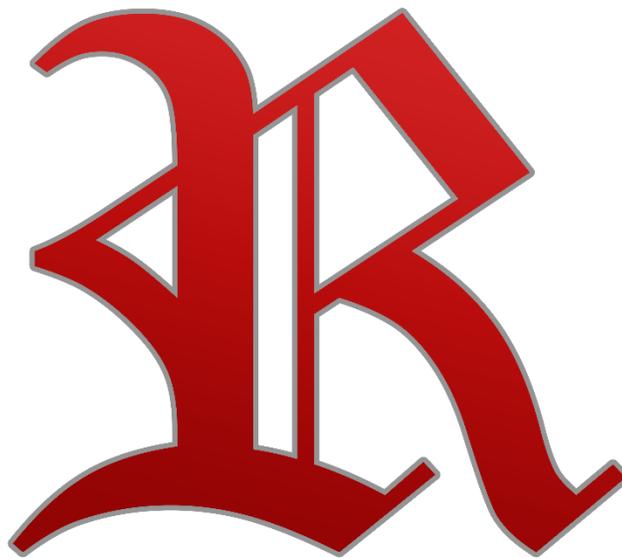


Richmond County Public Schools

Code of Student Conduct



Richmond County Public schools
Warsaw, Virginia
2021-2022



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A PARTNERSHIP IN RESPONSIBILITY

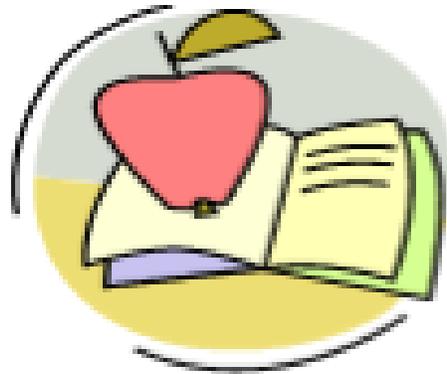
The Richmond County Public Schools have a tradition of providing students and parents with an atmosphere conducive to learning. Rules governing discipline and conduct are written so that parents, students, teachers, and administrators know what is required of students. By working together using clearly stated and consistently enforced regulations, the Richmond County Schools can administer firm and fair discipline practices.

Parents, students, teachers, staff, school administrators, the Superintendent, the School Board, and central office administrators are responsible for helping students develop self-discipline. The Code of Student Conduct outlines the partnership that the school and the larger community share.



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The development, implementation and enforcement of Richmond County Public Schools' Code of Student Conduct is intended to ensure that all students have fair access to an education. This Code of Conduct sets forth those standards of behavior believed to be appropriate in the learning environment and informs all students, their parents, and the larger community of the consequences for violations of this policy.



I. THE STUDENT

A. Rights

A student has all rights expressed and guaranteed by the United States Constitution and by federal, state, and local laws. These rights do not permit a student to disrupt the educational process, to break school rules, to present a health or safety hazard, or to disregard directions of those in authority. Individual rights do not include infringing upon the rights of others in the school community.

Students have the right to:

- ◆ a public education without regard to gender, race, religion, national origin, or any reason not related to their individual capabilities.
- ◆ an orderly school and classroom environment which will allow optimum learning, emphasizing the values of responsibility, kindness, fairness, and safety.
- ◆ express themselves in speech, writing, or symbols, consistent with their constitutional rights and School Board policy.

B. Expectations

A student is expected to:

- ◆ cooperate in the creation and maintenance of a healthy environment.
- ◆ conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner.
- ◆ respect the rights of others during both curricular and extra-curricular school programs.
- ◆ be present and on time for all scheduled activities.
- ◆ dress in a way that is appropriate and responsible.
- ◆ refrain from inappropriate behavior, including disruptive actions such as use of profanity, obscenity, and/or demeaning remarks.
- ◆ safeguard the property and the school and protect the community's investment in it.
- ◆ be knowledgeable about school and classroom rules.
- ◆ report to the principal or staff incidents when your safety or safety of others may be jeopardized.
- ◆ support and participate in school activities.



C. Responsibilities

It shall be the primary responsibility of students to maintain a climate of mutual respect and trust in order that the dignity of the individual is protected and the pursuit of opportunities for each student may be realized. It shall be the responsibility of administrators and those to whom disciplinary authority is delegated, including teachers and bus drivers, to be consistent and uniform in the application of all School Board policies and all school regulations.

A student is responsible for:

- ◆ knowing and complying with any rules or regulations of the School Board, as well as local, state, and federal laws in school or at school activities.
- ◆ attending school regularly equipped with the materials needed to attend class and complete class assignments and/or requirements. Students who miss classes because of unexcused absences or tardiness will receive a zero for classwork or homework assignments during the absence. The student is responsible for getting and completing missed assignments when there is an unexcused absence.
- ◆ contributing to a climate of mutual respect for all within each school so that the hopes and ambitions of all individuals may be realized.
- ◆ dressing in compliance with school rules in a fashion that will not disrupt classroom procedures and

- in a manner which conforms to community standards of decency.
- ◆ following School Board regulations, which forbid supplying, handling, using, transmitting, or possessing any type of weapon on school property, on the way to and from school, or at any school-sponsored event.
- ◆ following school rules and/or the law concerning use, possession, distribution or sale of tobacco, marijuana, or controlled substances as defined by the Code of Virginia, imitation controlled substances, nonprescription or prescription drugs, or alcohol on school property, on the way to and from school, or while attending school-sponsored activities.
- ◆ reporting to the principal or a staff member incidents when your safety or the safety of others may be jeopardized.
- ◆ taking advantage of the studies offered by the school and prepare a plan of study for a job entry or college.



II. THE PARENT

A. Responsibilities

All parents are expected to:

- ◆ assume responsibility for student's behavior and assist school in enforcing Code of Conduct.
- ◆ accept the right of the School Board to require responsible behavior of all students and others attending school activities.
- ◆ maintain regular communication with school authorities.
- ◆ monitor and require daily attendance.
- ◆ send your child to school as required by Virginia Compulsory School Attendance Law (Code of Virginia 22.1-254).
- ◆ instill in your child the desire to learn by expressing an interest in his/her school activities and accomplishments.
- ◆ request and attend parent-teacher conferences.
- ◆ ensure that your child has the necessary materials and supplies needed for classes and activities.
- ◆ adhere to parental responsibility and involvement requirements as required by Virginia School Law (Code of Virginia 22.1-279.3) as printed in Section II. B. of this booklet. Parents must sign the Parent/Principal Contract statement acknowledging the receipt of the Code of Student Conduct and recognizing their responsibility to assist the school in disciplining their student.
- ◆ ensure that you and your child understand school rules and/or the law concerning use, possession, distribution or sale of tobacco, marijuana, or controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, imitation controlled substances, nonprescription or prescription drugs, or alcohol on school property, on the way to and from school, or while attending school-sponsored events.
- ◆ ensure that your child is free of communicable disease and in good health.
- ◆ ensure that you and your child understand that supplying, handling, using, transmitting, or possessing any type of weapon on school property or possession of a beeper, on the way to or from school or at any school-sponsored event is prohibited.

B. Code of Virginia Requirements

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Excerpted from the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended

§22.1-279.3. Parental responsibility and involvement requirements.

A. Each parent of a student enrolled in a public school has a duty to assist the school in enforcing the standards of student conduct and compulsory school attendance in order that education may be conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property, and supportive of individual rights.

B. A school board shall provide opportunities for parental and community involvement in every school in the school division.

C. Within one calendar month of the opening of school, each school board shall, simultaneously with any other materials customarily distributed at that time, send to the parents of each enrolled student (i) a notice of the requirements of this section;(ii) a copy of the school board's standards of student conduct; and (iii) a copy of the compulsory attendance law. These materials shall include a notice to the parents that by signing the statement of receipt, parents shall not be deemed to waive, but to expressly reserve, their rights protected by the constitutions or laws of the United States or the Commonwealth and that a parent shall have the right to express disagreement with a school's or school division's policies or decisions.

Each parent of a student shall sign and return to the school in which the student is enrolled a statement acknowledging the receipt of the school board's standards of student conduct, the notice of the requirements of this section, and the compulsory school attendance law. Each school shall maintain records of such signed statements.

D. The school principal may request the student's parent or parents to meet with the principal or his designee to review the school board's standards of student conduct and the parent's responsibility to participate with the school in disciplining the student and maintaining order, to ensure the student's compliance with compulsory school attendance law, and to discuss improvement of the child's behavior, school attendance, and educational progress.

E. In accordance with 22.1-277 and the guidelines required by 22.1-279.6, the school principal may notify the parents of any student who violates a school board policy or compulsory attendance requirements when such violation could result in the student's suspension or filing of a court petition, whether or not the school administration has imposed such disciplinary action or filed a petition. The notice shall state (i) the date and particulars of the violation; (ii) the obligation of the parent to take actions to assist the school in improving the student's behavior and ensuring compulsory school attendance compliance; (iii) that, if the student is suspended, the parent may be required to accompany the student to meet with school officials; and (iv) that a petition with the juvenile and domestic relations court may be filed under certain circumstances to declare the student a child in need of supervision.

F. No suspended student shall be admitted to the regular school program until such student and his parent have met with school officials to discuss improvement of the student's behavior, unless the school principal or his designee determines that readmission, without parent conference, is appropriate for the student.

G. Upon the failure of a parent to comply with the provisions of this section, the school board may, by petition to the juvenile and domestic relations court, proceed against such parent for willful and unreasonable refusal to participate in efforts to improve the student's behavior, as follows:

1. If the court finds that the parent has willfully and unreasonably failed to meet, pursuant to a request of the principal as set forth in subsection D of this section, to review the school board's standards of student conduct and the parent's responsibility to assist the school in disciplining the student and maintaining order, and to discuss improvement of the child's behavior and educational progress, it may order the parent to so meet; or

2. If the court finds that the parent has willfully and unreasonably failed to accompany a suspended student to meet with school officials pursuant to subsection F, or upon the student's receiving a second suspension or being expelled, it may order he student or his parent to participate in such programs or such treatment, including, but not limited to, extended day programs, summer school, other educational programs and counseling, as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior or school

attendance. The order may also require participation in a parenting, counseling or mentoring program, as appropriate or that the student or his parent, or both, shall be subject to such conditions and limitations as the court deems appropriate for the supervision, care, and rehabilitation of the student or his parent. In addition, the court may order the parent to pay a civil penalty not to exceed \$500.

H. The civil penalties established pursuant to this section shall be enforceable in the juvenile and domestic relations court in which the student's school is located and shall be paid into a fund maintained by the appropriate local governing body to support programs or treatments designed to improve the behavior of students as described in subsection G2. Upon the failure to pay the civil penalties imposed by this section, the attorney for the appropriate county, city, or town shall enforce the collection of such civil penalties.

I. All references in this section to the juvenile and domestic relations court shall be also deemed to mean any successor in interest of such court.



III. THE SCHOOL

A. Jurisdiction

The authority of the school over the conduct of students extends to the following locations:

- ◆ on the school grounds, before, during, and after school hours.
- ◆ on the school grounds as either a spectator or a participant at any other time when school is being used by a school group.
- ◆ off the school grounds at any school-sponsored activity, function, or event as a participant or a spectator.
- ◆ during the time spent at bus stops and on the school bus.

B. Prohibited Behaviors

In Richmond County Public Schools, as in the community at large, certain rules and procedures are established to guide students through constructive growth and into mature adulthood.

Discipline is the positive direction of behavior toward established standards of conduct, fully understood and based upon reason, judgment, and consideration of the rights of others. Disciplinary measures should be a problem-solving process focusing on the causes of the **infraction and should be commensurate with the severity of the infraction and the circumstances involved.**

Schools, community, and parents share the responsibility for helping students develop self-discipline. When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary forces from outside the individual must be imposed to protect the rights of others and to ensure uninterrupted instruction by teachers for students.

Any student exhibiting behavior contrary to the Student Responsibilities outlined previously will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion as fully explained in each school's handbook and in the School Board Policies and Administrative Regulations.

Behavior that warrants discipline includes **BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO** the following:

1. Acceptable Use of the Internet- Students shall abide by the Richmond County School Division's Acceptable Internet Use Policy and Regulation. Each student and his/her parent must sign the division's acceptable computer use agreement before using the division's computer system.

2. Attendance - Students are expected to attend class every day. Absence from class includes late arrival, early dismissal or missing any class. Unexcused tardies and/or skipping classes are considered attendance violations.

In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, if a student who is under 18 years of age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school, the principal or principal designee may notify the juvenile and domestic relations court, which may take action to suspend the student's driver's license or make the parent complete a community service project.

3. Use and/or Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs- A student shall not possess, use and/or distribute alcohol, tobacco and/or tobacco products, or other drugs including other controlled substances on school property, on school buses, or during school activities, on or off school property. This includes but may not be limited to, smokeless tobacco, anabolic steroids, look-alike drugs, drug paraphernalia, and any prescription or non-prescription drug possessed in accordance with School Board Policy.

A student shall not possess, procure or purchase or attempt to possess, procure, or purchase, or be under the influence of (legal intoxication not required), or use or consume or attempt to use or consume, any of the restricted substances listed in this regulation or what the student believes is any of the restricted substances in this regulation.

Restricted Substances include alcoholic drinks, marijuana, narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, and anything else covered by the Drug Control Act referenced below, as well as any abusable glue, paint and similar materials, anabolic steroids and both prescription and non-prescription drugs if they are not taken according to the prescription or directions on the package, and includes anything that a student represents to be a restricted substance or which a student believes is a restricted substance.

Students shall not manufacture, give, sell, distribute or possess with intent to give, sell or distribute marijuana or other controlled substances as defined in the Drug Control Act, Chapter 15.1 of Title 54 of the Code of Virginia.

Drug-free school zones have been established and any person buying, selling or possessing drugs or alcohol within these zones is in violation of both state law and school board policy. The School Board policy does take a "0" tolerance to any drugs or alcohol of any student found buying, selling, using, or possessing these items. The school administrators and school board will continue to take a strong position regarding the disciplinary action when such matters are brought before them. One state law, known as the "abuse and lose" law, does significantly affect teenager's privilege to drive a car. According to the law, anyone between the ages of 13-17 found guilty of buying, possessing, or driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol will either be denied the privilege of applying for a driver's license or lose it for a period of time.

Persons found in violation of these policies will face disciplinary action, which may include but is not limited to suspension or expulsion and will be reported to the Richmond County Sheriff's Department for legal action. The Superintendent may however, determine, based on the facts of the case, that special circumstances exist and another disciplinary action is appropriate. In addition, it is important to note that student disciplinary records will be made available to other school divisions if necessary according to state law.

In July 1991, the General Assembly passed a law forbidding anyone under the age of eighteen (18) to buy, sell, or possess tobacco products.

4. Arson – Setting fire to or attempting to set fire to school property or the property of another on school ground or any school property.

5. Cellular Telephones, Laser Pointers or Similar Devices – Students are discouraged from bringing, cell phones and other communication devices to school. If a student possesses a cell phone on school property, the student may not turn on or use the cell phone during instructional time without teacher permission. A violation of this rule is grounds for confiscation and/or disciplinary action.
6. Bullying – Students shall not harass or bully others. This includes physical intimidation, taunting, name-calling, and insults or any combination of prohibited activities.
7. Defiance of the Authority of School Personnel – Students shall comply with any oral or written instructions made by school personnel within the scope of their authority as provided by Board policies and regulations.
8. Dishonesty – Honesty shall be practiced in the entire educational experience. Cheating, plagiarism, forgery (including computer forgery), lying, stealing, robbery, extortion, larceny or any other acts of dishonesty shall not be tolerated. This includes unauthorized or illegal use of computers or computer networks.
9. Disruptions – Students shall not behave in a disorderly manner or in any other way interrupt or disturb the orderly operation of the classroom or any school activity while on school property or under the supervision of school authority.
10. Gambling – A student shall not bet money or other things of value, or knowingly play or participate in any game involving such a bet, on school property or during any school related activity.
11. Gangs – Any group activity that threatens, that is illegal and/or violent, or that portends the development of gang activity, which may involve wearing gang-related apparel, inappropriate congregating, bullying, harassment, initiations, hazing, intimidation, and/or related activities which are likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to students are prohibited.
12. Harassment – Students shall not harass another person sexually or based on race, national origin, disability or religion. This would include another student or any school employee, volunteer, student teacher or any other person present in school facilities or at school functions.

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Students who knowingly make false charges of harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action as well as court proceedings.

13. Hazing – Students shall not engage in hazing. Hazing means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily harm on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity.

The principal of any school at which hazing occurs that causes bodily injury shall report the hazing to the local Commonwealth Attorney.

14. Medication and Prescription Drugs – No student may have in his/her possession any medication or prescription drugs, even if recommended or prescribed for the student's use. "Medication" shall mean any drug or other substance used in treating diseases, hearing, or relieving pain, including all over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin, cough syrups, gargles, caffeine pills, and the like. All such items shall be delivered by the student to the office with a note from a parent or guardian for safekeeping and administering.

15. Possession, Exhibition or Dissemination of Obscene Literature or Materials – Students shall not possess, exhibit or disseminate obscene literature or materials.
16. Stalking – No student shall engage in conduct with the intent to place another person in reasonable fear of death, criminal sexual assault, or bodily injury.
17. Student Dress – A student's dress and appearance shall not be such that it causes disruption, distracts others from the educational process or creates a health or safety problem or is obscene, slanderous, libelous, racist, or sexist.

Students must comply with specific division and school building dress regulations. The wearing of any insignia with obscene or libelous words, phrases, or pictures is prohibited. The wearing of insignia advertising alcohol or other drugs is prohibited.
18. Theft – Students are prohibited from taking personal property from another student or staff member without his or her consent. This includes theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications.
19. Threats or Intimidation – Students any verbal, written, electronic or physical threat of bodily injury or use of force directed toward another person for the purpose of extortion or for any other reason including bomb threats and inciting riots.
20. Trespassing – Students and non-students (including suspended or expelled students) are prohibited from being present on school property or from using school facilities without proper authority or permission.
21. Truancy – Students are to be in their assigned classes and on the school grounds during the entire school day. Students must obtain permission from the principal or his/her designee to leave the school grounds before the designated closing of the school day.
22. Vandalism – Students shall not maliciously or willfully injure, deface, or destroy school property or the personal property of others at school, on a school bus or at school- sponsored events. In addition to criminal sanctions against offending students, the Code of Virginia allows the School Board to collect up to \$2500 in damages from parents of minors who destroy school property.
23. Verbal Abuse and Vulgarity – Students shall not verbally or graphically curse or abuse anyone; use vulgar, profane, or indecent language; or bear or display any obscenity or indecency.
24. Violence-Assault and Battery – A student shall not assault or commit battery upon another person. Voluntary fighting resulting in physical injury to another person shall be considered assault and battery. Physical Assault includes any physical confrontation that may result in no injury, minor injury, or serious injury that includes, but may not be limited to, kicking, shoving, pushing, hitting and fighting. Battery is the unlawful application of force to the person of another.
25. Weapons – Carrying, bringing, using or possessing any firearm, dangerous device, or dangerous or deadly weapon in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle or at any school-sponsored activity without the authorization of the school or the school division is prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action. Violation of this policy shall require that proceedings for the discipline of the student involved be initiated immediately by the principal. The state laws and school board policy include those persons who may be carrying weapons inside or displayed in the window of a vehicle.

Such weapons include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ any stun weapon or taser;
- ◆ any knife having a metal blade three inches or longer;

- ◆ any pistol, revolver, or other weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind;
- ◆ any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade, ballistic knife, or razor, slingshots, spring sticks, brass or metal knuckles or blackjacks;
- ◆ any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nunchahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain;
- ◆ any disc of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades, and which is designed to be thrown as a throwing star or oriental dart, or
- ◆ any weapon of like kind as those enumerated above.

In accordance with section 22.1-277.07 of the Code of Virginia, a student who is determined to have possessed a firearm, destructive device, a firearm muffler or firearm silencer, or a pneumatic gun as defined in Va. Code section 18.2-308.1 on school property or at a school-sponsored activity shall be expelled for no less than one calendar year (365).

The Superintendent may, however, determine, based on the facts of the case, that special circumstances exist and another disciplinary action is appropriate. Any such discipline shall be taken in accordance with the procedures set forth in Title 22.1, Chapter 14, Article 3 of the Code of Virginia and School Policy JGD/JGE. Any student who brings a weapon, as defined within this section, to school shall be referred to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system.

C. Discipline

1. PROCEDURES

A school is judged by the actions of its students in and out of school. At all times when students are under school jurisdiction, they are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectable manner. In an effort to maintain an orderly atmosphere in the school and on the school grounds, the teacher's authority extends to all students, whether or not the teacher teaches the student in class.

Disruptive student behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the teacher, assistant principal, and/or principal. Action taken by teachers toward students who are disruptive may include but is not limited to:

- a conference, with or without a parent;
- a reprimand;
- detention.

A discipline referral should be sent to an assistant principal or principal when the teacher feels that the student's improper behavior cannot be corrected through that teacher's classroom management practices. After consultation with the student and the teacher (if needed), the administrator will determine the course of action required to provide a safe, secure school. Action taken by an administrator toward students who are disruptive may include but is not limited to:

- a conference with or without a parent;
- a reprimand;
- entering into a behavior contract between student and administrator;
- lunch detention;
- in-school suspension (ISS);
- out-of-school suspension (OSS);
- alternative education program;
- recommendation for long-term suspension (more than ten days);
- recommendation for expulsion.

For those students who have been suspended for any duration three or more times, the principal may refer the student to the Office of the Superintendent or his designee for follow-up contract with parents and the development of corrective action plans.

Pupils may be suspended or expelled from attendance at school for sufficient cause; *however, in no case may sufficient cause for suspension include only instances of truancy.*

2. DEFINITIONS

A major disciplinary action is one of the following:

In-School Suspension - In-school suspension is a form of suspension which allows students to remain on the school premises, complete assignments, and receive credit for work completed. Students are isolated as much as possible from other students during this time. Typically, in-school Suspension is assigned for three days or less.

Out-of-School Suspension-Short Term - Suspension is a temporary action by which a student is prohibited from attending school for ten days or less.

A principal (or his/her designee) may impose a short-term suspension, pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-277.04, upon a student who has been charged with an offense involving intentional in jury enumerated in Va. Code § 16.1-260.G, to another student in the same school pending a decision as to whether to require that such student attend an alternative education program.

Out-of-School Suspension-Long Term-A student can be suspended for more than ten days following a review of the principal's recommendation by the Superintendent or his designee.

Alternative Education Program - A student may be required to attend an Alternative Education Program at the Regional Technical Center. Academic work will be assigned by the Alternative Education staff. Prior to enrollment, the student and his/her parent must have a conference with the Alternative Education staff.

Expulsion- Expulsion is a permanent action by which a student is prohibited from attending school. The typical expulsion is one year, but may be extended longer. A student can be expelled only by action of the School Board based upon recommendation of the principal and the Superintendent or his designee. Expulsion from school excludes the student from regular school attendance until readmitted by the School Board.

Notification Requirements

The principal or assistant principal will send a letter to the student's parents when the student is assigned any major disciplinary action. This letter will state the reasons for the suspension, dates of the suspension, opportunities to address academic work, privileges denied, and will inform the parents that a parent conference with the principal or assistant principal is required before a student will be readmitted to the regular classroom.

3. CONSEQUENCES

Students who receive major disciplinary action face the following consequences:

In-School Suspension

During the length of time they are suspended, students who are placed on in-school suspension are:

- ◆ required to report to the in-school suspension room;
- ◆ prohibited from attending classes or eating lunch with their classmates;
- ◆ prohibited from participating in or attending extracurricular activities both home and away.

Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion

During the length of time they are suspended, students who are placed on out-of-school suspension are:

- ◆ banned from school property at any time;
- ◆ given full credit for all classwork and homework assigned during the suspension or expulsion period;
- ◆ prohibited from participating or attending any school-related activities or events both home and away.

4. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may be given in-school or out-of-school suspensions for inappropriate behavior. Principals may suspend a student with disabilities for short-term suspension. Principals may suspend a disabled student from school for a period of five days, and may suspend a student with disabilities for six to ten days with the approval of the Superintendent or his designee. Principals may recommend a student with disabilities for long-term suspension or expulsion (greater than ten days) by following these procedures:

- ◆ The principal will follow regular procedures for long-term suspension or expulsion as described above.
- ◆ Once the principal has made a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion of a student with disabilities, he or she will convene members of the Child Study Team to determine if there is a causal relationship between the student's disabling condition and the conduct for which he or she is to be disciplined.
- ◆ The parent will be notified in writing of the time and place of the committee meeting and its purposes.

D. Appeal Procedures

1. SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS

Should a parent disagree with disciplinary action for a short-term suspension, the parent may appeal the decision as follows:

- ◆ Appeals should be made to the principal or his designee within three (3) days of the suspension.
- ◆ If the parent desires further review of the disciplinary action, he/she may appeal in writing the decision of the school administrator to the superintendent within three (3) days of the school administrator's decision. The decision of the superintendent or his/her designee is the final decision of the School Board, and no further appeal or hearing of the School Board is available.

2. LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS

Should a parent disagree with disciplinary action for a long-term suspension, the parent may appeal the decision as follows:

- ◆ Within three (3) days of the suspension the parent(s) should meet with the Superintendent or his designee.
- ◆ If the parent desires further review of the disciplinary action, he/she may appeal in writing the decision of the superintendent to the School Board within five (5) days of the superintendent's decision. Failure to file a written appeal within the specified time will constitute a waiver of the right to an appeal.

3. EXPULSIONS

Following the Superintendent's or his designee's recommendation for expulsion, an appeal can be made to the School Board in writing within seven (7) days of the superintendent's recommendation. Failure to file a written request within the specified time will constitute a waiver of the right to a hearing.

For students who have been expelled by the School Board, the School Board will consider a written request for readmission to school after the expulsion period is completed; such a request should be accompanied by evidence that the student has corrected inappropriate behaviors and has established acceptable patterns of conduct.

E. Search and Seizures

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the health, safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student lockers, student desks or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. Random, systematic, non-selective searches by local and state police may be made during the school year.

1. PERSONAL SEARCHES

A student's person and/or personal effects may be searched by a school official whenever the official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student has violated or is about to violate the law or a school rule and that the search will yield evidence of the violation.

A personal search may include requiring a student to be scanned with a metal detector. A patdown search of a student may only be conducted if a school administrator has established a reasonable suspicion that evidence will be found to corroborate suspicion that a law or school rule has been broken. If a pat down search of a student's person is conducted it will be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex and with an adult witness of the same sex present.

Strip searches may only be used when an extremely serious situation exists requiring immediate action. Such a search should be used only in the context of imminent threat of death or great bodily injury to a person or persons.

2. LOCKER SEARCHES

Student lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers and are responsible for the content of their assigned locker at all times.

A principal or designee may examine the contents and personal belongings of students, when there is reasonable grounds to believe that they contain illegal drugs, contraband, weapons, beepers, or stolen property, or that the student is in violation of state laws, or School Board policies.

Locks used by students must be rented from the school office. School authorities for any reason may conduct periodic general inspections of lockers at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

3. AUTOMOBILE SEARCHES

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exteriors of student automobiles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student has violated or is about to violate the law or a school rule and that the search will yield evidence of the violation, or that illegal or unauthorized materials or other evidence of illegal or otherwise prohibited activities are contained inside the automobile. Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Students and their parents must sign a parking registration form with the understanding the student's car may be searched if there is reasonable cause.

4. COMPUTER SEARCHES

School computers, software and Internet access are school property. Students are only authorized to use school computers and other similar educational technology consistent with the educational mission of the school. School officials may search school computers; software and Internet access records at any time for any reason and without student consent.

F. Records

1. SCHOOL RECORDS

Students have the right to accurate and complete school records, maintained in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Accurate and complete individual records shall be maintained for each student enrolled in Richmond County Public Schools. School Board Policy JO and the implementing regulations govern the management of student records and provide:

- ◆ That parents have the right to inspect any and all records relating to the dependent;
- ◆ That students with written permission may inspect their own records;
- ◆ That information may be released to others only under carefully prescribed conditions;
- ◆ That nominal fees may be charged for duplication of records;
- ◆ That a procedure be established for challenge of the contents of a student's record by parents or adult students.

2. DISCIPLINE RECORDS

Beginning on July 1, 1993, and pursuant to State law, any school record related to disciplinary action taken against a student for violating School Board rules or policies on school property or at school-sponsored events must be included in the student's scholastic record. Whenever a student transfers from one school division to another, the scholastic record (or copy), including disciplinary records shall be transferred to the school division to which the student transfers upon request from such school division. Permission of the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student shall not be required for transfer of such scholastic record to another school or school division within or outside Virginia.

IV. THE SCHOOL BUS

Student's behavior and administrative procedures contained in the Code of Student Conduct apply to school transportation. School jurisdiction extends to students during the time required to go to and from school on the buses and to the time spent waiting at bus stops.

A. General Guideline

Riding a school bus is a privilege, which may be revoked temporarily, or permanently should disciplinary action be required. Students are expected to follow the instructions of their bus driver at all times and to observe the Bus regulations and Safety Rules distributed at the beginning of each school year. Failure to do so results in disciplinary action. If disciplinary action is required, the following procedures will be used:

Bus drivers are required to report major rule violations to the administrator of the appropriate school as soon as possible after completing the morning bus route. If a severe disciplinary problem occurs in the afternoon, which requires immediate attention, the bus driver is to notify the Director of Transportation and/or the appropriate principal of this problem immediately.

Parents whose children encounter bus problems should contact the principal or Director of Transportation. Parents should not attempt to settle problems with the bus driver and parents are not permitted to get on the school bus without the driver's permission.

B. Meeting the School Bus

- ◆ Students shall arrive at the bus stop before the bus arrives. A bus driver is not allowed to wait for students.
- ◆ Students should wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and away from the place where the bus stops.
- ◆ Students should wait in an orderly line and avoid horseplay.
- ◆ Parents of students in the lower grades are strongly encouraged to have an adult accompany young children to and from the bus stop.
- ◆ Students who are to board the bus should wait until the bus has come to a complete stop. Do not run along the road beside the bus. Cross the road to board the bus only after the bus driver or safety patrolman signals you to do so.
- ◆ Students shall go directly to their assigned seats upon entering the bus and remain in the seats at all times.

C. Conduct on the Bus

Generally, the Director of Transportation will assign each student one seat on one bus. In order to avoid a student having to cross a busy highway, the student may be assigned to a different bus in the morning and after noon. In an emergency and only on a short-term basis, the Director of Transportation may allow a student to go home on a different bus, as space is available. Arrangements for this change are made by the student's parent making a request to the principal who will pass the request on to the Director of Transportation.

- ◆ Students are expected to ride the same bus every day to and from school, making the same stops, and being picked up and let off at the same places. Students are not allowed to leave or board the bus at locations other than the assigned stops at home or school. Once a routine has been established, it can be changed only by a note from the parent to the principal.
- ◆ Parents may not take a child off the bus without notifying the principal during the school day and properly clearing it through the office. After a bus route has been established at the beginning of the school year, there will be no changes for babysitting purposes.
- ◆ Students must remain seated and aisles and exits must be kept clear.
- ◆ Students shall not bring bottles, animals, hazardous materials, nuisance items, or large objects on

the bus. Only objects that can be held on their laps will be permitted.

- ◆ Students shall display classroom conduct and obey the driver promptly and respectfully. Safety patrolmen are the driver's assistants on the buses and students must cooperate with them.
- ◆ Students shall refrain from throwing or passing objects on, from, or into buses.
- ◆ Students shall refrain from extending objects, arms, etc, out of bus windows.
- ◆ Students shall refrain from eating and drinking on the bus.
- ◆ Students are not to distract the bus driver unnecessarily. Students are expected to respect the rights and safety of others on the school bus.
- ◆ Every student who rides the bus is responsible for keeping it clean. Students and their parents or guardians are responsible for damage done carelessly or maliciously to bus seats or equipment and they will be charged for the same. Students shall report damage they see on that same day to the bus driver so they will not be blamed for damages they did not cause.
- ◆ Students are not allowed on the bus unless the driver is on the bus.
- ◆ Students must follow State Laws and local School Board regulations including those laws related to drugs (including tobacco and alcohol), imitation controlled substances, weapons, explosives, arson, and beepers.

D. Leaving the School Bus

- ◆ Students who are to be discharged from the bus must remain seated until the bus comes to a full halt at a designated stop.
- ◆ Crossing the road in front of a stopped bus is extremely dangerous; therefore students who must cross the road must follow the rules below:
- ◆ Walk 15 feet ahead of the bus along the edge of the road.
- ◆ Walk into the road and stop in front of the bus, even with its left side.
- ◆ Wait for the bus driver's signal then cross the remaining traffic lanes.
- ◆ Leave the bus stop area immediately after exiting the bus.

V. Discrepancy

Policy of Non-Discrimination

In the event that there is a discrepancy between the Code of Student Conduct and the School Board Policy Manual, the School Board Policy Manual will prevail.

Alternative formats of this publication are available upon request for individuals with disabilities by calling the Richmond County School Board Office at 333-3681.

Richmond County Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, sex, religion, age, or disability in the admission or access to, and participation or employment in, its programs, services or activities.

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