.

### **Withdrawal from School**

At the time of withdrawal students must return all textbooks, library books, and other school-owned items. Any such items not returned, and any other school-related expenses for which the student is responsible (such as lunch charges), must be paid for at the time of withdrawal. The school may withhold grade reports, diplomas, and/or certificates of progress until restitution is made for lost or damaged textbooks and/or media materials.

In situations where a custodial parent enrolls a child in school, that same parent must be the person who withdraws the child from school. However, the custodial parent who enrolled the child in school may give written permission for the school to allow a noncustodial parent to complete withdrawal procedures.

An unemancipated minor may not drop out of school without the written permission of his/her parent or guardian. Prior to accepting such permission, the school shall schedule a conference with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the educational options available to the student and the consequences of not earning a high school diploma.

## **ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

### **Arrival and Dismissal Time**

Schools may adjust the beginning and ending times to accommodate bus transportation services.

The school day begins and ends as follows:

Elementary School (PK-5)

Instructional Day - 8:35 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Early arrival - 7:30 a.m.

Middle School (6-8)

Instructional Day - 7:30 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

Early arrival - 6:50 a.m.

High School (9-12)

Instructional Day – 7:10 a.m. – 2:56 p.m.

Early arrival - 6:45 a.m.

Tardy – 7:20 a.m.

The Board 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. The Board 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.

### **Absences, Tardies and Early Check-Outs**

1. 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 – 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.
2. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes each day. On the **FIRST DAY** that 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. Written excuses must be provided within three (3) days of returning to school.
3. Students who check in late or check out early must report to the school office and present a written note from their parent explaining their absence. Any individual checking out students in grades K-8 must present a valid photo ID and that ID information should correspond with information in the district student information system (Infinite Campus).
4. If a K-8 student is tardy upon arrival to school, a parent must accompany the student to the office and sign for the student. The tardy student may not be permitted to attend class until the parent has signed for the student.

### **Excused Absences**

Students may be temporarily excused from school by the principal in the following circumstances:

1. Serious illness or hospitalization that would endanger the student's health or the health of others, including maternity confinement and delivery;
2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family which would reasonably necessitate absence from school;
3. A scheduled medical, dental or eye examination;
4. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith;
5. Court orders or mandates by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for the armed forces;
6. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety;

7. Other circumstances where the parent or guardian makes prior arrangements with the principal for their child to be absent from school, i.e., college visits, serving as a legislative page, and other special family occasions.

A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.

### **Absence Procedures**

1. Documentation
  - a. Students who desire to document an absence shall present a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian within **three (3) days** of returning to school.
  - b. Failure to present an excuse within **three (3) days** shall result in an unexcused absence.
  - c. Documentation presented after **three (3) days** will not be considered. Documentation may not be sent by fax, e-mail, or telephone.
  - d. A student absent for **five (5) consecutive days** must submit a medical excuse for absences to be excused.

Any student found to have submitted an excuse falsely presented, as being from a parent or guardian, will be subject to school discipline. Absences covered by such false excuses will be deemed unexcused and no makeup work will be accepted.

The principal or designee will determine whether or not an absence is excused, and may, at his/her discretion, require supporting documentation from doctor, dentist, clinic, court, funeral home, etc. in order to make this determination. The decision of the principal or designee with respect to the justification and validity of proffered documentation for an absence is final.

2. Making Up Missed Assignments or Tests

Students shall be given a reasonable opportunity, not exceeding **five (5) school days**, to make up assignments or tests, which were missed because of an excused absence from school. It is the student and parent's responsibility to arrange to make up work. Failure to make up work after a reasonable time will result in a grade of 0 for assignments missed during an excused absence.
3. Absences Due to Pregnancy

Students who are or become pregnant during any school semester will not be excused from attending school unless the student's treating physician states in writing that the student cannot attend school. Excused absences due to pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition may be made up under the same terms and requirements as any other excused absence upon the student's return to school.
4. Absences Related to Disciplinary Actions

Students placed in in-school suspension or participating in school related or sponsored activities are considered to be in attendance at school. Absences resulting from disciplinary suspensions shall be excused for purposes of this policy, subject to the following requirements:

  - a. Make up of assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. that are both assigned and due during a period of suspension must be completed and submitted no later than the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) school day following the student's return from suspension. Failure to make up work within five (5) school days will result in a grade of 0 for assignments missed.
  - b. Work assigned prior to the start of a suspension and due during the suspension shall be accepted and graded if submitted by the suspended student's parent or guardian or other representative on the due date.
  - c. Work assigned during a student's suspension to with a due date after the suspension shall be accepted for grading on the due date.

- d. It's the student's responsibility to get all classroom assignments during periods of suspension.
  - e. If the student is suspended from school during an exam period, the principal will make arrangements to allow the student to complete their exams.
5. Procedures for Excessive Unexcused Absences
- Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and may result in penalty as imposed by the compulsory attendance law. Students who accumulate an unacceptable number of unexcused absences may be referred for enrollment in the Learning Support Academy. Excessive absences may jeopardize the earning of course credits.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Unexcused absence-** School personnel (teacher/principal designee) will contact parent/guardian by telephone, concerning the reason(s) for absences, and will explain the procedure for documenting absences as excused, as outlined in Student Code of Conduct. The appropriateness for hospital/homebound should be discussed at this point.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Unexcused absence-** School personnel (principal designee) will send a note home to parent, including the total number of unexcused absences, and the school's attendance policy.
- 5<sup>th</sup>-Unexcused absence-** School personnel (principal designee) will refer student to the School Social Worker for counseling and appropriate intervention. A school social worker referral form **must** be completed and all relevant correspondence and documentation **must** be attached to the referral form. The School Social Worker will notify the parent via a letter, a home visit or telephone call requesting them to contact the School Social Worker to discuss the reasons for student's absences (family, economic, health, transportation, etc.). After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence without response, the school system (social worker) shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by certified mail, return receipt requested. The school system (social worker) shall provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of a child a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory school attendance. Parents and students age 10 and older shall sign the attendance consequences notice and return the completed notice to the school.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Unexcused absences-** Once a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences, the School Social Worker will file a juvenile truancy complaint with the Peach County Juvenile Court.
6. Consequences for Absences
- A student absent more than 15 excused and/or unexcused days of school in grades PK-8 shall not receive credit for work passed during the school year. A student absent more than 8 excused and/or unexcused days per semester (semester equals 18 weeks) in grades 9-12 will not receive credit for work passed during that semester. The denial of credit and/or retention may be appealed to the School Attendance Committee.

### **Tardies**

Tardy means the failure by a student to be in their 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).

#### **1. Tardy Policy for Grades 6-8**

For grades 6-8, a student is allowed three (3) tardies per semester. Additional tardies to class shall result in the following:

- a. Four (4) tardies to class per semester = Detention
- b. Five (5) tardies to class per semester = In-School Suspension/or Principal's Discretion
- c. Six (6) tardies to class per semester = In School Suspension (2 days)
- d. Additional tardies – In School Suspension/Principal discretion

2. Tardy Policy for Grades 9-12

For Grades 9-12, a student is allowed (2) tardies per semester period. Additional tardies shall result in the following:

- a. Three (3) tardies to class (semester) = Lunch Detention
- b. Four (4) tardies to class (semester) = Lunch Detention
- c. Five (5) or more tardies to class (semester) = ISS

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Special Education/504 Services**

Special education services and Section 504 services will be provided as required by law to all students of the Peach County School District. If a student or parent believes any student qualifies to receive special education or Section 504 services, this information may be reported to that student's principal, the Special Education Director, or the Superintendent. Grades for special education students may be based on the degree of completion of the student's Individual Education Program (IEP).

### **Gifted Program**

Peach County uses the multi-criteria approach for gifted identification and placement, which includes mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. In Peach County, students are reviewed for possible referral for gifted education services each year. Classroom teachers observe the traits, aptitudes, and behaviors of the students. Achievement tests, mental ability, creativity, scores, grades, special recognition, and awards received by students will be considered. Classroom teachers usually make referrals; however, any responsible person who has knowledge of a student's intellectual functioning (including parent/guardian) may make a referral. For review of the gifted administrative procedures and/or gifted education curricular, contact the Gifted Eligibility Chair at each school or Mary Jean Banter, the coordinator of Gifted Services, at (478) 825-9650 Ext. 1822.

### **Medical Needs**

1. Illness

If a student becomes too ill to remain in class, the student may contact his/her parent to make arrangements to be checked out of school. The principal should be notified in writing if a student has a chronic illness or disability that could require special or emergency treatment. Students should not be returned to school until fever and/or vomiting has ceased for 24 hours. Medicine must be kept in the school office and dispensed by the principal or his/her designee.

2. Medication

The administering of medication by school system personnel to students shall be permitted only with parental/guardian consent or in the event the school staff reasonably believes the administration of such medication is necessary or desirable for the health or wellbeing of a student. Administration of medication to students shall be done in accordance with the School District's policy on Administration of Medication. Students shall not have possession of prescription or non-prescription medicine while on school property, or while engaging in any school related activity, except that a student may have an asthma inhaler and may have possession of prescription or non-prescription medicine only for the time period reasonably required to deliver it to the principal (or his/her designee) along with a written note from the parent/guardian requesting that such medicine be administered to the student.

Students are authorized to carry and self-administer prescription auto-injectable epinephrine provided the student's parents provide (1) a written statement from a licensed physician: (a) detailing the name of medication, method, dosage, and time schedules by which the student is to take the medicine; (b) confirming the student is able to self-administer auto-injectable epinephrine; and (2) a written statement from the student's parent acknowledging: (a) they give

the student permission to self-administer the prescription auto-injectable epinephrine as provided by the student's licensed physician; (b) the parent has provided a medical release that gives school personnel permission to consult with the student's physician regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medicine; and (c) the parent has provided the District with a signed authorization releasing the District, 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's self-administering auto-injectable epinephrine.

### 3. Hospital Homebound Service

A student enrolled in the Peach County School District who has a medically diagnosed physical condition, which is non-communicable and restricts the student to his/her home or a hospital for a period of time that will significantly interfere with his/her education may be eligible to be served by the hospital homebound program.

A student may not be eligible for hospital homebound services for a number of reasons, which include, but are not limited to absences due to any of the following:

- a. Cases of pregnancy not requiring abnormal restriction of activities as prescribed by a licensed physician. Pregnant students are eligible for hospital homebound if, and only if, a medical doctor determines the condition precludes attendance.
- b. Abuse of chemical substances where hospitalization is not required.

Further inquiries about the Hospital Homebound Program should be addressed to the Office of the Superintendent.

### **School Nutrition Program**

The Peach County School Nutrition Program is responsible for the daily preparation and serving of student meals. The goal of the SNP is to provide a healthy and nutritious breakfast and lunch to assist students in meeting academic and physical achievement. In order to ensure that all students have access to these meals, a free and reduced application should be completed for each household. This application will determine if a student will receive meals at no charge, a reduced rate, or the full paid rate. Applications for free/reduced meals are available for all students and may be obtained from any district school, through online services or at the Central Office.

Students whose application status is determined to be reduced or paid will be allowed three days of meal charges (total of three breakfasts and three lunches). Meal charges are for emergency situations only and are designated to cover situations when parents or students forget to bring or provide funds for meals. The SNP encourages the parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments for their child(ren). When the second negative account balance is incurred, the parent/guardian will be notified via telephone or in writing of the need for payments on their child's account. If a child exceeds the three meal charge limit, the student will receive a replacement meal of a cheese or peanut butter sandwich on whole wheat bread and a choice of milk. This meal will be provided for a total of three additional days and then no further meals will be provided until the balance has been paid, or an application has been completed and a status of free is determined. Students with negative balances will not be allowed to purchase any a la carte items.

## **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

### **Grading Scales**

Academic grading scale for K-12

#### **Kindergarten**

E = Exceeds

MS = Meets

#### **Grades 1-12**

A+ = 95-100%

A = 90-94%

Conduct grading scale for K-12

1 - Excellent (95-100)

2 - Above Average (85-94)

PR = Progressing	B+ = 85-89%	3 – Average (75-84)
EM = Emerging	B = 80-84%	4 – Below Average (70-74)
ND = Not Demonstrated	C+ = 75-79%	5 – Poor (0-69)
NA = Not Assessed	C = 70-74%	
	F = 0 -69%	

Documentation supporting the conduct grade shall be maintained by the teacher in accordance with the individual school criteria.

## Graduation

### 1. General Requirements

The Georgia Board of Education and the Peach County Board of Education establish graduation requirements. To be eligible for graduation, requirements in each of the following components must be met:

- a. Unit credit: Students must earn the minimum number of units required for their graduating class and diploma program.
- b. Required courses: Students must satisfactorily complete specific courses required for graduation. Students should also be aware that specific courses may be required for admission to a university, college or technical college. No required course may be substituted, exempted or audited. No courses may be repeated unless the student failed the course.
- c. Attendance: Attendance requirements are those set forth in the Georgia compulsory attendance law and elsewhere in this Handbook and Code of Conduct.
- d. Assessment: Students must satisfy the applicable state assessment requirements. (Further information may be obtained from your child’s school counselor.)

### 2. Graduation Ceremonies

**All requirements for graduation must be completed before a student can participate in graduation exercises.** A diploma will be presented upon completion of all graduation requirements.

## TRANSPORTATION

Peach County School District contracts with Durham Transportation Services to provide daily transportation for its students. All bus routes are posted on the Transportation Department page of the district website ([www.peachschools.org](http://www.peachschools.org)). If you have questions regarding bus transportation, please contact Durham Transportation Services at (478) 825-0601.

### Video Cameras on Buses

Each bus is equipped with a video camera. Students are videoed on each trip. The videos provide a record of student’s behavior on the bus. School personnel review the video to determine actual events. Upon written request, the parent of a student accused of a bus disciplinary infraction may make an appointment to view a tape of their child. Please contact your child’s school principal to make an appointment to view a video.

### Transportation to and from Designated Bus Stops

Students will be picked up at their designated bus stop and returned to their designated bus stop. Students may only ride their assigned bus. It is the responsibility of the Peach County School System to transport students from bus stop to school and from school to bus stop. Parents are responsible for the child after he/she is deposited at designated bus stop. The Peach County School System shall not be responsible for the student after he/she returns to the designated bus stop.

**PEACH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL NOT PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION FOR NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS.**



## Safety Tips

1. Students must be at the bus stop five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the school bus.
2. Students who must cross the road to board a bus should never do so until the bus has arrived, the proper warning signs are displayed, and the driver motions for the student to cross.
3. Students should never cross behind the bus.
4. Students should always stand a safe distance from the road, i.e. at least five (5) feet.
5. Students should never run to or from the bus.
6. Students who must cross the road after exiting the bus should always cross at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus after looking in both directions to be sure no traffic is approaching; after the bus has come to a complete stop; and after the driver signals that it is safe for them to cross.
7. Students participating in band shall contact their band director regarding band instruments, which are approved for transportation on a Peach County School Bus.

## Bus Conduct Rules and Regulations

See Student Code of Conduct (Bus Conduct Rules and Regulations-page 24) for additional information.

## Transportation for Extracurricular Activities

Students are often involved in extracurricular activities that keep them from returning home through the school transportation system. If a parent cannot provide transportation for the student, the parent should ensure that a means of transportation is provided to the student. The school system does not take responsibility to provide transportation for students outside of the normal busing schedules.

## Driving Privileges

### 1. Driving and Parking Private Vehicles on School Property

Students who drive to school must obtain parking permits from the principal's office. Students should take lunches, textbooks, paper, pencils, etc. needed for school when they initially park and leave the vehicle. The principal or the principal's designee must accompany students wishing to return to their car later in the school day. Violation of the rules, regulations and policies of the Board of Education and/or the school concerning driving or parking a vehicle on school campus can result in suspension or expulsion from school, revocation of parking privileges and/or having the vehicle towed at the driver/owner's expense. **While a student vehicle is on school property, the principal and his/her designee have the right to search the vehicle without obtaining permission from the student or the owner of the vehicle.**

### 2. Restrictions on Driving Privileges

The School District is required to report to the Georgia Department of Education which in turn reports to the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety Driver's License Bureau, certain violations of the Code of Conduct which may lead to restrictions being placed on the student driving privileges. Violations which must be reported include: dropping out of school, exceeding more than 10 unexcused absences in any semester, suspensions from school for the following: threats or actual violence towards any school district personnel or their property, possession and/or sale of drugs/alcohol; possession and/or use of a weapon; any sexual offenses; and causing bodily harm or disfigurement. **Note: Students assigned to the Learning Support Academy are not permitted to drive to school.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Accidents

Peach County School District – Disclaimer for Accident Liability

In accordance with Georgia law, the School District shall not be responsible for loss or injury sustained as a result of any accident which occurs on any of its properties. The School district will not be responsible for the replacement of any items that are damaged or destroyed as a result of any accident which occurs on any of its properties. The School District will not be responsible for any medical expenses for injuries that occur as a result of any accident on any of its properties.

If a student is injured or becomes ill at school, every effort will be made to contact the parent and take action at the parent's direction. If a parent cannot be contacted, school officials will take reasonable actions to preserve the health of the child. Parents must notify the school if their child has health problems that could result in a health emergency and should explain the procedures the school should follow.

### **Athletics**

Students enrolled in grades 6-12 and meeting academic requirements will be eligible to participate in interscholastic events. For more information, contact the principal or student athletic director. Students will not be retained for athletic purposes.

### **Book-Bags, Sports Bags and Other Bags**

Book-bags may be used by students. Bags should not be of design or size as to cause disruption on the school bus. Bags with rollers are permitted providing they meet the previously mentioned safety requirements. If a student chooses to use a rolling bag, they must carry the bag when entering and exiting the bus. A luggage-type bag that is too bulky for students to safely hold in their lap is prohibited on the bus. For safety reasons, the center aisle of the bus must remain clear of any and all bags.

### **Cancellation of School**

In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, official information about school closings will be broadcast on area radio and television stations. Parents should be aware that severe weather or other emergencies could cause school to be cancelled during the school day. Parents should plan accordingly.

### **Classroom Observations**

Parents/Guardians who wish to observe student classes must request an appointment at least 24 hours in advance. Principals reserve the right to designate an alternate time/date for an observation dependent upon scheduled building-level activities.

### **Clubs and Organizations**

As required by Georgia law, schools must provide to parents a list of all clubs and organizations available for students. Schools will send this information to parents at the beginning of the school year. Included with this list shall be a form that parents should use to notify the school if they wish to prohibit their child from participation in any club or organization. Please contact your child's school if you have not received this list and notification form. If new clubs or organizations are formed during the school year, parents will be notified.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

The principal, superintendent and Board of Education must approve all extracurricular activities and field trips. Students who violate school rules or the rules of the Board of Education while on extracurricular activities or trips shall be subject to disciplinary action in the same manner as if the violations were committed on school property and during school hours. All school-sponsored activities shall be conducted under the direct supervision of the sponsoring teacher(s).

If transportation to and from an activity is provided by Peach County Schools, both the eligible students and supervising teachers will ride in the vehicles provided so that supervision may be maintained. Contingent upon the principal's approval, an exception may be made when the parent wishes to assume direct responsibility for his or her child's transportation.

### **Field Trips**

Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip and will be asked to sign a field trip permission form. Sometimes a small contribution may be requested of the parents to help defray transportation or facility costs. No student will be penalized in any manner or denied the opportunity to attend the field trip for failure to contribute.

### **Head Lice**

Because head lice are so easily spread from one student to another, students with head lice (or eggs) cannot remain at school. If a student has head lice, his/her parent will be asked to pick up the child. Students will not be allowed to return to school until proof of effective treatment is provided and an examination indicates the student no longer has head lice. In the event that head lice are a recurring problem, clearance from the Peach County Health Department or a physician may be necessary before the student may return to school.

### **Lost and/or Damaged Textbooks and Library Books**

Parents are responsible for the cost of lost and/or damaged textbooks and library books. Textbooks are kept for seven years. The cost for textbooks, which are lost and/or damaged within the first year of purchase, will be full replacement value. The replacement costs will decrease by ten percent (10%) for every year thereafter.

### **Lunch with Students**

Parents/guardians are welcome to eat lunch with their children at school. On such occasions, parents are encouraged to purchase a school lunch but are permitted to bring food to the school for consumption by themselves and their children. Commercial foods may not be delivered to the school without prior approval by the principal. Parents are asked to please inform the school administration office by 9:00 am on the morning that they intend to have lunch with their children.

### **Metal Detectors**

The Board of Education has authorized the use of hand-held and walk-through metal detectors. School officials or law enforcement officers will conduct metal detector checks on groups or individuals in a minimally intrusive, nondiscriminatory manner.

A student's failure to permit a metal detector search as provided in the Student Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension. Any student wearing a pacemaker, defibrillator, or similar device who objects to being scanned by a metal detector must notify the appropriate school official and may be subjected to an alternate means of search. Any student allegedly wearing a pacemaker, defibrillator, or similar device must provide the school with medical documentation to support this claim within five (5) school days or be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents are encouraged to contact the school to arrange a parent-teacher conference when the parent would like more information about their child's performance at school. A parent-teacher conference can be an effective way to help students improve their schoolwork. To schedule a conference, parents should contact the school office or the teacher. Teachers are not available for parent-teacher conferences during instructional time.

### **Solicitation of Students or Employees**

Solicitation of students or employees by any business, industry, organization or individual for the purpose of selling a product, service or membership is prohibited on school grounds. The selling of any article or subscription, or any other activity undertaken for the purpose of raising funds or collecting monies in or through a school is prohibited unless the particular activity is approved by the Peach County Board of Education. **Please do not allow your child to bring items to school to be sold to students or employees.**

### **Student Questioning By Officials**

Principals and Assistant Principals have the responsibility and authority to question students for the purpose of maintaining a safe and orderly school environment without parental consent. DFCS officials investigating suspected child abuse are permitted to conduct reasonable interviews and inspections of children. Any request by a Guardian Ad Litem appointed by the court 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's relationship with the child.

### **Student Questioning By Law Enforcement**

School Resource Officers (“SRO”), as well as Probation Officers of the Juvenile Court, are permitted to question students at school without prior parent approval. The SRO as well as the Probation Officers of the Juvenile Court must notify the principal or his/her designee prior to questioning students. 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 or warrant for arrest, or state that the situation involves hot pursuit of a suspect linked to a felony crime may question students without parental consent.

### **Student Searches**

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student desks, student lockers or student automobiles at any time. In addition, a student may be searched if administrators have reason to believe the student is in possession of an article or substance which is illegal, prohibited by school rules, or dangerous. Students are given the opportunity to produce the item sought, or to voluntarily empty their pockets, pocketbooks, or book bags. Students may be asked to remove their jacket, vest, shoes or socks. A School Resource Officer may be summoned if there is reason to believe any search should be continued beyond the parameters set forth above. A student that refuses to allow an administrator to search him/her will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.

If a search yields illegal or contraband materials, such items shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition. If recovered items are not illegal but are in violation of Board policies, the items will be held by the school until claimed by the student’s parents or guardian. **Confiscated items may be retrieved at the school office upon payment of \$30.00 administrative storage fee.**

### **Visitors**

All schools in the Peach County School District are closed campuses. All visitors must report to the main office. Visitors must wear a name badge while at the school. Unauthorized person(s) found on school property will be prosecuted (O.C.G.A. § 16-7-21).

## **STUDENT DRESS AND GROOMING**

### **Student Dress and Grooming Code for Grades K-12**

No article of clothing shall be worn which advertises alcohol, drugs, any prohibited product, sex, depicts or suggests violence or which contains suggestive writings, pictures, or emblems that are inflammatory, vulgar, or discriminatory. All pants and shorts shall be hemmed and holes patched.

The following is the dress code for all students (K-12) in the Peach County School System:

#### **Shirts**

- All shirts must be collared and may be any solid color
- All shirts shall be tucked in

#### **Shorts/Skirts/Pants/Dresses**

- Khaki material – only blue, black or khaki colors are allowed (Khaki denim material permitted)
- All shorts, skirts and pants must be worn at the natural waistline and size appropriate
- No Leggings or jeggings are permitted
- All shorts, skirts and dresses may be no more than 2” above the knee
- Belts must be worn if shorts or pants have belt loops
- Cargo-style pants are permitted

#### **Shoes**

- Shoes must be tennis shoes or flats

- Hair**
- No braiding or unbraiding of hair during the school day
  - Combs, picks, pens, roach clips, and curlers shall not be worn in hair
  - Beards, goatees and mustaches shall be neat and well-trimmed
- Hats**
- Hats or hoods shall not be worn in the building
  - Head gear is not permitted.
- Jewelry**
- Spiked jewelry or chains of any kind are not permitted
  - Jewelry with inflammatory words or pictures are not permitted
  - Safety pins used as decorative jewelry shall not be permitted
  - Facial, mouth and body ornaments are not permitted
  - Nose rings are not permitted unless dictated by religious faith. Documentation stating that the nose ring is dictated by religious faith must be provided.

### **Dress Code Violation for Students Grades K-8**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Warning – Parents will be called.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** ISS for one day

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** OSS for one day

**4<sup>th</sup> and Subsequent Offenses:** OSS for one day. Parent must accompany student back to school for a parent conference.

### **Dress Code Violation for Students Grades 9-12**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Warning

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** Lunch Detention

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** Lunch Detention

**4<sup>th</sup> and Subsequent Offenses:** ISS

**\*All deviations from the dress code as stated above must be at the principal's discretion.\***

*\*Adopted 5-3-2011 by the Peach County Board of Education*

*\*Revised 4-8-2014 by the Peach County Board of Education*

### **BOARD APPROVED DRESS CODE ADDENDUM**

1. Pullover or zipped hoodies are permitted if proper attire is worn underneath. Pullover or zipped hoodies must be size appropriate. Hoods cannot be worn in the building.
2. Solid colored pullover sweaters and vests are permitted.
3. Zip-up jackets with hoods, sweaters with buttons and other light jackets are permissible but hoods cannot be worn in the building. Additionally, all sweaters, jackets, and zip-up jackets with hoods must remain open. Correct dress code procedures must be followed. Example: correct shirt must be visible.
4. Zip-up jackets with hoods, sweaters with buttons & other lightweight jackets in solid colors are preferred but not required.
5. Heavy coats and topcoats are not to be worn inside the classroom.
6. Inappropriate logos and advertisements are not allowed on sweatshirt (hoodies), zip-up jackets, sweaters, or jackets.
7. Zip-up jackets with hoods, sweaters with buttons, and other light jackets must be size appropriate.

*\*Adopted 11-1-2011 by the Peach County Board of Education*

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

### **Student Expectations - Each student is expected to:**

1. Behave in a responsible manner at school, on school buses, at school bus stops, and at all school-related functions on or off campus.
2. Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others.
3. Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
4. Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials to class and complete assignments.
5. Obey all District rules and cooperate with the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
6. Communicate with your parent/guardian about your school progress.

### **Additional Behavior Requirements**

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

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

### **Unauthorized Conduct**

#### 1. Academic Dishonesty

Coursework submitted by a student must be the student's own, original work. Students shall not cheat on any assignment by giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or commit the act of plagiarism. Students who commit such acts are subject to receiving a grade of zero on the assignment in question as well as disciplinary action.

#### 2. Alcohol and Drugs

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any alcohol or mind altering substance, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, cocaine, marijuana, controlled substance, counterfeit drug, alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell or use any drug or alcohol paraphernalia or related object of any nature. Use of prescribed medications dispensed by a registered pharmacist is allowed, so long as said medications are used in accordance with school rules governing the possession and use of prescribed medications. All prescription drugs shall be kept in the original container and shall not be distributed to other students. Students who see or become aware of any alcohol and/or other drugs or drug related objects must not touch the material **nor remain in the presence of the person or group possessing it. Students must notify a staff member immediately, or be subject to discipline, including but not limited to expulsion.**

#### 3. Bullying

Bullying is prohibited. Georgia law defines bullying as an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or as to acts of bullying that involve electronic communication.

Bullying is (1) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on a person when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; (2) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; (3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that: (a) Causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm; (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.

Notwithstanding Peach County Schools' ability to impose any additional punishment for violations of rules under the Parent and Student Handbook, students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals. Peach County Schools reserve the right to punish a first (1<sup>st</sup>) or second (2<sup>nd</sup>) offense of bullying pursuant to the punishment guidelines established for Level-2 violations.

4. Computer Use Violations

Students will be held **accountable** for violations of any computer use policy, including but not limited to the Student Internet Safety Policy. A student and his/her parent/guardian will also be responsible for all damages and costs incurred for service or repair or any computer or computer equipment damaged by a student.

5. Gang-Related Activity

Exhibiting gang affiliation and/or engaging in any gang-related activity is not permitted. For the purposes of this handbook, a gang is defined as any group or association of three (3) or more persons, whether formal or informal, as evidenced by a common name or common identifying sign, symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic, that encourages, solicits, promotes, condones, causes, assists, or abets any illegal or disruptive activity.

Students shall not use any speech or commit any act or omission in furtherance of the interests of any gang-related activity, including but not limited to:

- a. Soliciting others for membership in a gang;
- b. Requesting any person to pay protection, bullying, or otherwise intimidating or threatening or physically harming any person;
- c. Inciting other students to engage in any gang related activity;
- d. Defacing any school property with any kind of gang graffiti.

6. Obscene, Slanderous and Vulgar Speech

Students may not engage in speech or expression which:

- a. Is obscene to minors, libelous, slanderous, indecent, lewd, or vulgar;
- b. Advertises any product or service not permitted to be possessed or used by minors by law, including but not limited to alcohol, tobacco and controlled substances;
- c. Injures, harasses or invades the privacy of other people including, but not limited to, speech or expression which defames any person on the basis of his/her race, color, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or creed; or
- d. Will result in or which school administrators reasonably forecast will result in a material or substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or school activities, which may include but is not limited to representations of killing or sacrificing animals or humans, pentagrams, upside-down crosses, the number 666, or swastikas.

School administrators may also prohibit any other type of speech, expression or dress, which is inconsistent with school district policy.

## 7. Sexual Harassment

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to harass any other student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to the following:

- a. Verbal harassment or abuse;
- b. Pressure for sexual activity;
- c. Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
- d. Unwelcome touching;
- e. Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats;
- f. Sexually-orientated kidding, teasing, or jokes;
- g. Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or their appearance;
- h. The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
- i. Physical contact or blocking movement.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships between students. It also does not apply to age appropriate behavior between very young students. Rather, it is behavior which is ***not welcome*** and which is ***personally intimidating, hostile or offensive***.

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other conduct of a sexual nature by employees or volunteers toward students are ***unwelcome*** by definition, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any student who alleges sexual harassment by a student, teacher, administrator, or other school system employee may complain directly to a principal, guidance counselor or other individual designated to receive such complaints. All allegations of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be taken as appropriate.

## 8. Tobacco

Students shall not possess, transmit or use tobacco or tobacco-related products in any form, including, without limitation, lighters, rolling papers, and matches.

## 9. Vapor Products

Students shall not possess, transmit, or use vapor or vapor related products in any form, including, without limitation, e-cigarettes, vapor pipes and e-juice.

## 10. Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

- a. Students are not allowed to carry, possess, or have under his/her control any weapon, explosive compound, firearm, cap pistol, water gun, rubber knife, or any other toy or object that resembles a weapon while at a school building or on school property, at a school function on or off-campus, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school. A student in possession of any such item will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Handbook, with the matter being reported to law enforcement authorities.
  - 1) Weapon: Includes any pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, taser or stun gun, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or a dirk, any knife regardless of the length of the blade, straight edge razor or razor blade(s), spring stick, metal or wooden knucks, blackjack or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken or fighting chain, or any disc of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or bat, club, or other bludgeon type weapon, chains, pipes, sticks or any weapon of any kind or any object that is used as a weapon.



- 2) Explosive: Includes any bomb, firebomb, Molotov cocktail, firecracker, fireworks, stink bomb, bullet, shell, gunpowder, grenade, missile, or any other type of explosive device or substance.
  - 3) Firearm: Includes but is not limited to any weapon, including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device; or any type of weapon which will expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant and which has any barrel with a bore of more than **one-half (1/2) inch** in diameter. A destructive device includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine or any similar device.
- b. Any student in possession of or having under his/her control a firearm while at school or a school function on or off campus, on school property, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school system, may be immediately suspended from school. The matter will be submitted to a disciplinary hearing officer and reported to law enforcement authorities. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, students found to have committed this offense by the disciplinary hearing officer will be expelled from Peach County Schools for not less than **one (1) calendar year**. Upon appeal, the Peach County Board of Education may modify this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.
  - c. Toys such as cap pistols, water guns, and rubber knives are prohibited. Bringing toys that resemble weapons onto any school property or bus can result in suspension or expulsion from school.
11. Students shall not engage in any other activity, which is prohibited by this Student Handbook, by any other policy of the School District, the School, or by law.

### **Bus Conduct Rules and Regulations**

- 1. For the safety of all students and school personnel, students are expected to obey the following rules:
  - a. The school bus is an extension of the classroom.
  - b. Bus drivers are responsible for the student's conduct, safety and transportation and therefore shall have complete control of students. Bus drivers will report promptly to Durham Transportation Services any bus misbehavior. Durham Transportation Services will notify the school principal of any bus disciplinary issues. Principals or their designee(s), NOT BUS DRIVERS, are responsible for disciplining students for bus misbehavior.
  - c. Bus drivers, with the assistance of the principal or his/her designee, may assign seats to all students.
  - d. Students must take their seats promptly when loading the bus and remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
  - e. Students will not be allowed to enter or leave a bus at any place other than at the student's usual bus stop or school unless authorized by the principal or his/her designee. Students will be picked up at their designated bus stop and returned to their designated bus stop or school. Students who must change buses at any school or wait for the school bus must remain at the designated location at the school until the bus arrives and departs. Parents remain responsible for the child after he/she is dropped off by a parent or guardian at designated bus stop until such time as the student enters his/her designated bus. The Peach County School District shall not be responsible for any student after he/she is returned by the Peach County School District to the student's designated bus stop.
  - f. Bus drivers will not put students off the bus after accepting students, but will carry students to the school or to their designated bus stop.

- g. Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices, lights or reflective devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to computer; cell phone; pager; any tape, compact disc, audible radio or mp3 player, mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other electronic devices, lights, or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
- h. Misconduct on a school bus will result in the application of the normal discipline procedures of the School District. The following is a nonexclusive list of infractions, which may result in the principal suspending students from the school bus, or school, or both:
  - 1) Being insubordinate to the bus driver including, but not limited to, giving the bus driver an incorrect name or address;
  - 2) Failing to obey orders or directions of the bus driver;
  - 3) Using vulgar or obscene language whether written or spoken;
  - 4) Using obscene gestures or improper language;
  - 5) Smoking, possessing or using tobacco or any smoking paraphernalia;
  - 6) Getting on or off the bus at any improper location;
  - 7) Damaging the bus, leaving trash on the bus or throwing objects on the bus or out the windows;
  - 8) Making threats; bullying; engaging in acts of physical or verbal violence; being disrespectful towards the bus driver or any other persons on the school bus; or other unruly behavior;
  - 9) Possession of contraband items, including but not limited to weapons, drugs or alcohol, or prohibited electronic devices;
  - 10) Tampering with emergency exits including but not limited to the back door;
  - 11) Drinking any liquid, or eating, or chewing any food, gum or candy;
  - 12) Talking or causing disruption at railroad crossings or bus stops.
  - 13) In cases of extreme student misbehavior while being transported to and from school or school related activities, appropriate law enforcement officials may be called to remove the student(s) from the bus. The student may also be subject to suspension from the school bus for the remainder of the school year.
  - 14) No luggage carriers or luggage carts are allowed on the bus.
  - 15) Silence shall be observed at all railroad crossings and bus stops.

2. Procedure for Addressing Bus Misconduct

The bus driver will speak with the student about the misconduct and reassign the student to another seat as needed. The driver will document the offense and any discipline. The driver will give a written copy of the discipline notice to Durham Transportation Services, who will provide all necessary documentation to the school principal.

The principal shall take appropriate disciplinary action for any bus misconduct, which may include, but is not limited to, the loss of the privilege of transportation. The principal may also call a disciplinary hearing for bus misconduct and will notify the parent/guardian of any warnings, disciplinary actions, or bus suspension.

No student shall be allowed to ride any Peach County School Bus if the student's riding privileges have been suspended. If the school year ends and the student has not served his/her entire bus suspension, then the student shall finish the bus suspension at the beginning of the next school year.

## **Levels of Misconduct**

Students may not engage in any other activity, which is prohibited by or may be punished pursuant to this Student Handbook, which is prohibited by any policy or rule of the School District or which is prohibited by law.

The Student Code of Conduct is organized into four (4) categories of prohibited behaviors: Level-1 Offenses, Level-2 Offenses, Level-3 Offenses, and Level-4 Offenses. Additional information regarding prohibited behaviors and disciplinary actions follows these sections.

Parents and students should carefully review **ALL** information contained in the Student Code of Conduct. Students are subject to disciplinary action for engaging in or attempting to commit any of the prohibited behaviors listed in the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Level-1 Offenses**

1. Behavior detrimental to learning, including but not limited to unexcused tardies to school or class, and disruptions of the learning environment.
2. Being insubordinate to school personnel.
3. Being disrespectful to students, school personnel, or other persons.
4. Being in an unauthorized area.
5. Eating or drinking in an undesignated area.
6. Violating the policies for bus conduct (See Bus Conduct Rules and Regulations).
7. Possessing and/or using nuisance items, including but not limited to noise makers, novelty items, and any other item that disrupts class.
8. Deliberately giving false or misleading information, including but not limited to forgery and altering records.
9. Failure to be prepared for class.
10. Failure to deliver and/or return written communication between home and school.
11. Displaying or using a cell phone, pager, or electronic communication device during the school day without the consent of the principal or his/her designee.
12. Gambling.
13. Lunchroom or restroom misconduct.
14. Leaving school or skipping class without permission.
15. Inappropriate physical contact between students.
16. Violating the student medication policy (See Student Medication Policy).
17. Violating the student dress code (See Student Dress and Grooming Code).
18. Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any material, substance, food item, or personal belonging that is inappropriate for school without the consent of the principal or his/her designee.

### **Level-2 Offenses**

1. Accumulation of seven (7) or more Level-1 violations.
2. Communicating a terroristic threat: which occurs when one threatens, whether spoken, written, or transmitted by an electronic device, to commit an act of violence.
3. Verbally or physically harassing or taunting any other student, including but not limited to harassing or taunting on the Internet (web based sites) or via any other electronic device such as a cell phone.
4. Theft, including but not limited to attempted theft, extortion, bribery, theft by deception, and/or possession of stolen property.
5. Fighting.
6. Engaging in disorderly conduct.
7. Refusing to comply with assigned disciplinary consequences.

8. Failure to report to a teacher or administrator the knowledge of an event, device, object, or substance that could cause harm to self or others;
9. Posting or distributing unauthorized materials on the school grounds.
10. Sexual misconduct, including but not limited to harassment; possessing, accessing to viewing obscene or vulgar materials; indecent exposure; entry into areas designated for the opposite sex only; and/or sexual contact.
11. Engaging in hazing, which includes but is not limited to, any activity which endangers the physical health of a student, regardless of a student's willingness to participate in such activity.
12. Engaging in gang-related activity, which includes, but is not limited to, any activity that encourages, solicits, promotes, condones, causes, assists or abets any illegal or disruptive act.
13. Damaging or vandalizing school or personal property.
14. Engaging in a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) act of bullying within a school year.
15. Violating the Student Internet Safety Policy.
16. Violating any law that constitutes a misdemeanor under Georgia law.
17. Any other act that endangers the welfare or safety of other students or staff.
18. Any other act that seriously disrupts the orderly process of the school.
19. Verbal Altercation

### **Level-3 Offenses**

1. Using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, being under the influence of any drug or substance declared unlawful, any substance or chemical that is mood altering when taken, or any substance represented to be a drug or unlawful substance; admits to the use of any substances represented to be a drug prior to attending school or a school related activity; or possessing any drug paraphernalia.
2. Using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage; or admits to the use of alcohol prior to attending school or school related activity.
3. Using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging tobacco; or possessing any tobacco paraphernalia.
4. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator or other school employee toward a student.
5. Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering or exchanging any counterfeit money.
6. Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering or exchanging any weapon, explosive, compound or object that can reasonably be considered and/or used as a weapon.
7. Violations constitute a felony under Georgia law.
8. Threat to staff member

### **Level-4 Offenses**

Students are prohibited from engaging in or attempting to commit physical acts of violence against and inappropriate physical contact with school personnel (teachers, administrators, other employees or school visitors), which includes but is not limited to:

1. Unintentional but inappropriate physical contact with school personnel.
2. Attempting to make inappropriate physical contact with school personnel.
3. Intentional physical contact with school personnel of an insulting or provoking nature.
4. Intentional physical contact with school personnel that causes harm, unless such contact occurs in self-defense.

## **Punishment for Disciplinary Infractions**

In addition to and not in limitation of the disciplinary authority given to teachers, administrators and student discipline hearing officers in this Student Handbook or by School District policy, the following punishments may be given to any student who violates this Student Handbook or School District policy.

### 1. Punishment for Level-1 Offenses.

At an administrator's discretion, any student who commits or attempts to commit a Level-1 violation or any other violation of the Student Handbook that is not specifically designated as a Level 2, 3 or 4 offense may be assigned in-school suspension for up to ten (10) days or assigned out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) school days, regardless of the number of previous violations. A disciplinary hearing may also be called in the discretion of the administrator.

Other available punishments for Level-1 violations include but are not limited to:

**1<sup>st</sup> Violation:** In-School Suspension for two (2) school days.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Violation:** In-School Suspension for three (3) school days.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Violation:** In-School Suspension for five (5) school days.

**4<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Out-of-School Suspension for two (2) school days.

**5<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Out-of-School Suspension for three (3) school days.

**6<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Out-of-School Suspension for five (5) school days.

**7<sup>th</sup> Violation:** The student may be suspended (in-school or out-of-school suspension) with the matter being submitted to student discipline hearing officer. If the hearing officer finds the student has engaged in or attempted to commit the seventh violation of any Level-1 Offense, the hearing officer will issue in-school suspension, a short-term suspension, a long-term suspension, or expulsion from school. The hearing officer has the discretion to allow the student to serve the suspension/expulsion at the Learning Support Academy.

### 2. Punishment for Level-2 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level-2 Offense may result in the student being assigned in school suspension or out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) days and the matter may be submitted to a student discipline hearing officer.

If the student discipline hearing officer finds that a student has engaged in or attempted to commit a Level-2 Offense, the hearing officer will issue an in-school suspension, a short-term suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion from school. The student discipline hearing officer has the discretion to allow the student to submit an application to enroll at the Learning Support Academy.

A student allowed to attend the Learning Support Academy shall not go on any other school grounds during the time of the suspension or expulsion unless the student is granted an early release in accordance with this Student Handbook.

### 3. Punishment for Level-3 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level-3 Offense will result in the student being assigned an out-of-school suspension, for up to ten (10) school days with the matter being submitted to a student discipline hearing officer.

If the student discipline hearing officer finds that a student has engaged in or attempted to commit a Level-3 Offense, he/she will be given a short term suspension, long term suspension or expulsion. The student discipline hearing officer has the discretion to allow the student to submit an application to enroll at the Learning Support Academy. A student allowed to attend the Learning Support Academy shall not go on any other school grounds during the time of the suspension or expulsion, in accordance with this Student Handbook.

4. **Punishment for Level-4 Offenses**

A student who is alleged to have committed a Level-4 Offense will be assigned out of-school suspension for up to ten (10) school days and the matter will be submitted to a student discipline hearing officer. A student who is found to have committed a Level-4 (a) (b) or (c) act will be given a short term suspension, long term suspension or expulsion, and a student found to have committed a Level 4 (d) act will be expelled from Peach County Schools for the remainder of that student's eligibility to attend public schools and will be referred to the Juvenile Court.

5. **A student who has been assigned an out of school suspension or has been expelled may not return to his or her home school during the period of the suspension or expulsion.**

6. **The Peach County Board of Education has the authority to increase, reduce, modify or enforce any punishment given pursuant to this Student Handbook.**

**Definition of Disciplinary Terms**

1. **In-School Suspension**

This program is designed to isolate students who violate certain school rules from their regularly assigned classrooms and school activities, while allowing students the opportunity to progress with classroom assignments. In school suspension may include suspension from all extracurricular activities, athletic participation and other school events. If a student violates any rule of the in-school suspension program, that student may be suspended from the program and from school for the remaining number of days that the student was assigned to in-school suspension.

2. **Short-Term Suspension**

Short-term suspension is out-of-school suspension for a time period of not more than ten (10) days. Short-term suspension may include suspension from all regular school activities, extracurricular activities, athletic participation, and other school events.

3. **Long-Term Suspension**

Long-term suspension is an out-of-school suspension that exceeds ten (10) days but is not longer than a semester. Long-term suspension may include suspension from all regular school activities, extracurricular activities, athletic participation, and other school events.

**Expulsion**

Expulsion is an out-of-school suspension that is for one (1) semester or longer, and includes but is not limited to permanent expulsion from all Peach County Schools. Expulsion may include suspension or permanent expulsion from all regular school activities, extracurricular activities, athletic participation, and other school events.

**DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY**

**Jurisdiction to Take Disciplinary Action**

School administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for misconduct that occurs:

1. On school grounds;
2. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event;
3. Off the school grounds at a non-school activity, function or event, but where the misconduct leads to a disruption of school; and
4. En route to and from school, on the bus, and at the bus stops.

Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school related actions by students, at any time of the year, which have a direct or immediate impact on school discipline, the educational operation or function of the school, or the welfare of students or staff. Such act could include, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act, which would be considered to be a felony if committed by an adult, an

assault upon another student, a violation of the laws prohibiting controlled substances, or sexual misconduct. A student whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare or safety of other students or staff, or whose presence may cause substantial disruption at school, may also be subject to discipline.

### **Disciplinary Authority of Teachers & Administrators**

#### **1. Teachers**

- a. Teachers shall maintain discipline and order in the classroom, and are authorized to assign students to detention, refer students to the office, and employ any other discipline and behavior management techniques except for discipline which is forbidden by law or which is permitted under the Student Handbook or by Peach County policy to be administered only by an Administrator or student discipline hearing officer.
- b. For any day assigned to detention, students will be required to spend a period of time, not to exceed one (1) supervised hour, completing assigned school work. No other activity will be allowed during detention. Transportation of students assigned to detention is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents. One (1) day advance notice shall be given to allow students to make alternate transportation arrangements for those days when assigned to detention.

#### **2. School Administrators**

- a. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, school administrators (principals and assistant principals) have the authority to administer any discipline or behavior management technique which a teacher is permitted to use, have the authority to administer corporal punishment on students in accordance with the Corporal Punishment Policy, may assign students to in-school suspension, assign students short-term suspensions, may assign students out-of-school suspension up until the time of a disciplinary hearing (even if for a longer period of time than a short-term suspension) and refer any disciplinary matter to a student discipline hearing officer for a disciplinary hearing. Any student who has been suspended pending a disciplinary hearing shall be allowed to make up school work that is missed due to the suspension pending the disciplinary hearing, and shall be permitted onto school grounds to pick up class assignments at the office unless an administrator determines that allowing the student to pick up work assignments at the office constitute a danger to other students or staff. Although generally progressive in nature, discipline should be appropriate for the misbehavior and the age of student. Consequently, administrators have the latitude of assigning discipline in relation to the misbehavior. For example, students who engage in more serious acts of misbehavior, such as fighting, are not entitled to a warning before any other disciplinary action is taken.
- b. 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 the Student Handbook, the principal or their designee may undertake corrective measures which he/she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided such action does not violate School Board policies or procedures, or state or federal laws.

#### **3. Corporal Punishment Policy**

Any Administrator (principal or assistant principal) or his or her designee may, in his or her sound discretion, administer corporal punishment on any student placed under his or her supervision subject to the following requirements and limitations:

- a. Corporal punishment must be administered in the presence of another school administrator or his/her designee. The individual who is to administer corporal punishment

and the witnessing individual must confer and they must agree on the necessity for corporal punishment in each instance.

- b. Prior to administering corporal punishment, an administrator or his/her designee must explain to the student the reason for the corporal punishment. The administrator or designee who is to witness the corporal punishment must be informed beforehand and in the presence of the student of the reason for the punishment.
- c. Corporal punishment shall not be excessive or unduly severe.
- d. An administrator or designee who administers corporal punishment shall not use any instrument on the student, and no part of the body above the waist or below the knees may be struck.
- e. The individual who administers corporal punishment shall provide the student's parent or guardian, upon request, a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the principal, assistant principal, or other designee who was present and witnessed such punishment.
- f. Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a child whose parent or guardian has filed with the principal of the school a written statement requesting that corporal punishment not be administered to the child. Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a child whose parent or legal guardian has upon the day of enrollment of the student filed with the principal of the school a statement from a medical doctor licensed in Georgia stating that it is detrimental to the child's mental or emotional stability.

### **Student Discipline Hearings**

#### **1. Referral to Discipline Hearing Officer**

All disciplinary matters where a long-term suspension or expulsion could occur shall be referred to a student discipline hearing officer for a disciplinary hearing. Student discipline hearing officers are appointed by the Board of Education to hear disciplinary matters. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, disciplinary hearing officers have the authority to issue a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion of any student found to have violated any provision of this Student Handbook. The hearing officer has the discretion to allow the student to submit an application to enroll at the Learning Support Academy except for violation of Level 4 - #4, page 27.

#### **2. Disciplinary Hearing Procedure**

##### **a. Notice to Students and Parents**

If any disciplinary matter is referred to a student discipline hearing officer for a disciplinary hearing, the student and parents of the student shall be given notice of the hearing prior to the time of the hearing, which shall include the following:

- 1) The rule(s), which the student has allegedly violated.
- 2) A description of the student's acts.
- 3) The names of the witnesses who may testify against the student (witnesses may be added prior to and during the hearing.).
- 4) The time and place for the hearing.
- 5) That the student is entitled to subpoena witnesses to be present at the hearing
- 6) And the student will have right to present evidence, examine any and all witnesses presented and have an attorney, at the student's expense, to represent the student.

##### **b. Time and Conduct of the Hearing**

- 1) Time of Hearing: The disciplinary hearing shall be conducted no later than ten (10) school days after the time when the student has been suspended for the alleged offenses, unless the parent and school mutually agree to an extension or the conduct of the student or parent causes a delay beyond said ten (10) day period.
- 2) Nature of Hearing: A student disciplinary hearing is formal, although the strict rules of evidence as applied in a court do not apply in a disciplinary hearing. The student discipline hearing officer will determine the innocence or guilt of a student accused of



violating the Student Code of Conduct. Although the school has the burden of establishing guilt, the student should be prepared to present evidence and witnesses to support their innocence.

- 3) Record of the Hearing: The student discipline hearing officer shall make a verbatim or written record of any information orally presented at the hearing. All statements and documentary evidence shall be kept on file by the Superintendent or designee of a period of sixty (60) days after the date of the disciplinary hearing if no appeal is filed and/or thirty (30) days after the completion of an appeal at which time all items will be destroyed. A transcript of the hearing shall not be prepared unless there is an appeal to the Board of Education.
  - 4) Examination of Witnesses: All parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses about any matters logically relevant to the charge against the student. The student discipline hearing officer may limit unproductively long or irrelevant questioning.
  - 5) Role of the Parents, Attorney and Victim(s): The parents or legal guardian of the student and any victims may be present at the hearing and make a statement to the student discipline hearing officer concerning their feelings about the proper disposition of the case and to answer any questions. The student may be represented by counsel, at student's expense, at the hearing.
  - 6) Subpoenas: All parties shall be entitled to subpoena witnesses for the hearing. A student or parent/guardian shall submit all requests for subpoenas to the student's principal at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time of the disciplinary hearing.
  - 7) Group Hearings: When students are charged with violating the same rule, and the facts are substantially the same for all students, group hearings may be scheduled if the group hearing will not likely result in confusion or prejudice. If, during the hearing, the hearing officer finds that a student's interest will be substantially prejudiced by a group hearing, the hearing officer may order a separate hearing for that student.
  - 8) Meetings and Records: All student discipline proceedings and hearings conducted by either the student discipline hearing officer or the Board of Education are confidential and are not subject to the open meetings law. Any written records, transcripts, exhibits or other documents assembled or used in any manner with regard to the conduct of any student discipline hearing are not public records and are not subject to public inspection.
- c. Decision of the Student Discipline Hearing Officer
- The student discipline hearing officer shall prepare written findings of fact, make a determination regarding innocence or guilt, and if applicable, punish the student for violations of the Student Code of Conduct. The decision of the student discipline hearing officer will be made within ten (10) days after the conclusion of the hearing or the close of the record, whichever is later. A copy of the decision shall be given to all parties as soon as practicable.

### 3. Appeals

#### a. Appeals to the Peach County Board of Education

Any decision by the student discipline hearing officer may be appealed to the Board of Education by filing a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within twenty (20) days from the date the student discipline hearing officer's decision is rendered. The written notice shall specifically set forth the reasons for the appeal, and shall designate in what respects the student discipline hearing officer erred in the findings or recommended punishment. No specific form of appeal is required.

The Board of Education shall consider any appeal within ten (10) school days from the date the superintendent received the notice of appeal.

The appeal shall be considered by the Board of Education solely on the record made before the student discipline hearing officer, and no new testimony or evidence shall be received or reviewed by the Board of Education. The Board of Education may take any action it deems appropriate, and any decision of the Board shall be final.

Any disciplinary action imposed by the student discipline hearing officer may be suspended by the superintendent pending the outcome of the appeal to the Board of Education

b. Appeals to the State Board of Education

A student or parent aggrieved by a disciplinary decision of the Board of Education may appeal the Peach County Board of Education's decision to the State Board of Education by giving the superintendent written notice of appeal within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Peach County Board of Education.

### **THE LEARNING SUPPORT ACADEMY**

The Learning Support Academy is designed to provide intense interventions for students who are behaviorally unsuccessful and/or off track to graduate on time. The teachers at the Learning Support Academy will use a combination of direct instruction and computer based instruction in a small group setting to provide lessons and skills to help the student get back on track. The Learning Support Academy will also serve the academic needs of students who have not been successful with the behavior and academic expectations in the traditional classroom.

#### **Discipline and the Learning Support Academy**

1. Long-Term Placement

In appropriate cases, the student discipline hearing officer may allow a student who is being suspended or expelled the opportunity to apply to serve that period of suspension or expulsion while attending the Learning Support Academy. Unless the student discipline hearing officer (or in cases of an appeal, the Board of Education) specifies "no early release," students who successfully complete an 18-week placement may petition to have their suspension or expulsion lifted in order to re-enroll in the student's home school.

A student sixteen (16) years of age or older who has been suspended or expelled and has been given permission to apply to attend the Learning Support Academy and who has not enrolled within five (5) days of the decision of the student discipline hearing officer will be withdrawn from school. Students under 16 years of age who have been suspended or expelled and given the opportunity to attend the Learning Support Academy by the student discipline hearing officer and who have not enrolled within five (5) days will be withdrawn from school and referred to a counselor or truant officer for counseling and appropriate intervention which may include a charge of truancy being filed against the parent and/or student.

2. Early Release from the Learning Support Academy

Students admitted to the Learning Support Academy *may not* be eligible for early release unless explicitly specified in the Findings, Rulings, and Notices of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer.

3. Expulsion from the Learning Support Academy

If a student commits any acts of misconduct or violates any of the rules and regulations of the Learning Support Academy while serving a suspension or expulsion, the Learning Support Academy Academic Administrator may discipline the student as set forth in the Student Handbook and may also recommend that the student's privilege of attending the Learning Support Academy be revoked for the remainder of the period of suspension or expulsion. In that event, the Learning Support Academy Academic Administrator shall contact the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Affairs and Operations to schedule a follow-up disciplinary hearing to determine future placement.

Students attending the Learning Support Academy with non-punitive status are subject to all rules and regulations of the Learning Support Academy and violations may result in a student disciplinary hearing.

4. **Transitional Placement**

Peach County School District appoints a District Case Management Consultation Team, under the direction of the Department of Administrative Affairs, to review all records of students enrolling in Peach County Schools from the physical or legal custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice. Based on the records review, the team determines appropriate placement of the student.

**Reporting Criminal Conduct**

Any action or failure to act by a student which is a violation of any law or which an administrator or teacher believes may be a violation of a law may be reported to the Student Resource Officer or any other legal authority.

**Discipline of Students With Disabilities**

All Peach County students covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act shall comply with and be subject to this Student Handbook unless otherwise prohibited by law. Students attending the Elam Alexander Academy who are covered by the Individual with Disabilities Education Act shall comply with and be subject to the Bibb County Student Handbook and this Student Handbook unless otherwise prohibited by law. In the event of any conflict between the Bibb County Student Handbook and the Peach County Handbook, the Bibb County Handbook shall govern with respect to all actions and activities, which occurred in Bibb County or relate to Elam Alexander Academy.

**COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

**Student and Parent Grievances**

The Peach County Board of Education recognizes that a student and their parent should have some means to effectively express concerns, which will be considered by the school administration. Any student or parent/guardian who wishes to resolve a complaint should first attempt to speak with the teacher/school administrator who made a decision which the student or parent/guardian considered unjust or unfair.

If the matter remains unresolved, the student or the student's parent/guardian shall alert the principal in writing within fifteen (15) workdays of the discussion with the teacher/administrator referenced above. Alternatively, the student or parent/guardian may make an appointment with the principal or the principal's designee to give a sworn statement summarizing the complaint. The party shall state the nature of the complaint and indicating how the party may be reached in order to schedule a conference. The principal shall render a decision to all parties within fifteen (15) workdays.

If the student or parent/guardian remains dissatisfied with the principal's decision, the party may appeal the decision within ten (10) workdays to the Superintendent and shall follow the District's existing policy for appealing grievances, a copy of which is available upon request. Requests for an appeal or for copies of grievance appeal policies may be submitted to:

Peach County School District  
Attention: Superintendent  
523 Vineville Street  
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030  
(478) 825-5933

## **Equal Opportunity Grievances**

Employees, students or other persons who believe that they have been discriminated against because of their sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, or disability, or have been subjected to sexual harassment should contact:

Director for Human Resources  
Peach County School District  
523 Vineville Street  
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030  
(478) 825-5933

**OR**

The Office of Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W., Suite 19T70  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 562-6350

Complaints should be made in writing stating the nature of the complaint and indicating how the party may be reached in order to schedule a conference. Complaints submitted to the School District administrator designated above shall be resolved in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedures, a copy of which is available upon request.

## **CERTAIN FEDERAL LAWS AND GUIDELINES**

Peach County School District is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Hatch Amendment, the Vocational Education Guidelines, and the Gender Equity in Sports Act. Please review the following selection of federal laws and regulations pertinent to your child.

### **Health Education**

Classes in health education may not be offered separately on the basis of sex except that separate sessions for boys and girls are permissible during times when materials and discussion deal exclusively with human sexuality.

### **Gender Equity in Sports**

As required under (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315), students are hereby notified that the Sports Equity Coordinator for the Peach County School District, Ben Maddox, is available at (478) 825-5933. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity or alleged gender discrimination in sports may be submitted to the Sports Equity Coordinator.

### **Student Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records as follows:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. The parent or guardian should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record in question, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

- a. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure 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 (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task, (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
  - b. FERPA also permits disclosure of personally identifiable information without consent to appropriate officials in health or safety emergencies so long as the disclosure of the information is necessary for the receiving party to respond to the emergency nature of the situation and made to protect the health or safety of the student or others.
  - c. FERPA permits disclosure in response to a lawfully issued judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
  - d. Finally the School District may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- 4 The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Ave, SW.  
 Washington, DC 20202-4605

The school district has designated the following types of personally identifiable information about students as "Directory Information":

- Student's name, address and telephone listing;
- Date and place of birth;
- Dates of attendance;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- Photographs;
- Video and audio images and recordings;
- Diplomas, honor and awards received;
- Major field of study;

The name of the most recent previous educational agency, institution, or school attended by the student.

Directory information may be released by the school district without the consent of a parent or student. A parent or eligible student who desires that the school district not release any or all of the directory information about a student must notify the school district to that effect in writing addressed to **Peach County School District, Attention: Superintendent, 523 Vineville St., Fort Valley, Georgia 31030 by no later than September 20, 2014.**

### **Research and Student Surveys**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding the school's conduct of surveys, collections and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law. These include the right to:

1. Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education:
  - a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
  - b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
  - c. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  - d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  - e. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  - f. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student nor parents; or
  - g. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
  - a. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  - b. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law;
  - c. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:
  - A. Protected information surveys of students;
  - B. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  - C. Instructional material used as a part of the educational curriculum.

The School District has adopted policies that protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collections, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. The following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- a. Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- b. Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education.
- c. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Students or parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Students and parents are hereby notified that the Title VI, VII, IX, ADA and Section 504 contacts for the Peach County School District may be reached at:  
 The Office of the Superintendent, Peach County School District, 523 Vineville Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030, (478) 825-5933

## ESEA FLEXIBILITY WAIVER SCHOOL DESIGNATION STATUS:

August 1, 2016

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 requires that parents or guardians who have children attending a Title I school be notified of how well their child's school is preparing its students for college and/or a career, as well as the school's designation status under Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

Under the 2015 renewal of Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver, certain Title I schools continue to be designated as Reward, Priority, or Focus Schools. The Waiver allows the use of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) as the comprehensive report card for all schools in Georgia, providing a score between 0-100 for each school—measuring how well the school is doing in preparing its students to be successful in college and/or a career.

Peach County Schools' CCRPI score is 66.2 based on 2014-2015 data. For more information on our school score, please visit <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-andAssessment/Accountability/Pages/default.aspx>

Priority Schools and Focus Schools receive their designation based on student achievement on statewide assessments. Schools keep their designation until they meet the exit criteria for Priority or Focus School status. Reward Schools are identified annually.

- Reward Schools are Title I schools that are either among the State's highest performing schools or schools with significantly high progress. They are identified annually. Highest Performing Reward Schools are among the highest 5% of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the state's CCRPI. High Progress Reward Schools are among the highest 10% of Title I schools in the state based on the progress in improving the performance of the "all students" group over a number of years on the statewide assessments that are part of the state's CCRPI.
- Priority Schools are among the lowest 5% of Title I schools in the state based on achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the state's CCRPI or high schools with a four-year cohort graduation rate less than 60 percent in 2013 and 2014.
- Focus Schools are among the lowest 10% of Title I schools in the state that have a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the state's CCRPI.

The School Designation Status for each of the Peach County Schools is as follows for the 2016-2017 school year:

Byron Elementary School- No school designation  
Hunt Elementary School- No school designation  
Kay Road Elementary School- No school designation  
Byron Middle School- No school designation  
Fort Valley Middle School- Focus School  
Peach County High School- Priority School

You will be receiving more information from your child's school regarding the school's academic performance and what academic supports will be taking place throughout the year if your child's school has been named as a Priority or Focus School.

If you have **additional questions or concerns, please contact Mallerina Marshall, Title I Director** at **478-825-5933** or [mmarshall@peachschoools.org](mailto:mmarshall@peachschoools.org).

Sincerely,

**Mallerina Marshall**  
Title I Director  
Peach County Schools



## **PEACH COUNTY FEDERAL PROGRAMS COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Complaint Procedures under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965

### **Section 9304 – General Applicability of State Educational Agency Assurances**

### **Section 9503 – Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children**

#### **A. Grounds for a Complaint**

Any individual, organization or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Peach County Board of Education (“Department”) if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a local educational agency (“LEA”), the state educational agency (“SEA”), or an agency or consortium of agencies is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that 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**

1. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
2. Title I, Part B, Subpart 3: Even Start Family Literacy
3. Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
4. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
5. Title I, Part F: Comprehensive School Reform
6. Title I, School Improvement Grant 1003(a)
7. Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
8. Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education through Technology
9. Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
10. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities
11. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2: Community Service Grants
12. Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers
13. Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs
14. Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111: State Assessment Program
15. Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments Competitive Grant Program
16. Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income Schools
17. Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children
18. Race To The Top, RT3
19. SIG 1003(g)

#### **C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level**

As part of its Assurances within NCLB program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 of the No Child Left Behind Act, 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 at the local level to no avail, the complainant must provide the Georgia Department of Education with written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue at the local level.

#### **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 the LEA, SEA, agency or consortium of agencies 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; and;
7. The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Peach County Schools  
Ben Maddox  
Asst. Superintendent of  
Administrative Affairs & Operations  
523 Vineville Street  
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

Once the complaint is received by Mr. Maddox, it will be copied and forwarded to the district Superintendent's office as documentation of complaint being received and investigated.

#### **E. Investigation of Complaint**

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, Mr. Maddox or his designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the district received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;
3. A statement of the ways in which the district may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.

The Department will have thirty (30) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings.

***Appropriate Department staff will review the information and determine whether:***

1. Additional information is needed;
2. An on-site investigation must be conducted;
3. Other measures must be taken to resolve the issues raised in the complaint; or
4. A Letter of Findings can be issued.

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

If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and

timelines for completion will be included. Either the 30-day or the 60-day timelines outlined above may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist.

The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant, as well as the other parties involved.

#### **F. Right of Appeal**

If an individual, organization or agency is aggrieved by the final decision of the district, that individual, organization or agency has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education.

For complaints filed pursuant to Section 9503 (20 U.S.C. §7883, complaint process for participation of private school children), a complainant may appeal the Department's decision to the United States Secretary of Education no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the complainant receives the Letter of Findings. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Department's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal

## Peach County Schools Complaint Form for Federal Programs under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965

Please print

Name (Complainant):
Mailing Address:
Phone Number (Home): _____
Phone Number (Cell): _____
Phone Number (Work): _____
Email Address: _____
Agency/Agencies complaint is being filed against:
Date on which violation occurred:
Statement that the Peach County Schools 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 (attached additional sheets if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of District Receiving

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*In order to file a complaint regarding Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption involving US Department of Education funds or programs, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html>**

## HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF

Recognizing the importance of effective teachers, the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requires that schools be staffed with highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. Additionally, professional development activities must ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals meet the highly qualified provisions of ESEA. Local educational agencies (LEAs) must notify parents of their rights to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. Also, in Title I schools the LEA must require the principal of each Title I school to submit an attestation annually requiring compliance with this provision.

### Teachers

In Title I Programs, all teachers hired who teach core academic subjects must be highly qualified. This includes teachers in targeted assistance schools who are paid with Title I funds, teachers in school-wide Title I schools, and any other teachers paid with Title I funds who teach eligible private school students.

To be considered highly qualified to teach in the State of Georgia, teachers must be fully **certified to teach** by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and be teaching in their field(s) of certification.

#### *New teachers must:*

- Hold a bachelor's degree from a PSC accepted accredited institution of higher education.
- Hold a valid Georgia teaching certificate.
- Have evidence of specialized training in the subjects they teach, such as an academic major or the equivalent in the subjects and a passing score on the required content assessment for the area/subjects they teach.
- Have a teaching assignment that is appropriate for the field(s) listed on the Georgia teaching certificate.

#### *Veteran teachers must:*

- Hold a bachelor's degree from a PSC accepted accredited institution of higher education.
- Hold a valid Georgia professional teaching certificate.
- Have a teaching assignment that is appropriate for the field(s) listed on the teaching certificate.
- Have evidence of specialized training in the subjects they teach, such as an academic major or the equivalent in the subject, **and a passing score on the required content assessment for the area/subject they teach** or evidence that they have met the requirement of a HIGH OBJECTIVE UNIFORM STATE STANDARD OF EVALUATION (HOUSSE), as adopted by the PCS.

A teacher who is **new** to the profession is a beginning teacher, defined as a teacher in a public school who has been teaching less than a total of three complete school years [Title IX, Part A, Section 9101(3)].

A **veteran** teacher is one who is not new to the profession and is defined as a teacher in a public school who has been teaching a total of three or more complete school years.

#### *Teachers who are fully certified and highly qualified have met all requirements including:*

- Clear renewable certificate and major/concentration in the content area or
- **PSC required content assessment** or
- HOUSSE, if applicable, and
- Appropriate teaching assignment

Core academic subjects include English, reading, language arts, mathematics, broad-field science (such as physics, biology, or chemistry), foreign languages, broad-field social studies (such as civics and government, economics, history, geography), and the arts (visual arts, music, band and chorus). Dance and drama are not considered core academic subjects in Georgia. All teachers teaching a core academic subject, including remedial, extended day, evening, or summer school classes, must be highly qualified to teach the subject.

The Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requires states to develop plans with annual measurable objectives that will ensure that all teachers teaching in core academic subjects are highly qualified. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, states and LEAs must report annually on their progress toward this goal.

### **Paraprofessionals**

Paraprofessional requirements are strengthened in the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), Section 1119, and requires that all paraprofessionals who work in an instructional program supported by Title I funds (school-wide program or targeted assistance program) be highly qualified.

A paraprofessional is an individual with instructional duties. Individuals **who work solely** in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, and non-instructional computer assistance are not considered to be paraprofessionals for Title I purposes. The requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals who work with special education students performing non-instructional duties, such as assisting with mobility and bodily functions. The Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requirements do NOT apply to paraprofessionals with:

1. Primary duties to act as a translator or
2. Duties consisting solely of conducting parental involvement activities.

The requirements do not apply to aides.

Paraprofessionals who are hired after January 8, 2002, must have:

- Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education. (Two years of study at an institution of higher education requires completion of a minimum of 60 semester hours at a Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) approved accredited institution of higher education.)
- Obtained an associate's degree (or higher) or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrated through a formal state approved assessment the knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, language arts, writing and mathematics or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

In lieu of completing at least two years of postsecondary study or an associate's degree to meet these requirements, a paraprofessional may complete a PSC approved paraprofessional qualification assessment. If eligibility is established through the assessment, the applicant must also hold a high school diploma or a General Education Diploma (GED) equivalent.

All individuals holding a current paraprofessional certificate in Georgia must meet the new requirements (if not previously met) for certificate renewal effective June 30, 2009 or the effective renewal date thereafter.

Paraprofessionals who work in a school-wide program or who are paid with Title I funds and work in a targeted assistance school may be assigned the following instructional support duties:

- One-on-one tutoring if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher.
- Assisting in classroom management.
- Assisting in computer instruction.
- Conducting parent involvement activities.
- Providing instructional support in a media center.
- Serving as a translator.
- Providing instructional support services.

These paraprofessionals may not be assigned duties inconsistent with the above list of instructional support duties. Additionally, paraprofessionals may not provide instructional support to students unless they are under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher.

A paraprofessional is deemed to work under the direct supervision of a teacher if the teacher plans the instructional activities for the paraprofessional, the teacher evaluates the achievement of students with whom the paraprofessional works, and the paraprofessional works in close and frequent physical proximity to the teacher.

A paraprofessional may assume limited duties that are assigned to similar personnel who are not working in a program supported with Title I funds including non-instructional duties if the amount of time the paraprofessional spends on those duties is the same proportion of total work time as the time spent by similar personnel at the same school.

### **Parental Notification**

At the beginning of each school year, local educational agencies (LEAs) must notify parents of their rights to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status.
- The baccalaureate degree of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field or discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals.
- Parent notification is not required for the following:
  - For teachers who do not teach core academic subjects in Title I school-wide or targeted assistance programs.\*
  - For paraprofessionals who are not highly qualified. \*

\*If a student has been assigned to or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher of a core academic subject who is not highly qualified, the parents must be provided a timely notice.

All notices and information required must be in a uniform and understandable format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents understand.

### **Annual Parent Notice - Right To Request Teacher Qualifications**

Our school system receives federal funds for Title I programs that are part of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. As a parent of a student you have the right to request certain information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher(s). Specifically, federal law requires the school district to provide you with the following:

- a. whether the Professional Standards Commission has certified or licensed the teacher for the grades and subject in which the teacher is providing instruction.
- b. whether the Professional Standards Commission has decided the teacher can teach under emergency status for which state certification requirements have been waived.
- c. the teacher's college major and the field of discipline for any graduate degree or certificate.
- d. the qualifications any paraprofessional working with your child.

If you would like to request this information, please contact the school with your **written request** and we will respond in a timely manner. Thank you for your interest and involvement in your child's education.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF  
STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK & CODE OF CONDUCT**

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the Peach County School District Student and Parent Handbook (“Handbook”) for the year set forth below. We have received, read, and discussed the requirements of the Handbook with our child, including but not limited to the code of conduct, disciplinary procedures, dress code, and the requirements of and penalties for violation of Georgia’s compulsory attendance law, and we agree to fully abide by the same.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student Date

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Room Teacher/Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please complete and return within 5 days of receipt of the Student and Parent Handbook.***

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Perkins Act of 1997); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Students, parents, employees and the general public are hereby notified that the Peach County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.



**PERMISSION FOR STUDENT PHOTO TO APPEAR ON PEACH COUNTY DISTRICT OR SCHOOL WEBSITE AND IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS FOR RECOGNITION PURPOSES**

The undersigned hereby acknowledges that photographs of the student listed below may be published on the district/school website and in local newspapers for recognition purposes for the 2016-2017 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Room Teacher/Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to your child's school.