

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER**

Georgia Law requires students to attend school unless a mental and/or physical condition justifies being excused. Any parent, guardian, or other person having charge of a child or children who violates the compulsory attendance law is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not to exceed on hundred dollars (\$100), or imprisonment not to exceed thirty days or both. Each day's absence from school in violation of this Act shall constitute a separate offense, O.C.G.A. 20-2-690. The Attendance Worker shall investigate all cases of failure to enroll or habitual absences by children and shall recommend appropriate action in accordance with state laws and State Board policies.

**\*I HAVE RECEIVED MY COPY OF THE JOHN JOHNSON ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR.**

**PARENT SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE RECEIVED** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD'S NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOMEROOM TEACHER** \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_



The staff and administrators at John Johnson Elementary welcome students and parents to the **2017-18 school year. We are dedicated to providing the best possible education for our students**, which will allow every student to achieve to his or her greatest potential. For this to be possible, it will require effort and cooperation from students, parents and teachers. We will communicate with our John Johnson families through monthly newsletters, teacher correspondence, and our website. In addition, progress reports will be sent home in grades 1-4. Our staff will make every effort to maintain a positive relationship between home and school. Communication and regular conferences are vital, and we encourage parents to contact us if any problems arise. Our most successful students are those whose parents are informed and active in their school life. With your help, we are confident that this school year will be the best one ever!

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<p>BOARD MEMBERS DR. SYDNEY COCHRAN, CHAIRMAN JACKY GRUBBS, VICE-CHAIRMAN BOBBY BARBER KEITH LYLE KELVIN BOHIE WINSTON ROLLINS</p>	<p><b>THE BEARCAT WAY</b></p>  <p>PROUD TRADITION      PROMISING FUTURE</p> <p><b>Decatur County Schools</b></p>	<p>SUPERINTENDENT TIM COCHRAN</p> <p>ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS APRIL ALDRIDGE, Ed.D. LINDA LUMPKIN, Ed.D.</p>
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August 4, 2017

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed on December 10, 2015 reauthorizes the 50 year old Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the nation’s national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. ESSA provisions to help ensure success for students and schools include advancing equity for disadvantaged and high-need students, requiring high academic standards to prepare students to succeed in college and careers, providing vital information to families, educators and communities through annual state wide assessments, as well as other provisions.

Georgia’s Single Statewide Accountability System is the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). The CCRPI will serve as a comprehensive report card for all schools in Georgia. The state system will give parents, students, teachers and families a more complete and comprehensive picture of where a school or district is meeting performance expectations or where it is not. CCRPI reports can be found by accessing the Georgia Department of Education website at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org).

Your child attends John Johnson Elementary which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. If at any time you wish to receive additional information regarding your child’s performance on state assessments beyond that which is provided immediately following the assessment, please contact us.

John Johnson Elementary continues to make progress in a number of areas due to the hard work of our teachers. The instructional staff is ready for the coming school year and is prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in the Every Students Succeeds Act. The regulations allow you to learn more about the professional qualifications of your child’s teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s). We are happy to provide this information to you at any time you may ask. The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student’s teacher –
  - Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;

- Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Please contact Tammi Godwin, Principal, at 229-248-2215 or Mr. John Wooden, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources at 229-248-2806, for this information.

John Johnson Elementary’s staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to become college and work ready. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled and we are proud to report that all of our staff is professionally qualified. Parents will be notified in a timely manner if their student has been assigned or taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who has not met subject or grade level requirements for professional qualifications.

Parent and Family Engagement play an important part in every child’s success. Parent Involvement Plans and Parent/Student/School compacts are distributed to every parent at the beginning of the year. Parent resource centers are located at the school and district level and are available to parents to check parent portal or to obtain resources for students. Monthly Parent and Family Engagement Newsletters are provided to inform parents of workshops and events occurring throughout the district.

Parent volunteers and chaperones provide a valuable resource and result in positive experiences for students, families and schools. All volunteers and chaperones must complete an initial training and background check followed by annual online updates. Upon completion of training, a picture id badge will be issued annually before a parent or guardian may serve as a volunteer, chaperone, or accompany students on a school trip. Training must be completed at least two weeks in advance of the time scheduled to volunteer or chaperone. For more information, visit the Decatur County Schools website and access the “For Parents” tab.

John Johnson Elementary is committed to ensuring that your student is provided a quality education through the ongoing implementation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Excellence, Engagement, and Accountability for all is being achieved by the educational team at this school and throughout the district. Achievement of District AdvancED Accreditation supports our vision for continuous school improvement.

Please feel free to contact Tammi Godwin, Principal, at 229-248-2215 should you have additional questions about your child’s school or academic progress. Additional information can also be viewed on the district website, [www.dcboe.com](http://www.dcboe.com), by clicking the Federal Programs link. We look forward to a successful 2017-2018 school year.

Sincerely,



Tim Cochran, Superintendent



Tammi Godwin, Principal

# **Decatur County Schools**

100 West Street  
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817  
(229) 248-2200 • Fax (229) 248-2252

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

It is a policy of the Decatur County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, veteran status, or handicapping condition in its educational programs, activities, and employment practices.

The Board shall comply with all aspects of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended, 1973), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended, 1974), Title XXIX of the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984.

For compliance information contact the Coordinator for Title VI, Title IX and section 504,

Kathy Varner  
Decatur County School Support Center  
507 Martin Street,  
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817  
229/248-2836

## **NOTA DE NO DISCRIMINACION**

Es la política de la Junta Educacional del Condado de Decatur de no discriminar en función a raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, estatus de veterano, o condición de discapacidad en sus programas educacionales, actividades, y prácticas de empleo.

La Junta cumplirá con todos los aspectos del Título IX de las Enmiendas de Educación de 1972, Título VI de la Ley de los Derechos Civiles de 1964 (modificado, 1973), Título VII de la Ley de los Derechos Civiles de 1964, (modificado, 1974), Título XXIX del la Ley de Discriminación por Edad de 1967, y sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, y Título II de la Ley de Educación Profesional Carl D. Perkins de 1984.

Para información de conformidad contactar al/la coordinador/a del Título VI, Título IX y sección 504.

Kathy Varner  
Centro de Soporte de Las Escuelas del Condado Decatur  
507 Martin Street,  
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817  
229/248-2836

## MISSION

The mission of John Johnson Elementary is to empower all students to engage and succeed in a global society by providing rigorous & equitable opportunities, nurturing environments, sustained partnerships, college & career readiness and character development.

## VISION

Excellence, engagement and accountability.....for all.

## HOURS

Office .....7:00-4:00

Teachers .....7:40-3:40

## Student Hours

<b>7:00-7:30</b>	Bus students arrive
<b>7:30</b>	Walkers/Riders begin to arrive
<b>7:50</b>	Announcements
<b>8:00</b>	<b>Tardy bell---late students must go by office for a late slip</b>
<b>3:15</b>	Dismissal of walkers
<b>3:20</b>	Dismissal of car riders
<b>3:30</b>	Dismissal of bus students

## ARRIVAL

**The safety of our students is our utmost concern. Please read carefully the guidelines for arrival and dismissal and help us have a safe and orderly campus.**

**Parents are allowed to walk their children into school for the first week. For safety reasons, parents may not walk their children into the building after the first week. Staff members are positioned throughout campus to ensure the safety of students as they walk to class independently.**

**Bus Students** begin to arrive at 7:00 in the circular drive out back. PK students go directly to the classroom. K-4 students should go directly to the location assigned for that grade level. All bus students are supervised by staff members and dismissed to classrooms at 7:45.

**Walkers** should not arrive on campus before 7:30 and should go directly to assigned location. Students will be monitored and dismissed to classrooms at 7:45. Students who need to cross West Street should wait directly across the street from the main front gate for an adult to accompany them across the street.

**Car Riders** will be dropped off in two locations: in the circular drive out front (two

lanes of traffic) or on the side drive off John Johnson Street (one lane of traffic). Students may not begin to exit the cars until 7:30. Staff members or school patrol members will assist students exiting vehicles, so students should not exit the vehicle until that time. Parents/Drivers should not get out of the cars or pull over to the side of either circular drive due to safety reasons. Once exiting the car, students will report to their assigned grade level locations.

Locations for students arriving before 7:45:

PK – Designated PK classroom  
K – Lunchroom  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – Gym  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Music Room  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Media Center

### DISMISSAL

You will provide the information for afternoon dismissal on the pink sheet provided in your beginning of the school year packet. **If there is a change in your child’s afternoon dismissal procedure, the school must have a note (i.e. a note to ride or not ride a bus, or ride in a different car pool) sent to school in the morning. Do not call the office to leave a message for your child concerning afternoon pickup; this should be taken care of before he/she comes to school and will only be allowed in case of emergency.**

**Bus and Daycare Vans** – will dismiss at 3:20 in the back circular drive. Cars are not allowed on this back driveway at any time. Buses will begin to arrive at 3:30.

**Walkers** – will dismiss at 3:15 in two locations. Staff members will assist students crossing West Street.

**Car Riders** – will dismiss at 3:20 in two locations: out front or on the side. Students should wait quietly in the hallways for their name to be called. A staff member will load your student into your vehicle. This is a very BUSY and CONGESTED time of the day that will run smoothly if the following guidelines are followed:

1. Safety is our goal – please be patient while we load each car. Make sure your child is buckled up **before** you leave.
2. **PULL ALL THE WAY UP!** We can load several cars, but we need you to pull up to the teacher at the end of the pick-up area.
3. **Patience!** We try to get as many cars off West Street as possible, that means double “parking” cars on John Johnson Street – please be kind and let cars **merge** into one lane at the turn into the 4<sup>th</sup> grade parking lot.
4. Have your “name card” in the front windshield so that we can have your child ready to load in your car.
5. Please **DO NOT** talk on the cell phone during pickup time.
6. Vehicles may begin to enter the front driveway no earlier than 2:50 pm each day.
7. If you need to talk with your child’s teacher, or get out of your car for any

reason, please pull into a parking space. Vehicles are not allowed to pull over on any part of the driveway between 7:30 and 8:00 am or between 3:00 and 3:40 pm.

### **BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Breakfast is free to all students and will be served in classrooms beginning at 7:45.

If students wish to eat breakfast at school, they must arrive **no later than 7:50** so that they will have adequate time to eat breakfast.

A free and nutritious lunch will be offered to all students with a menu determined by the lunchroom staff in conjunction with the food service director. Please contact the office or lunchroom manager if your child has a food allergy so that the appropriate paperwork can be completed and precautions taken at school. The lunch menu will be posted in the classrooms, on the JJE website, and in the local media.

Children may bring lunches to school if they wish, however, soft drinks and restaurant meals are not allowed. (**see appendix**)

### **LABELING PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

All personal belongings should be labeled. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor clothing, pencil boxes, book bags and lunch boxes. Lost and found items are turned into the school office. If the item is unlabeled and not claimed promptly, it will be donated to local charities.

### **VISITORS**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. All visitors are required to report to the school's office upon entering the building. **Each visitor must sign in and obtain a visitor's pass before proceeding to the classrooms.**

#### **Guidelines for classroom observation by parents or legal guardians:**

1. The Decatur County School System is an open system and encourages parent, guardian and community involvement.
2. To assure the safety of all students, visitors are required to check in at the office upon arrival at school in order to obtain a visitor's pass.
3. To maintain an optimal learning environment, parents or guardians should arrange classroom visits with the principal in order to avoid testing days, field trips, or other similar preplanned group activities.
4. While visiting in classrooms, visitors should avoid activity which would distract students, such as walking about the room, talking to the teacher during class, or talking with students. The rights of all students to privacy and to a proper learning environment must be strictly observed. (Teacher/Parent conferences should be scheduled at other times.)
5. Visits should not exceed 30 minutes and up to two visits may be conducted per month.
6. Visits should not be for the purpose of "monitoring" a teacher. If the visitor has questions regarding the competence of a teacher, this matter should be properly addressed to the school principal.



7. When appropriate, the principal and/or administrator may choose to sit with the visitor during the visit.
8. No cell phones are allowed in the classrooms or hallways.
9. Appropriate attire is required for class visits and special events on campus.
10. Younger students/siblings will not be allowed during classroom visits.
11. If during the visit the principal considers the classroom observation to be other than in the best interest of the students being served, he/she may terminate the visit.
12. If a parent or guardian violates the visitation protocol the principal has the discretion to suspend or terminate visits.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Good attendance is extremely important to success in school, and students should develop good work habits by arriving ON TIME each day. REMEMBER.... students are late at 8:00, and announcements begin at 7:50. The Decatur County BOE is committed to ensuring that students have good attendance, which is necessary to obtain adequate progress in school. Students with excessive or unexcused absences, or tardies, may be referred to the attendance committee and/or referral to court. **See the DCBOE Attendance Policy in the appendix.**

#### **Tardy**

Any student who arrives at school after the 8:00 tardy bell must have a note from a parent/guardian stating the reason for being tardy, or the tardy will be counted as unexcused. Students must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to class. Please note: **students must be in their classroom at 8:00.** Students desiring to eat breakfast should be at school before 7:50.

#### **Absences**

A doctor's excuse or written excuse is required when a student is absent from school. Failure to bring an excuse within three days after returning to school shall constitute an unexcused absence. A student who has an excused absence is permitted to make-up work that has been assigned. Students will have three days to complete missed work.

#### **Students Signing Out Early**

Please be advised that if your child is signed out early he/she is missing an important part of the school day and his/her grades may be affected. Leaving early other than for a doctor's appointment or emergency is discouraged. Signing out early should not be done to "beat the traffic". Students can only be called to the office after the parent arrives in the office. Students are responsible for making up any work missed.

### **LEAVING CAMPUS**

Students are not allowed to leave school during school hours for any reason without the knowledge of their teacher and the administrator. Students must be signed in and out on the master sheet in the office by the parent/guardian whenever leaving and /or returning to school.

### **WITHDRAWALS**

In the event that it is necessary for a child to change schools (in-county or out-of-

county), the office must be contacted by the parent/guardian at least 24 hours prior to the actual withdrawal date. Upon notification, the appropriate records for the child will be sent to the new school.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students attending Decatur County Public Schools in Grades PK through 4 must conform to the following dress code:

1. Hats and sunglasses may not be worn in the school building or on school buses.
2. Book bags (other than clear or mesh) are not permissible on campus.
3. Shoes must be worn. Tennis shoes are required on PE days.
4. No tank tops, halter tops, shirts that expose the midriff or back, or see-through clothing allowed.
5. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be fingertip length or longer when standing erect.
6. Proper undergarments must be worn.
7. Pants, shorts, and skirts must be the appropriate size for the student and must be worn at the appropriate waist level. Saggy pants and pants that expose undergarments should not be worn.
8. Clothing that displays inappropriate language or suggestive sayings, pictures (ie., drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, profanity, sexual pictures, etc.) cannot be worn at school.

\*The principal at each school may deem it necessary to restrict certain clothing, etc. The principal or principal’s designee will determine if attire is disruptive or inappropriate.

### **BOOK BAGS**

Students must use either a clear or mesh book bag in all Decatur County Schools.

### **CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices are not allowed on the school campus. Any cell phone or other device brought to school will be sent to the front office and will be returned only to the parent.

### **MEDICATION IN SCHOOL**

Prescription medicine must be in the prescription bottle with instructions, child’s name, and parental permission attached to the bottle. Medication must be administered by the school nurse. Special needs for nonprescription medication must be cleared and administered through the nurse. If your child will be taking medicine on a daily basis at school, please see the nurse in order to complete the appropriate paper work. Aspirin will not be given under any circumstances.

### **ILLNESS OR INJURY**

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or by a member of the school staff. If treatment is necessary, the parent/guardian will be notified. We are prepared to treat minor scrapes and scratches as well as bites and

stings. In case of an emergency, if the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we must have the student's family doctor's name on file in the office, as well as a signature on your child's student information card giving us permission to secure medical attention in the event that you cannot be located.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

The State of Georgia requires that all students entering Kindergarten and Seventh Grade have an up to date Georgia Certificate of Immunization on file. The Georgia Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) must be obtained from your private physician or the local health department and turned in to the school by August 4, 2017. Your child will not be given a schedule or allowed to attend school until the required Certificate of Immunization is received by the school nurse. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

The immunization requirements for school and childcare facility attendance are outlined in the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) and the Policy Guides 3231INS and 3231REQ. Childcare facility operators, school personnel, healthcare providers and parents are responsible for seeing that these rules and laws are enforced. This information summarizes your responsibilities and provides guidelines to help your school or childcare facility comply with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 20-2-771.

## **INSURANCE**

Student Accidental Insurance is made available to students through an independent company and is offered at the beginning of the school year. Claims must be made directly to the insurance company. Please note that this is a limited benefit policy. The school is not responsible for payment of any claims.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE**

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address and telephone number for home and emergency in the office. The parent/guardian must notify the school immediately if there is any change of address or telephone number during the school year.

## **STUDENT RECORDS/MEDIA RELEASE WAIVER/PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

The Decatur County School District has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name, address and telephone number
- Student's date and place of birth
- Student's participation in official school clubs and sports
- Weight and height of students if he/she is a member of an athletic team
- Dates of attendance while enrolled in Decatur County Schools
- Awards received during the time enrolled in Decatur County Schools

Unless you, as the parent/guardian or eligible student request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public. Any school district receiving ESEA funds must, upon request of military or high education institutions, provide access to secondary school student's names, addresses, and telephone listing. School districts must notify parents of

the option to require prior written parental consent to such listings. School district must provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as is provided generally to post-secondary educational institutions or prospective employers. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request.

You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event. This may occur unless a parent/guardian objects in writing to your student being photographed, videotaped or interviewed to the principal of the school where your student is enrolled. You are also notified that from time to time your student’s photograph, art work, poetry, creative writing stories, or other pieces of acclaim or interest connected with a school activity or function, may be displayed on the Decatur County School’s website – [www.dcboe.com](http://www.dcboe.com) and the local media. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which your student is enrolled in writing within 10 days from the date of enrollment.

### **DELIVERIES TO JOHN JOHNSON**

Please do not send gifts, flowers, or balloons to students at school. This includes Valentine’s Day.

### **PARTIES**

Teachers are more than happy to help parents arrange to celebrate birthdays at school. Please contact your child’s teacher for the best time to bring treats. Please remember that party invitations should not be given out at school unless the entire class is invited. When invitations are given to only a few students, feelings may be hurt and that is not the “**Where everybody is somebody**” spirit!

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND CHAPERONES**

Parent volunteers and chaperones provide a valuable resource and result in positive experiences for students, families and schools. All volunteers and chaperones must complete an initial training and background check followed by annual online updates. Upon completion of training, a picture id badge will be issued annually before a parent or guardian may serve as a volunteer, chaperone, or accompany students on a school trip. Training must be completed at least two weeks in advance of the time scheduled to volunteer or chaperone. For more information, visit the Decatur County Schools website and access the “For Parents” tab.

### **HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS**

We are committed to continually seeking to improve instruction for our students. We hope that as a parent, you will become involved in our school improvement initiatives as

we continue to monitor student achievement and set high expectations. We are proud of the professional credentials of our teaching staff and will furnish to you, upon request, the professional qualifications of any of your student’s classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. See **“Right To Know” letter on page 1**

## **CONFERENCES**

Teachers are available for conferences on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during planning time and after 3:40. Teachers are on duty and are supervising students beginning at 7:45, so please schedule a meeting in advance so that you and the teacher are able to communicate without interruption.

## **GRADING PRACTICES & PROCEDURES**

### **Grading Scale for Grades 1-4:**

A – 90 -100

B – 80 - 89

C – 70 - 79

F - Below 70

E – Indicates the student is working below grade level.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

Elementary schools abide by the Promotion and Retention of Students section of the Decatur County Board of Education policy. The complete section is found under descriptor code IHE. The following is a brief description of promotion standards and criteria:

Kindergarten – promotion will be based on satisfactory progress of the GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program) and the skills listed on the Kindergarten Report Card.

Grades 1 and 2 – promotion will be based on receiving passing grades (yearly average) in Reading and Math based on grade level performance. An “E” is considered behind grade level.

Grades 3 and 4 – promotion will be based upon passing grades (yearly average) in Reading and Math based on grade level performance. An “E” is considered behind grade level. In addition to Reading and Math, students must also pass two out of the three academic subjects (English, Science and Social Studies).

*Students in grades 3 must also achieve an on grade level score in Reading. If the student does not score on grade level in Reading, there will be a retest opportunity.*

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

All grade levels will send home graded work on a weekly basis and Paw Prints during the 9 weeks grading period for grades 1-4. Paw Prints are progress reports listing subject grades.

## **REPORT CARDS**

A report card on the progress of each student is issued each nine weeks. This report is given to the student to take home and will not be mailed. The parent/guardian should sign the envelope and return it to the school the following day. Parents may keep the report card.

## **ACADEMIC AWARDS**

We celebrate academic excellence and will recognize students at Honors Programs. The following academic awards will be given:

1. A-Honor Roll: Must have an “A” average in all subjects for the end of the year average. Student may have a B during the year, but all yearly averages are “A”s. Students with an “E” are not eligible for Honor Roll.
2. A-B Honor Roll: Must have all A’s and B’s, or all B’s, for the end of the year average. Student may have a C on the report card, but not on yearly average. Students with an “E” are not eligible for Honor Roll.
3. Effort Award: Students who do not meet the honor roll requirements above, but consistently give 110% effort.
4. English/Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies Awards: Students must have a yearly average of 95 or better. Students with an “E” are not eligible for Honor Roll.
5. Perfect Attendance: Must be in attendance every day of school year with no tardies or early releases.
6. Certificate of Attendance: Must be in attendance every day of the school year but may have tardies and/or early releases.
7. Perfect Score on any portion of the Georgia Milestone Assessment.

For the purpose of determining awards, the averages on May 15<sup>th</sup> will be used. The final grade may be different on the yearly report card.

## **DECATUR COUNTY EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

The Decatur County Program for Exceptional Children offers special education and related services for eligible students ages three to twenty one. The procedures for identifying and determining eligibility for the program are governed by the Georgia Department of Education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The state of Georgia recognizes eligibility categories which include intellectual disabilities, hearing impairment including deafness, speech or language impairment, visual impairment including blindness, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, specific learning disability, or deaf/blindness. Decisions regarding eligibility, least restrictive environment, and services are made by a committee of individuals including the parent. The committee collaborates to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to support students’ individual needs. IEP annual review meetings are held annually to determine progress and necessary specialized services. Meetings include parents, teachers, local education authorities, and related service providers.

Decatur County offers the full continuum of services for students with identified disabilities and strives to serve each student to the greatest extent possible in the least

restrictive environment. Related services are provided for eligible students as deemed necessary by IEP teams. Related services may include special transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adapted physical education, speech/language therapy, psychological, and audiology services. Special education instruction is specially designed by qualified staff and provided at no cost to parents.

If you suspect your child has a disability or have questions regarding special education or related services, contact Catherine Gossett, Exceptional Education Director at 229-248-2828.

### **HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND**

Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/chemotherapy or students with other serious health conditions). Students must be enrolled in a public school in Georgia in order to receive HHB services.

HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are by design temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive (five days for student on block schedule) or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student’s inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented.

For HHB forms or questions contact your school counselor or:

Sylena Wiggins

Hospital Homebound Coordinator

229-248-2826

### **GIFTED EDUCATION**

By definition, a gifted student is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability, exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. Decatur County Schools follow the Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program Gifted Students and due process in the identification and placement of students for gifted education services. Formal identification of students begins in kindergarten. To be eligible for gifted education services, students are evaluated in four data categories: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. Eligibility decisions comply with Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38. A student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self and other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities.

Parent referrals for consideration for gifted education services should be submitted in writing to the school principal by March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Parent referrals are presented to the eligibility team which consists of grade level teachers, the gifted teacher, the school counselor, and an administrator. This team is responsible for reviewing the student's profile of information which consists of observational data, and the student's standardized testing history. After reviewing the information, the team makes a determination of whether further evaluation is warranted.

All referrals in grades K-2 are submitted to the eligibility team which consists of grade level teachers, the gifted teacher, the school counselor, and an administrator. This team is responsible for reviewing the student's profile of information which consists of observational data, and the student's standardized testing history. After reviewing the information, the team makes a determination of whether further evaluation is warranted.

Referrals in grades three and four are based on Decatur County's Automatic Referral Procedures. According to the procedures, students that score as a "Distinguished Learner" in one or more content areas on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment are referred for testing.

Gifted services are available in grades K-12.

Gifted services are provided through the following models:

*Elementary-*

Resource

- Pullout for identified gifted students
- Enrichment
- Content Based Curriculum based on Common Core Standards
- Emphasis on higher level thinking skills

*Middle School-*

Advanced Content Classes taught by gifted endorsed teachers

*High School-*

Advanced Placement (AP)

- Guidelines set by College Board
- Teachers have special training from College Board, and/or gifted endorsed

## **SECTION 504**

The Decatur County School System, including all staff and administrators have the responsibility of ensuring that all students with disabilities are identified, evaluated and provided with needed accommodations and services, resulting in a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Please refer to the Appendix to view the following documents: Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 and Decatur County 504 Procedural Safeguards. For more information regarding (Section 504 of the Rehab. Act 1973, 45 CFR Part 84.), please visit our website at [www.dcboe.com](http://www.dcboe.com).



## ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS

In July 2012, Senate Bill 289 and House Bill 175 passed allowing students opportunities to take online courses. This legislation does not require an online course to graduate, but provides an online learning option should your student or you choose this option. Decatur County School System will provide online learning opportunities through Georgia Virtual School beginning the 2013-2014 school year by allowing students to take a course or courses as part of their assigned required courses. Students who wish to pursue online course enrollment should read information provided on the Georgia Virtual website, [www.gavirtualschool.org](http://www.gavirtualschool.org). Pay close attention to deadlines in the Georgia Virtual process as well as the list of courses offered. For more information about the opportunity for your student to participate in online courses, please contact Tammi Godwin, Principal at 229-248-2215.

## TEXTBOOKS

Students are responsible for the textbooks and library books issued to them. This responsibility includes keeping the books in good condition and not losing the books. At the end of the school year, if the book is damaged, the student will be charged a fine for the damage done to the book. If the book is lost, the student will have to pay the replacement cost of the book.

## INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Decatur County Schools use instructional technology as one way of enhancing our mission to teach the skills, knowledge and behaviors students will need as responsible citizens in the global community. Students learn collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking in a variety of ways throughout the school day.

The Decatur County School System also believes staff and students should have open access to local, national, and international sources of information. The system, by providing access to electronic services via the Internet, recognizes the potential of such services to support curriculum and student learning. The goal of providing this access is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

Using the electronic services via the Internet is a privilege, not a right and all students and parents must sign the **Decatur County School System Electronic Network Use Rules**.

The document mentioned above must be signed and on file. Failure to submit to the terms and conditions as prescribed by this document may result in loss of privileges or disciplinary action. Please see individual school discipline policies and/or handbooks for how technology infractions and violations will be handled.

## MEDIA CENTER

The media center is available for students, parents and teachers. Students are encouraged

to read fiction and nonfiction for pleasure. The Parental Involvement Resource Center is located in the media center.

### **Student Checkout Policy**

Students in grades 2-4 may check out two books. Students in kindergarten and first grade may check out one book. Students must bring their **reading folder with barcode** to check out books.

### **Overdue, Damaged or Lost Books**

Library Overdue Notices will be sent with Paw Prints to inform parents/staff of any missing library books. Damaged books that are returned are charged for the amount of damage and students/ parents must pay to replace or repair the book. Lost books must be replaced, and the student/parent must send the amount of the book as indicated by the notice sent to the parent. Report Cards will be held at the end of each nine-week grading period if students have overdue books or if students owe fines for lost or damaged books.

### **BUS INFORMATION**

DCBOE's Transportation Department is responsible for transporting students in the safest manner possible using trained drivers and buses which are monitored for safety and efficiency. In order to assure safety on the bus, students must use appropriate behavior while boarding, de-boarding, or riding the bus. Discipline offenses will be written up by the bus driver and submitted to the principal. A progressive list of consequences begins with a warning for the first offense and expulsion from bus for the remainder of the school year for the sixth offense. If your student rides the bus, please review the following guidelines frequently. Students who follow these guidelines have great experiences with school transportation. **See the Code of Conduct and School Bus Ride Guide in the appendix.**

### **DISCIPLINE**

All elementary schools in Decatur County abide by the local board policy JCD, Student Behavior and Conduct Regulations. John Johnson Elementary is committed to maintaining a well-disciplined atmosphere where children will have the greatest opportunities to learn. We believe that discipline is an on-going process, which helps students learn to be responsible and capable of making choices that are in the best interest of others, as well as themselves. We believe students need guidance, rules, and consistency in the enforcement of rules. We also feel that it is the joint responsibility of the parents/guardians and teachers to praise and reinforce appropriate behavior. We have established a strong, positive discipline program which includes specific school-wide behavior expectations and consequences. Positive reinforcement will occur when good behavior is exhibited. A listing of the school wide procedures is included for you to review with your student at home. For severe or recurring discipline problems, parents/guardians will be expected to be involved as a part of the adult team working to help the student improve his/her behavior. Compliance with the standards of conduct adopted by John Johnson is mandatory for every student.

#### **Major Offenses:**

Major offenses include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Hitting, rough or physical abuse
2. Throwing objects
3. Defiance of authority
4. Disrespectful/abusive language or actions
5. Bullying
6. Continuous, disruptive behavior
7. Willful destruction of property

Interventions include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Discipline notice
2. Conference with Parent/Guardian
3. Loss of privilege
4. Corporal Punishment (with written parent permission)
5. ISS (In School Suspension)
6. OSS (Out of School Suspension)
7. DCBOE Resource Officer
8. ABE

### **Serious Offenses**

Serious discipline offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Physical assault on a school employee
2. Possession of a dangerous weapon or the use of an object
3. The use, possession, or sale of alcoholic substances, narcotics, tobacco, or other noxious substances
4. The use, possession, or sale of explosive devices

Interventions include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Automatic suspension from school
2. Expulsion

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Be courteous to others at all times.
2. Respect yourself, staff, and other students.
3. Respect school property and keep your school clean.
4. Go directly to and from your destination.
5. Students will obey all staff members on campus.

## **SCHOOL WIDE PROCEDURES**

### **Hallway**

1. Students will use the 3,2,1,0 rule (3-3<sup>rd</sup> tile, 2-hands by your side, 1-behind the other, 0-talking/noise).
2. Quiet courteous behavior.
3. Go directly to and from destination.

4. Stand free of doorways and exits.
5. Students must have a hall pass while in the hall, unless they are with an adult.

### **Cafeteria**

1. The cafeteria is a place to talk quietly, not to scream, whistle or yell.
2. Enter and exit quietly and orderly, one at a time.
3. Stand in a single file line.
4. Use good manners in speaking to lunchroom workers and others.
5. Pick up necessary items in cafeteria line first time through.
6. At a table, only talk to your neighbors beside you and in front of you.
7. Practice good eating habits.
8. Remain in seat unless given permission to leave.
9. Clean personal space including stool before leaving.
10. Students are to STOP at the stop sign and put trays in window one student at a time.

### **Restroom**

1. Flush toilet and wash hands after each use.
2. Place paper towels in trash cans.
3. Individual use of stalls and urinals.
4. Use appropriate behavior in restroom.
5. Designated monitors are to report any problems to the teachers.

### **Assemblies**

1. Sit and respond appropriately.
2. Use good manners.
3. Talk very quietly before and after assembly.
4. Listen quietly to performance.

### **Playground**

1. Do not run going from or coming into the building.
2. Refrain from karate, wrestling, hitting, flipping, and fighting on the playground. No physical contact games (tag, Frisbee, football, etc).
3. Do not climb the fence or trees.
4. Use playground equipment with care.
5. Wood chips and rocks are to remain in designated areas. Rocks should not be in hands or pockets.
6. Shoes must be worn at all times.
7. No pushing each other in the swings.
8. Use slide correctly. Do not slide backwards, on stomach, or in any position other than the correct way. No climbing up the slide.
9. Stay in designated boundaries.
10. Sit at picnic tables or benches to eat snacks.
11. Put TRASH in containers.
12. Walk to line up with your class.

### **Media Center**

1. Walk to and from the media center quietly. This includes the outside breezeway.
2. Each student must have a pass to go to the media center.
3. Speak softly in a whisper voice.
4. Students are responsible for turning in books within 2 weeks. Books may be renewed one time.
5. Replacement barcodes may be purchased for fifty cents. Barcodes will be printed as soon as time permits.

6. Do not touch any computer equipment at the checkout center. Wait for the librarians.
7. Students must have AR folder to check out books. The folder must contain the record sheet complete with the student's reading level, list of books read, and teacher's signature.
8. Overdue notices will be sent home with Paw Prints. If a book is determined to be lost, the student must pay for the book before full checkout privileges are reinstated. Report cards will be held if students have overdue books or if students owe fines for lost or damaged books. Fines for lost and damaged books remain on the student's record while enrolled in Decatur County Schools.
9. If a book is found after a replacement fee has been paid, it will be reimbursed ONLY through the end of the school year in which it was lost.
10. Parents may check out books through the media center for their child's use at home. Students may not check out books under the parent's name.

### **Morning**

1. Upon arrival each student should report to his/her grade level's designated location. With the exception of bus riders, students should not enter the buildings before 7:30.
2. At 7:45, go directly to the classroom, picking up breakfast from the cart. Do not stop at the bathroom or library.
3. Quietly enter the classroom, following the individual teacher's classroom procedures.

### **Afternoon**

1. Leave in an orderly fashion.
2. Students should wait quietly in the hallways/gym until the student's name/bus is called. Exit the building with an adult. Students should not enter any building after dismissal.
3. All students need to cross the street with an adult.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Fire Drill**

1. When the first drill bell rings, line up quietly and orderly.
2. Walk down the hallway quietly.
3. While outside in line, stay orderly in a single file line until the bell rings to come back inside.
4. Students should not talk until the fire drill is over.

### **Tornado/Severe Weather Drill**

1. When the drill sounds, walk quietly outside the doorway and get into the position your teacher has shown you.
2. Talking is not allowed until the drill is over.

### **Severe Weather Causing School to be Cancelled**

In the case of severe weather and threats of unsafe conditions for attending schools, the Superintendent shall make the decision to close schools. The public will be notified by

local radio and television stations and by a phone call from the Superintendent via the DCBOE emergency communication system.

### **YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A HARASSMENT-FREE SCHOOL**

Sexual harassment is unlawful and unacceptable in the school or workplace. Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is illegal. Because of the importance we place on these types of issues, this school has instituted a procedure for investigating harassment complaints. It is our policy to investigate and resolve these issues in a prompt manner. If you have been harassed, or another's conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, please notify the principal.

## Appendix

- **Notice of Student and Parent Rights under Section 504**
- **Decatur County 504 Procedural Safeguards**
- **Procedure for Foods and Beverages brought into Cafeteria**
- **Food Allergy Memo**
- **Payment Procedure**
- **2017-18 Attendance Guidelines Overview**
- **School Bus Code of Conduct**
- **School Bus Ride Guide**



## **Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504 Decatur County School System**

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

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact Kathy Varner, Decatur County School System Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

507 Martin Street  
Bainbridge, GA 39817  
Phone: 229-248-2836  
[kvarner@dcboe.com](mailto:kvarner@dcboe.com)

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

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



9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedures (Section 504 Procedural Safeguards) upon request.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

## Decatur County 504 Procedural Safeguards

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

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

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

legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing as least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.

- e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims.
  - f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
  - g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
  - h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
  - i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
  - j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
  - k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documents related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
  - l. Unless other required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of the school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
  - m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the rights to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. **Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date of the hearing conclusion. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
6. **Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

Decatur County 504 School System Coordinator: Kathy Varner

507 Martin Street; Bainbridge, GA 39817  
Phone: 229-248-2836 fax: 229-248-2845

Revised 5/14/12; 5/31/13; 5/30/14



PROUD  
TRADITION

Decatur County Schools

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THE BEARCAT WAY

PROMISING  
FUTURE

**Decatur County Board of Education's Procedure  
For  
Foods and Beverages Brought Into the School Cafeteria**

As a result of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, school systems were mandated by the United States Department of Agriculture to update 2006 Local Wellness Policies to include the promotion of healthier food choices.

As stated in Decatur County BOE policy EEE, the goal is to promote wellness and healthy nutrition for students and staff. All foods available on campus must have as an objective the promotion of student and staff health and the reduction of childhood obesity. In addition, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations prohibit the sale of non-nutritional foods and carbonated beverages during meal times at all school levels.

The objective of the Decatur County School Nutrition program is to provide students and staff with meals that are balanced and encourage good nutrition. School Nutrition meals must meet the USDA's current Dietary Guidelines and Requirements for Americans. Food choices are evaluated to reduce fat, sugar and sodium while providing the proper amounts of nutrients and calories for different age groups. A nutritious breakfast and lunch is served daily at each school.

**It is for the reasons listed above that, while encouraging parents and guardians to enjoy a special meal with their child (ren), we are implementing the following procedure:**

**Procedure for Foods and Beverages Brought into the School Cafeteria:**

- Students who bring their lunch should pack it appropriately and drinks (non-carbonated) should be in a non-breakable container.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the school and enjoy a nutritious school meal with their student.
- NO outside foods or beverages from restaurants will be brought into the cafeteria.
- Students who have food allergies or medical conditions that require special foods must have a doctor's statement on file.

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# Decatur County Schools

PROUD  
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THE BEARCAT WAY

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School Nutrition Program  
1304 East Evans Street  
Bainbridge, GA 39819  
229-243-5321

TO: Parents / Guardians  
FROM: Debbie Crosten-Purcell, Director  
DATE: July 1, 2017  
SUBJECT: Meal Substitutions for Medical or Other Special Dietary Reasons

According to Federal Regulations 7 CFR 210.10(i) under the National School Lunch Program and 7CFR 220.8(f) under the School Breakfast Program, schools are **required** to make substitutions to the standard meal patterns for participants who are considered handicapped under 7CFR Part 15b and whose handicap restricts their diet. Schools are **permitted** to make substitutions for other participants who are not handicapped but are unable to consume the regular meal because of medical or other special dietary needs.

Substitutions for individual participants who are not “handicapped persons”, as defined in 7CFR 15b.3(i), but who are unable to consume a food item because of medical or other special dietary needs shall be made on a case by case basis. These cases must be supported by a statement signed by a recognized medical authority which may include physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

The supporting statement shall include:

- A. An identification of the medical or special dietary need which restricts the participant’s diet; and
- B. The food or foods to be omitted from the participant’s diet, and the food or choice of foods that may be substituted.

*Schools are not required to make substitutions for participants whose conditions do not meet the definition of “handicapped person” set forth in 7CFR 15b.3(i).*

The statement will be kept on file and a medical alert will be entered in to the point of sale software. This will appear as a red alert box when the student’s meal information appears that will remind the cashier to check the tray for restricted foods. When possible, the serving line will be labeled indicating an at risk food. In addition an alert list will be posted in the kitchen/ food preparation area to remind workers of key allergy foods.

For further clarification call Debbie Crosten- Purcell at 229-243-5321

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# Decatur County Schools

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THE BEARCAT WAY

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School Nutrition Program  
1304 East Evans Street  
Bainbridge, GA 39819  
229-243-5321

## PAYMENT PROCEDURE

The School Nutrition Program encourages customers to use MyPaymentsPlus or checks to prepay for food purchases. Both Options provide parents documentation of payment.

### PAYMENT TO Schoolcafe'

- ❖ Make a prepayment into your student's account using a check, credit card, or debit card at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) or by calling **855-729-2328**

### PAYMENT BY CHECK

- ❖ Make check payable to each school lunchroom.  
Check must include:
  - Full Name
  - Street Address
  - Home Phone Number w/Area Code
  - Work Phone Number w/Area Code
  - Driver's License Number w/State
- ❖ List customer name on the memo line of check.
- ❖ Place check in an envelope with customer name and amount enclosed on outside of envelope.
- ❖ Turn the envelope in to the school lunchroom manager.
- ❖ DO NOT include fees for other items with your school nutrition money.

### CASHING A CHECK

No one is allowed to cash a check out of School Nutrition Program monies.

Checks will only be accepted for the amount of money to be credited to an account or for the amount of a food purchase.

### RETURNED CHECKS

Returned checks are now being processed by **Envision Payment Solutions, Inc.** If a check is returned due to non-payment, these procedures will be followed:

1. If your check is returned, it may be re-presented electronically. You authorize service charges and processing fees, as permitted by state law, to be debited from the same account by paper draft or electronically, at our option. If you have any questions you may contact **Envision** at (800) 290-3957 or [www.envisionpayments.com](http://www.envisionpayments.com).
2. Once an individual has had two returned checks, the School Nutrition Program Manager will not be allowed to accept any additional checks from that person/account until the previous debts have been taken care of.

At the beginning of each school year, individuals who eliminate any prior debt will be reinstated as a customer in good standing.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL  
2017-2018  
Decatur County Schools

This document includes a protocol for addressing and decreasing the incidence of truancy in Decatur County. This protocol reflects a partnership among various local agencies, offices, and individuals to promote the educational progress of children and families in Decatur County.

This partnership includes, but is not limited to, representatives of the following entities:

Decatur County Superior Court  
State Court of Decatur County  
Solicitor General  
Decatur County Juvenile Court  
Decatur County District Attorney's Office  
Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice  
Decatur County Board of Education Representatives  
Decatur County Board of Education Attorney  
Decatur County Sheriff's Office  
Decatur County Department of Family and Children Services  
Decatur County Health Department  
Decatur County Family Connection Collaborative  
Director of Bainbridge Public Safety  
Decatur County Mental Health Department

The purpose of the committee is to make recommendations to the Decatur County Board of Education regarding attendance policy and procedures, as well as to create guidelines for collaboration between local and state agencies having an interest or function related to educational achievement and school attendance in Decatur County.

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee has agreed upon procedures, which are intended to allow the reduction of truancy at the individual, family, and community levels. It is understood, however, that these procedures are general guidelines, and extenuating circumstances may be considered, as allowable by law, for each student and family. In addition, it is understood that each state and local agency involved must first adhere to its own policies, which were considered in the development of this protocol.

#### Operational Authority

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee is operational under authority of the chief superior court judge as defined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.2. Following adoption of this written protocol and filing with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), the committee will meet quarterly during its first year and twice annually thereafter for the purpose of evaluating compliance and effectiveness, and to modify the protocol as appropriate.

### **Tardies and Early Checkout**

#### Definition of Terms

**Tardy to School:** Any student arriving at school following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal established by the Principal and intended to indicate the start of the school day. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the bell, chime, or other audible signal will be considered tardy to school.

**Tardy to Class:** A student is "tardy to class" when he/she arrives to class following the ringing bell, chime or other audible signal indicating the beginning of instructional time.

**Excused Tardy:** A tardy resulting from events beyond a student’s control shall be determined excused by the Principal or designee. Events may include an accident, road closed due to an accident, area power outage, late bus, or other incidents. Documentation is required to excuse a tardy.

**Unexcused Tardy:** Incidents including over-sleeping, heavy traffic, errands, delays at a train crossing, or similar excuses determined by the Principal or designee as unacceptable are unexcused. Documentation will not obligate the Principal or designee to excuse an unexcused tardy.

**Early Checkout:** Leaving school prior to the end of instructional time and/or the end of the official school day.

- Excused: Early checkouts for emergency, illness, or other reasons that the Principal deems necessary or reasonable. Documentation is required to excuse an early dismissal.

Records will

be kept at each school to document the number of days a student misses due to early checkouts.

Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to

the AST as the Principal deems necessary.

- Unexcused: Early checkouts for reasons other than those approved by the Principal. Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the AST as the Principal deems necessary.

**Official School Start/End Time:** The time designated by the principal and advertised to students and parents as the official start or end of the school day. Correct time will be the time as determined accurate by the school principal, indicated on a designated school clock, and displayed in a prominent location.

**Attendance Support Team (AST):** An interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address attendance problems that impact learning of K-12 students in a school.

**Unexcused Tardies and Early Checkouts:**

- Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies to school will receive a referral to the Principal or Principal’s designee for violation of Board Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses.
- At the school system’s discretion, students establishing a pattern of early checkouts may be referred to the Principal or Principal’s designee for disciplinary or other appropriate action.
- Students leaving early or arriving late to class may be counted absent from the class or classes missed if they are not present more than 15 minutes of the entire instructional period.

**Consequences and Penalties for Unexcused Tardies/Early Checkouts**

The Principal or Principal’s designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts that may include, but are not limited to the following:



- **Third Tardy:** Written notification to notify parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) having control or charge of the student of possible consequences for continued tardies.
- **Fourth to Ninth Tardies:**  
Elementary and Middle School Students: Referral(s) to the Principal or the Principal's designee for disciplinary consequences (detention for each tardy), counselor's referral, social work referral or other appropriate action.  
High School Students: Upon a student's fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) tardy, a disciplinary referral will be made to the Principal or Principal's designee. Consequences may include loss of driving privileges, detention, in-school suspension, or other action in accordance with local school system policy.
- **Ten or More Tardies:** Ten or more tardies may result in immediate referral to support agencies outside the school system as the Principal deems appropriate. Among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Family and/or Youth Connections, or other external agencies.

### **Truant Students** Definition of Terms

**Truant:** Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences.

**Exception for Suspension:** School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

**Excused Absences:** Local board of education shall adopt policies and procedures excusing students from school under the following circumstances, as a minimum:

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences may require an excuse from medical doctor)
- Circumstances where attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others
- Serious illness in a student's immediate family
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election
- Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly

**Grades and Absences:** Final student course grades shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met.

- Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.
- Make up work for excused absences were completed satisfactorily. Local boards of education are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

**Absence Reduction Plan:** The board of education adopts the following policies and/or procedures to reduce unexcused absences.

**Parental Notification: Statement of Receipt**

- The school system will provide the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school with a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.
- By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student’s enrollment in the school system, the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of such student must sign a statement indicating receipt of the written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance with local school compulsory attendance policy and protocol.

**Consequences and Penalties for Violation of Compulsory Attendance**

The Principal or Principal’s designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused absences and/or early checkouts at any time if he/she deems necessary. Consequences and penalties may include, but are not limited to the following:

**Five Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:**

- Schools will notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student when such student has accumulated five unexcused absences in the school calendar year.
- Notice of five accumulated absences will include notification of the penalties and consequences of such absences.
- After five unexcused absences in the school calendar year, each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense.

**Notification**

- Schools will make two reasonable attempts by phone, conference, letter, email, or other appropriate means to notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student when five unexcused absences in an academic year have occurred and of the penalties and consequences for violation of compulsory attendance.
- If two reasonable attempts to notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student have been unsuccessful, the school will send written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested. Such notification will include a reminder of previous notice to the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school containing a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.

**Six or More Unexcused Absences in an Academic Year**

**Six Unexcused Absences:** Students accumulating six (6) days of unexcused absences in a semester will receive a referral to the Principal or administrative designee for violation of Board Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses. Upon a student’s accumulation of three (3) or more unexcused absences in the school calendar year, a student’s homeroom teacher will make a referral to the Principal or designee for Attendance Support Team (AST) intervention. Prior to the first AST meeting, a school social worker, school nurse or other appropriate staff member will attempt contact with the student and parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student.

The school social worker will participate as part of the AST to assist with the development of interventions and strategies for improvement of the student's school attendance.

**Three Unexcused Absences:** Upon a student's accumulation of three (3) unexcused absences in the school calendar year, the school social worker will refer the student and parent to Decatur County Truancy Education and Mediation (TEAM) for contracted participation in the TEAM truancy diversion program. The school social worker will serve to coordinate efforts between the school AST and TEAM in monitoring attendance.

Violation of TEAM Truancy Diversion Contract or refusal to participate in the TEAM truancy diversion program may result in immediate referral to the appropriate court, including but not limited to one or more of the following:

- Students ages six (6) to seventeen (17) and their parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of the student to the Juvenile Court for possible Protective Order or other appropriate disposition.
- Parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of students ages six (6) to seventeen (17) to State Court for Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance.

## **Student Attendance Protocol**

### **I. School System Procedures**

Decatur County Board of Education will monitor student attendance daily. Codes for attendance used in the student records database (Infinite Campus) will be consistent between schools to indicate excused absences, unexcused absences, excused tardies, unexcused tardies, early withdrawals, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. The Decatur County Board of Education will adopt policy and procedure outlining the specific steps to be taken to monitor and address student attendance. Each school will create a building level procedure in accordance with this policy.

Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents and guardians will be given notice of State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1 and the Decatur County Board of Education school attendance policy JBD. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the policy by requesting signatures from parents/guardians that this notice was received and understood. At the middle and high school, students will also receive this notice and provide a signature. At the elementary school, this notice will be received by all students who have reached age ten (10) or above by September 1 of that school year. This notice should also be included in each school's Code of Conduct.

Each school will utilize the Attendance Support Team (AST) to address attendance concerns. An AST meeting that is convened for the purpose of discussing attendance will be chaired by each school's Principal or other designated Administrator and include as its members a rotating committee of faculty having direct contact with the parents/guardians of or providing direct service to the specific student(s) to be discussed as well as the School Social

Worker. School Resource Officers will also be invited to participate, as appropriate. Each school's AST will meet as needed and be responsible for implementing and monitoring policy to reduce tardy days, early withdrawals, and truancy. Parents/guardians shall be invited to and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Daily attempts will be made to call the parents/guardians of absent students. In cases known to involve joint or shared custody or guardianship of a student, efforts should be made to contact all individuals with custodial rights. This principal shall also apply to steps mentioned hereinafter.

Attendance letters will be sent at two (2) unexcused absences.

After three (3) unexcused absences:

1. A referral will be made to the AST, which will assess the student's absences and determine strategies to address attendance, including the possibility of referral to the School Social Worker. Each school will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents/guardians are, in writing, invited to and encouraged to attend these meetings. Students may also participate in AST meetings, as deemed appropriate by the AST.
2. In addition to notice of the AST meeting, two (2) reasonable attempts will be made by the school to notify parents/ guardians, in writing, of attendance to date (absences, tardies, and early check-outs), compulsory attendance law, and potential consequences and penalties for failure to comply. A signature of receipt of this notice will be obtained, and kept on file for the remainder of the school year. Students age ten (10) and older will also receive a copy of the notice and provide a signature of receipt.
  - A. First attempts to meet this requirement shall be made in conjunction with the notice of an AST meeting and/or during an AST meeting when the Parent/guardian(s) are in attendance.
  - B. After two (2) unsuccessful reasonable attempts to provide notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) and obtain signatures, notice shall be sent via certified mail, with return receipt requested. The school should keep a copy of the notice mailed. Once the receipt is obtained, it will be kept on file by the school, attached to the copy of the notice.

At six (6) unexcused absences, the AST will review the case again and make a referral to the School Social Worker, if a referral has not been made previously.

The School Social Worker will:

1. Review available information from the AST and parent contacts from school staff.
2. Meet with the student(s) and attempt a home visit within no more than two business days from the date of the receipt of the referral to further explore reasons for absence and offer assistance to the student and family for addressing the causes of absences. Examples of such assistance would include, but is not limited to:
  - Brief individual or group therapeutic intervention with students at school
  - Referral to public or private mental health or counseling services
  - Referral to public or private medical or dental services
  - Referral to public assistance programs
  - Referral to the school's Attendance Support Team
  - In-home support facilitated by the School Social Worker
  - Referral to outside social service or counseling providers for intensive in-home support
  - Referral to Department of Family and Children services, if deemed necessary.
3. Upon further investigation, determine the need for immediate referral of:
  - Students ages ten (10) to sixteen (16) to Juvenile Court for truancy
  - Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students ages six (6) to sixteen (16) to the Magistrate Court for Deprivation, or to Superior Court for Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance
  - Refer to the Decatur County Truancy Reduction Program in Appendix 1

In most cases, Court referral will be made at this point or at the next unexcused absence. The family will be

referred to the Department of Family and Children Services for suspicion or indicators of abuse and/or neglect. If

a referral is necessary, the local Child Abuse Protocol will take precedence regarding further action.

4. Continue to monitor student attendance weekly and provide support related to the student and family's educational needs once a referral is made to a court or to the Department of Family and Children Services.
5. Review end of year attendance records with each school's Principal and determine a list of active referrals for the beginning of the next school year.

In general, students known to be on probation for truancy are monitored for attendance concerns on a monthly basis the next school year.

## II. Criminal Prosecution for Violation of School Attendance Law

O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 requires any person in this State who has control or charge of a child between the ages of six and sixteen to enroll and send that child to school, including public, private, and home schooling.

A child is responsible to attend school and is subject to adjudication in Decatur County Juvenile Court as an unruly child for violation of this statute. If a parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the child causes the child's absence, then that person, and not the child, is in violation of this statute. Such a violation is a misdemeanor and carries a penalty of up to \$100 fine and 30 days in jail for each violation. The law specifies that each day's absence constitutes a separate offense.

For purposes of this Protocol, the term "parent" may include any adult who has charge and control over the child, including a biological, adoptive, foster, or step-parent, a guardian or any other person who has control or charge of the child's attendance at school. In this regard, two parents residing in the same household with the child are equally responsible for the child's attendance at school.

### A. Filing Juvenile Complaints

A juvenile complaint should be filed in the Juvenile Court of Decatur County against a child who is habitually and without justification truant from school. Such a child is "unruly."

For the purposes of this Protocol, habitual truancy or absence is defined as six (6) or more days of unexcused absence from school. At this point the child's circumstances will be reviewed by the AST, to which the parent will be invited to attend. At this review the following options will be discussed:

- Refer the child and/or parent to the appropriate social services
- Request further medical documentation if appropriate
- File an "unruly child" complaint with the Juvenile Court of Decatur County
- Seek a protective order for the parent from the Juvenile Court
- Seek a criminal warrant for the parent from the Magistrate Court of Decatur County for Deprivation

The School Social Worker will be responsible for obtaining and monitoring compliance with the recommendations of the AST.

B. Juvenile Justice Procedures

1. Intake Process for Juvenile Complaints

- a. All truancy complaints will be forwarded to the Intake Officer of the Department of Juvenile Justice for Decatur County. The Intake Officer will process complaints as follows:
- b. Complaints will be entered into the Juvenile Tracking System and any past history will be assessed.
- c. The Intake Officer may contact the School Social Worker for any further pertinent information.
- d. The complaint may be forwarded to the District Attorney's Office, accompanied by any legal history and brief summary of involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice. This may include offense history, placement history, a summary of any past or current interventions, as well as current information.
- e. Truancy complaints will receive immediate attention and be informally adjusted in ten (10) days.

2. Adjudication and Disposition

- a. A youth may be placed on Probation for Truancy by the Juvenile Court Judge upon adjudication of a Truancy charge. At this time, the District Attorney and/or the Department of Juvenile Justice may request a Protective Order to ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) actively assist in the youth's compliance with Conditions of Probation and the youth's attendance at school.
- b. The Probation Officer will monitor the youth's attendance, at a minimum, on a weekly basis. Further unexcused absences from school by youth will result in immediate sanction by the Department of Juvenile Justice, including possible Violation of Probation. Upon adjudication for Truancy-related Violation of Probation, the Juvenile Court Judge will determine what further action or intervention is appropriate.
- c. Judicial truancy reviews will be held on a monthly basis from the date of the initial Probation Order for Truancy-related Probation cases. These reviews will assess the youth's attendance at school and effectiveness of any services that may be involved to assist youth and/or family. All parties involved should be prepared to report on youth's progress at these reviews.
- d. A Probation Order may be terminated by the Juvenile Court Judge prior to the expiration date if youth's attendance and/or progress have reached a level satisfactory to all parties involved.

C. Prosecution in Superior Court

After referral is made to the truancy reduction program, and it is determined that the parent is the direct cause of the child's absence, a warrant for violation of OCGA 20-2- 690.1 should be sought against the parent. In other circumstances, the AST may, but is not required to, take into account the following considerations when recommending a criminal warrant is sought for the parent of a child:

1. The child is under the age of 13 years.
2. The child has an illness for which the parent has not been diligent in pursuing medical attention or in seeking financial assistance to procure the proper medical attention.
3. The parent has not actively sought assistance from community social services

and resources to assist in getting the child to school.

4. The parent is absent from the home or neglectful to an extent that it hinders the child's willingness or ability to attend school.
5. The child is a deprived child.

The child and parent must comply with the AST's recommendations. Failure of the child or parent to comply with the recommendations, including further unexcused absences from school, will result in juvenile adjudication of the child and/or criminal prosecution of the parent. In any event, if the child accumulates ten (10) or more unexcused absences in a semester, the School Social Worker will file a juvenile complaint and/or apply, via the School Resource Officer, for a criminal warrant for violation of mandatory school attendance laws. When a parent is prosecuted, regular school attendance will be assigned as a condition of bond.

#### D. Notification to Parent(s)

Notification to the parent of a truant child shall include notice of an AST review and information about attendance law and the penalties that may occur as a result of the child's continued absence. After two unsuccessful attempts to serve such notice and obtain signature of receipt, notification should be sent via certified mail, with return receipt requested, to the parent and should contain the following language:

“Decisions as to appropriate action recommendations will be made at an AST Review that could include recommendations for criminal prosecution of you or your child. Parent(s) may be charged with a misdemeanor if they are causing the child's absence from school. The penalty can be up to \$100 fine and up to 30 days in jail for each day the child has an unexcused absence from school.”

### III. Community Support

#### A. Law Enforcement

Each school in Decatur County has access to, either on- site or within minimal driving distance, an employee of the Decatur County Sheriff's Department or the Bainbridge Public Safety Department. These individuals

are certified peace officers designated as “School Resource Officers.” In support of improved school attendance, the School Resource Officers shall:

1. Attend AST meetings, as appropriate.
2. Forward complaints against parents directly to the Sheriff's Department and/or relate City Public Safety Department regarding compliance with mandatory attendance law.
3. Honor any applicable school-related transportation orders issued by a court.

#### B. Public Health

Each school in Decatur County has licensed staff available to serve students via on-site school “clinics.” These personnel are hired by the Decatur County Board of Education. The School Health Nurses shall:

1. Be responsible, in cooperation with other staff, for the final determination at each school regarding when a child should be sent home early for the day, due to health related concerns.

2. Be available to parents for preliminary verification to the school of illness pending an appointment with a physician and advocate with physician's offices for timely appointments.
3. Follow any orders written by students' physicians regarding medication or other medical treatment to be provided during school hours.
4. Work in conjunction with teachers, school administrators, and the school social worker to promote general health and safety for students, school staff, and the community.

The Decatur County Health Department is an integral partner in community health related to school readiness, attendance, and success. The Decatur County Health Department shall:

1. Continue to support and promote the Decatur County School Nurses
2. Provide immunizations and immunization records required for school enrollment
3. Provide various medical, dental, and prescription services, referrals, and education to students and families in Decatur County to promote personal and community health.

#### C. Mental Health

The Decatur County Mental Health provides crucial support for the mental, physical and emotional well being of students and their families, including individual and group sessions on-site at the schools or at the Mental Health office. In support of this Protocol, Decatur County Mental Health shall:

1. Notify and/or refer student clients to the School Counselor or Social Worker when efforts to conduct individual or group sessions at school repeatedly fail due to absences.
2. Coordinate and host regular Inter-Agency Staffing Committee meetings, which facilitate support and treatment planning for at-risk youth, including students who are truant.
3. Attend court proceedings, when appropriate, for cases involving truancy and support any court orders for treatment of emotional or family issues contributing to absences.
4. Offer clinical support, when possible and appropriate, to any truancy prevention or treatment programs instituted.

#### D. Department of Family and Children Services

The Decatur County Department of Family and Children Services often provides social services to the families of truant students. In support of this Protocol, the Decatur County Department of Family and Children's Services shall:

1. Accept and consider information related to school attendance, behavior, and performance in reports and investigations of other suspected abuse and/or neglect.
2. Address school attendance in departmental case plans and safety plans.
3. Ensure school enrollment and regular attendance for students in emergency shelter care, temporary guardianship arranged by the department, or foster care.



4. Verify involvement of the School Social Worker when available attendance information indicates more than ten (10) unexcused absences.
5. Attend court proceedings, when necessary, for cases involving truancy and/or complaints against parents related to mandatory school attendance. Subpoena(s) should be issued to the appropriate Case Manager and/or Investigator when participation by the Department of Family and Children Services is desired.

#### IV. Monitoring the Protocol

To ensure that these written protocol procedures are followed, the Protocol Committee will meet quarterly for a year, which will begin on the date of the protocol's adoption. The Protocol Committee will then meet bi-annually, as required by law. The Committee's goal will be to improve communication between agencies, encourage inter-agency cooperation, and update the protocol as necessary. Each participating agency shall monitor and evaluate compliance with this protocol and, as needed, recommend protocol revision and implementation that best meets the needs of the community and complies with Federal, State, and Local statutes, as well as agency policy.

#### V. Steps to Prevent Truancy

Various measures are currently being explored to address truancy from a prevention perspective.

- A. The Department of Juvenile Justice in conjunction with the Decatur County Juvenile Court, The Decatur County Mental Health, and Decatur County Schools are working together to develop a plan to work on preventing truancy.

The Decatur County Commission on Children and Youth (CCCY) is a collaborative partnership working to address the educational, social and physical needs of local children and youth. The Commission serves as the local Family Connection collaborative with dedicated members representing a cross-section of the community.

The specific goals of the Commission for Children and Youth are to increase the number of students who graduate from high school on time, to decrease the number of teen pregnancies and to decrease the school drop out rate.

- B. Local businesses, clubs, and civic organizations will be asked to consider developing incentive or even scholarship programs for those students whose grades and attendance exhibit significant improvement.

- C. Drivers Licenses Denial  
The Decatur County Board of Education requires the local school superintendent or the

superintendent's designee to use his or her best efforts including certified mail, to notify students age 14 and older when the student has only three absences remaining before violating the state's attendance requirements pursuant to O.C.G.A. 40-5-22 regarding the denial of driver's permits and licenses.

Decatur County Schools will be responsible for certifying that students enrolled in public schools and in home schools in its district satisfy the attendance requirements. They will do this by using the *Certificate of Attendance* form. Decatur County Schools will be responsible for making this form available to private schools in Georgia in which students living in the public school district are enrolled. The private schools will complete the forms.

The Central Office of Decatur County Schools is required by this law to report information regarding non-compliance to the Department of Motor and Vehicle Safety through a process developed jointly with the Department of Education. Decatur County Schools must report this information from the public schools in its district, from private schools attended by students who reside in the public school district, and from home schools in the public school district. A non-compliant student is one who:

1. Has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for ten consecutive school days;
2. Has more than ten school days of unexcused absences in any semester or combination of two consecutive quarters; or
3. Has been suspended from school for:
  - (a) Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel;
  - (b) Possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property;
  - (c) Possession or use of a weapon on school property. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "weapon" shall be defined in accordance with Code Section 16-11-127.1 but shall not include any part of an archeological or cultural exhibit brought to school in connection with a school project.
  - (d) Any sexual offense prohibited under Chapter 6 of Title 16; or
  - (e) Causing substantial physical or visible bodily harm to or seriously disfiguring another person, including another student. O.C.G.A. § 40-5-22 (a.1)

## Code of Conduct for Students as Passengers on Buses

### A. Procedures for boarding the bus:

1. Students must be at the designated bus stop at the time the bus is scheduled to arrive. The bus stop is designated by the driver and/or transportation supervisor.
2. Students who must cross the road before getting on the bus shall wait for the bus to arrive, the driver to display the proper warning signs and hand signal before crossing the road.
3. All students must cross the road in front of the bus, never behind the bus.
4. Students shall always stand a safe distance off the road and never in the road while waiting for the bus to arrive.
5. While at the bus stop, students should:
  - a. Conduct themselves in an orderly manner
  - b. Avoid littering
  - c. Respect nearby private property rights

### B. Procedures for Deboarding the Bus:

1. Students must use the service entrance door while unloading and not the emergency exit doors. The emergency exit is to be used only in emergency situations.
2. Students who must cross the road after getting off the bus should cross at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus after looking both ways to be sure no traffic is approaching from either direction and wait for the driver to signal to cross.
3. Students should walk across the road, **never run**.
4. Students should not ask to be let off at stops other than their assigned stop unless requested in writing by student's parents or guardians and approved by principal or other school administrator.

### C. Rules for Riding the Bus:

1. Students shall take seats promptly after boarding the bus. No seats can be reserved. Should the driver assign a student a seat, the student must comply. Students will remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
2. Students must keep arms and head inside the bus.
3. Students shall not use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco in any form.
4. Students shall not throw objects on the bus or out the windows.
5. Students shall not distract the driver.
6. Students shall not eat food or drink beverages.
7. Students shall not transport live animals.
8. Students shall not litter.
9. Students shall not transport items which may endanger the health or safety of any other passengers.
10. Students shall not transport weapons or fireworks.
11. Students shall not use inappropriate language as follows: It is unacceptable to use language or gestures that are lewd, obscene, profane or in general offensive and objectionable as measured by the prudent and prevailing standard of the community and the Board of Education.
12. Students shall not be disobedient as follows: It is unacceptable to be defiant or refuse to obey and follow a legitimate request, rule, regulation, directive or order.
13. Students shall not be disrespectful as follows: It is unacceptable to be discourteous, impolite, rude, or insubordinate.

- 14. Students shall not be disruptive as follows: It is unacceptable to interrupt in any of its settings, the orderly course of transportation affairs by any means, way, form or fashion.
- 15. Students shall not be abusive or aggressive as follows: It is unacceptable to fight, mistreat, misuse, demean, insult, intimidate, extort, mock, ridicule, threaten or use excessive force.
- 16. Students shall follow school dress codes.
- 17. Students are expected to comply with any and/or all other policies and regulations as stipulated by the Decatur County Board of Education.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Students are subject to being recorded on video cameras at any time they are riding a school bus.

When deemed appropriate, violations will be reported to the Principal or other designee for disciplinary action.

(1st OFFENSE) - The driver will talk with a student, may reassign him/her to a new seat on the bus and talk with the student's parents or guardians. The driver will document the action and give copy to Principal or other designee.

(2nd OFFENSE) - Disciplinary Action will be at the principal's discretion.

(3rd OFFENSE) - Student will be suspended from riding the bus for three (3) days.

(4th OFFENSE) - Student will be suspended from riding the bus for five (5) days.

(5th OFFENSE) - Student will be suspended from riding the bus for ten (10) days.

(6th OFFENSE) - Student will be suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year.

**NOTE:** Principals have the option to suspend students out of school and from riding the bus for more than (10) days and up to the remainder of the year, when deemed appropriate. When altercations occur between students of different schools, Principal and/or designee of each school will collaborate in order to be consistent with disciplinary action.

### **MESSAGE TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE PASSENGERS ON BUSES**

Parents or guardians are ultimately accountable for the behavior of their minor children. The drivers need your cooperation and support of their efforts to enforce the rules that are essential to the safety and security of your children. While the drivers represent you in a parent-like role, the students must obey them regarding the rules for students the same as if you, the parents or guardians, were enforcing them. Your responsibility is to enforce at home that you require and expect your children to follow the specified rules while they are passengers on a school bus.

### **SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Parents or guardians who fail to act responsibly in teaching, requiring and upholding rules for their children while they are passengers on school buses may subject themselves to:

1. Providing your child's own transportation up to the remainder of the year.
2. Facing Disciplinary action from the Court System.

## School Bus Ride Guide

### Going to the School Bus Stop

-You should leave your house early enough to ensure that you will not miss your bus. After the school year has started and your driver has had an opportunity to stabilize the bus schedule, you should be at your bus stop five minutes before the bus is to schedule to arrive. If you have to cross the street to get on your bus, wait until the bus arrives and the driver motions you to cross. You should also check the traffic yourself.

### Wait at the Bus Stop

-While waiting at the bus stop you should keep your books and other materials in your hand. You should wait well away from the road. Always remember that you are at a bus stop, not a playground. When you see bus approaching you should wait in a single file line, do not push and shove.

### Getting on the School Bus

-When getting on your bus, you should always use the handrail. Never push or shove while getting on the bus. When going up the steps, you should always take one step at a time. If you are the only person in the seat, you should move over to the window.

### Riding the School Bus

-You should remain seated throughout your trip and follow **Code of Conduct for Students as Passengers on Buses.**

### Emergency Evacuation

#### -Front Door Evacuation:

1. Bus Driver will give command: "Front Door Emergency Evacuation" students are to remain seated.
2. Driver will assign two helpers beside front door.
3. Starting with the right-hand seat, students will be lead off bus and away from bus 40 steps or 100 feet.
4. When the students in the right-hand seat have moved forward enough to clear aisle, the driver will dismiss the students of the left-hand seat.
5. Continue the evacuation procedure as described, right and left seats alternately, until the bus is empty.
6. Remember to walk, do not run, use the hand rails and follow your bus drivers' instructions.

#### -Rear Emergency Door Evacuation:

1. Bus Driver will give command: "Rear Door Emergency Evacuation" students are to remain seated.
2. Driver will assign two helpers beside rear door.
3. Starting with the right-rear seat, students will sit down in aisle at rear door, slide out, and be lead away from bus 40 steps or 100 feet.
4. When the students in the right-rear seat have moved out the rear door, and have cleared aisle, the driver will dismiss the students of the left-rear seat.
5. Continue the evacuation procedure as described, right then left seats alternately until the bus is empty.
6. Remember to no pushing or shoving, allow assigned helpers to assist you while sliding out rear door and follow your bus drivers' instructions.

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