

Zolfo Springs Elementary



Student Handbook 2026-2027

“Charting the Course to Success”

One Team. One Goal. One Family

Zolfo Springs Elementary School

3215 Schoolhouse Road
Zolfo Springs, Florida 33890

Phone: (863) 773-5473
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Dr. Sheryl L. Mosley, Principal
Mrs. Kristen Rivas, Assistant Principal

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I welcome you to a new school year at Zolfo Springs Elementary! As your principal, I am honored to be a part of this amazing school community and look forward to the opportunity to serve our students and families.

At ZSE, our focus will be on academic excellence, social-emotional learning, and cultivating a safe, nurturing environment where every child feels seen, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. I am committed to leading a school that not only challenges students academically but also prioritizes their emotional well-being and personal growth. We will continue to enhance programs that promote innovation, creativity, and collaboration, while also preparing students with the skills they need to thrive in a changing world. Equally important, we will work together to build a strong partnership between school and home—because student success is a team effort.

I encourage all parents and guardians to take an active role in our school community. Whether through volunteering, joining the PTO, or attending school events, your involvement makes a tremendous difference. Open communication and collaboration will be essential as we work hand-in-hand to support our students' learning journey.

As we embark on this exciting year together, I want you to know that my door is always open. I am here to listen, to learn, and to lead—with integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to every student's success. Let's make this year one of growth, achievement, and joyful learning. Together, we will do great things.

Warm regards,

Dr. Sheryl L. Mosley
Principal

Empower and inspire all students for success.

http://www.hardee.k12.fl.us/zse_school/index.htm

Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Zolfo Springs Elementary School

3215 School House Road

Zolfo Springs, FL 33890

Phone: 863-773-5473

Fax: 863-773-0416

Principal: Dr. Sheryl Mosley

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Kristen Rivas

DISTRICT VISION AND MISSION

Vision

To Empower and inspire all students for success

Mission

We provide all students a high quality education in a nurturing and creative environment to develop responsible citizens.

ZSE MISSION STATEMENT

“Achieving excellence in education in a safe, positive, learning environment”

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

School hours are 7:30 AM to 1:55 P.M. and classes start promptly at 7:30 A.M. Please have students at school on time. The student pick-up and drop-off area is in the south parking lot.

Students should not arrive at school before 6:50 A.M. **When students arrive, they should report to the cafeteria if they want to eat breakfast.**

DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

The dismissal schedule is as follows:

1:50 K-2 bus riders dismissed followed by car riders and walkers

1:53 3-5 bus riders dismissed

To help ensure an orderly and safe dismissal, all student backpacks will be tagged with a colored plastic band. This color will indicate to staff how your child will be traveling from school. Please do not remove the tag, as staff supervising dismissal will be monitoring the color of the backpack tags. In the event of a temporary change in after school dismissal plans (i.e. a bus rider is going to be a car rider for one afternoon), your child will receive a sticker from his/her teacher indicating the change in plan. Please note that students will only be dismissed according to the plans that you have communicated to the teacher. Students will not be allowed to make a change in their dismissal plan. We request that dismissal plan changes be communicated in advance with your child's teacher in writing, as the validity of phone calls cannot be verified. All daycare vans will be picked up in front of the school office.

All Pre-K -5th graders will be picked up in the south loop.

****Please Remember-**Car riders are not released until 1:50 each afternoon. **Drivers will need to have the school issued car tag with assigned name on display.** Parents who do not have their car tag will need to park and come in the front office to sign out their student. Car riders need to be picked up by 2:00. After 2:00, parents will need to report to the front office to receive their child.

Note:

- Supervision is not provided after 2:15 PM
- Parents are not to park in loading areas.
- Students are not permitted back in the building after dismissal.

RAINY DAY DISMISSAL

Parents should tell their children what to do when school dismisses in bad weather. If your child is a walker, please establish a plan for your child and communicate this to your child's teacher for rainy day dismissals. All other dismissals may experience a minor delay, but will proceed as normal.

TARDINESS

Instructional time begins at 7:30 AM. It is very important that your child be present in the classroom so that he/she does not miss valuable instruction.

If your child arrives at school after 7:30 AM, he/she must be signed in at the front office **by an adult** and receive a tardy pass before being allowed to go to his/her class.

Please make an extra effort to see that your child is here at school before 7:30 AM so that he/she will not be marked tardy.

EARLY PICK-UP/SIGNING OUT

Just as important as arriving on time is staying at school until dismissal begins at 1:50 PM. Please refrain from signing your child out after 1:40 as teachers are preparing for dismissal. Classroom instruction continues until that time, so your child will miss needed academic time if he/she is taken out of school early. Please try to make medical/dental appointments after school hours.

All visitors are required to present a government-issued or other credentialed photo identification to the front office/attendance staff in order to sign students out. Parents or persons signing students out of school must be listed on the student's FOCUS portal.

DISTRICT ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Florida Statute 1003.26 requires that all students between the ages of 6 and 16 attend school 180 days a year, unless properly excused. Parents are encouraged to set the goal of regular attendance as a top priority. Students must be present in order to learn.

Any student who has been absent from school must bring a note from a parent or guardian stating the

cause of his/her absence.

Please be certain that your note includes the date, full name of your child, and that it explains exactly why he/she was absent or tardy. This note must be brought to the office within five days of an absence or it will be recorded as unexcused. Excessive absences or tardiness without notification will be investigated.

NOTE: A doctor's note will be required for all absences over a total of 15.

5200 - ATTENDANCE

The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session. School attendance is the responsibility of parents and students. Absences shall be reported to the school attendance office by the parent or adult student as soon as practicable.

In accordance with the statute, the Superintendent shall require, from the parent of each student of compulsory school age or from an adult student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a statement of the cause for such absence. The School Board reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence.

In addition, educators have the responsibility to encourage regular attendance of students, maintain accurate attendance records, and follow reporting procedures prescribed by the Superintendent. Schools will record absent and tardy students in the automated student attendance recordkeeping system.

Provision shall be made for promoting school attendance through adjustment of personal problems, education of parents, and enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws and related child-welfare legislation. Accordingly:

- A. absences must be reported to the school by the parent or adult student as soon as practicable;

Failure to report and explain the absence(s) shall result in unexcused absence(s). The final authority for determining acceptability of the reason for the absence(s) shall rest with the principal.

- B. upon each unexcused absence, or absence for which the reason is unknown, the principal shall contact the student's parent to determine the reason for the absence;
- C. teachers shall record absentees each period of the school day and report absences, excused and unexcused, as required by the school;
- D. insofar as possible, parents should be contacted each time their child has an unexcused absence or an absence for which the reason is unknown, to prevent the development of patterns of nonattendance;
- E. when a student has at least five (5) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a ninety (90) calendar day period, the teacher shall report to the Principal that the child may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. Unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, the Principal will refer the case to the school's child study team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the child study team finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, a meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies. If the problem is not resolved, the child study team will implement interventions set forth in, and act in accordance with, the requirements in F.S. 1003.26.

1. If a parent refuses to participate in the remedial strategies determined by the child study team because s/he believes that the strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent may appeal to the Board.
2. The appeal will be heard by a hearing officer who will make recommendations for final action to the Board.
3. If the Board's final determination is that the strategies of the child study team are appropriate, and the parent still refuses to participate or cooperate, the superintendent may seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance.

If the parent of a child who has been identified as exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance enrolls the child in a home education program pursuant to F.S. Chapter 1002, the superintendent shall provide the parent a copy of F.S. 1002.41 and the accountability requirements set forth in F.S. 1003.26. The superintendent shall also refer the parent to a home education review committee composed of the District contact for home education programs and at least two (2) home educators selected by the parent from a District list of all home educators who have conducted a home education program for at least three (3) years and who have indicated a willingness to serve on the committee. The home education review committee shall review the portfolio of the student, as defined by F.S. 1002.41, every thirty (30) days during the District's regular school terms until the committee is satisfied that the home education program is in compliance with F.S. 1002.41(1)(d). The first portfolio review must occur within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the establishment of the program. The following provisions shall also occur if the committee does not determine that the home education program is in compliance with F.S. 1002.41(1)(d):

- A. If the parent fails to provide a portfolio to the committee, the committee shall notify the superintendent.
- B. The superintendent shall then terminate the home education program and require the parent to enroll the child in an attendance option that meets the definition of "regular school attendance" under F.S. 1003.01 within three (3) days.
- C. Upon termination of a home education program pursuant to this subparagraph, the parent shall not be eligible to reenroll the child in a home education program for 180 calendar days.
- D. Failure of a parent to enroll the child in an attendance option as required by this subparagraph after termination of the home education program pursuant to this subparagraph shall constitute noncompliance with the compulsory attendance requirements of F.S. 1003.21 and may result in criminal prosecution under F.S. 1003.27(2).
- E. Nothing contained herein shall restrict the ability of the superintendent to review the portfolio pursuant to F.S. 1002.41(1)(e).

If a student subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent or the superintendent shall refer the case to the case staffing committee pursuant to F.S. 984.12 and the superintendent may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures in F.S. 984.151.

Under the direction of the superintendent, the Student Services Director shall give written notice that requires enrollment or attendance within three (3) days after the date of notice, in person or by return-receipt mail, to the parent when no valid reason is found for a student's non-enrollment in school.

- A. If the notice and requirement are ignored, the Student Services Director shall report the case to the superintendent, who may refer the case to the child study team at the school the student would be assigned according to attendance area policies or to the case staffing committee, established pursuant to F.S. 984.12.
- B. The child study team shall diligently facilitate intervention services and shall report the case back to the superintendent only when all reasonable efforts to resolve the non-enrollment behavior are exhausted.
- C. If the parent still refuses to cooperate or enroll the child in school, the superintendent shall take such steps as are necessary to bring criminal prosecution against the parent. Subsequently, the superintendent shall give written notice in person or by return-receipt mail to the parent that criminal prosecution is being sought for nonattendance. The superintendent may file a truancy petition, as defined in F.S. 984.03, following the procedures outlined in F.S. 984.151.

Each school should also establish procedures to ensure good attendance consistent with this policy.

Make-Up for Absences

For excused absences, the student shall have a reasonable amount of time, up to ten (10) school days, to complete make-up work. Principals may grant extensions to the make-up time limit for extenuating circumstances.

For unexcused absences, each principal shall establish site-specific policies that encourage both regular attendance and high academic achievement, and shall review and modify these policies from time-to-time as required to maintain and improve their effectiveness.

Excused Absences

The Board considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for time missed at school:

- A. Personal illness of the student (medical evidence may be required by the principal or designee for absences exceeding five (5) consecutive days).
- B. Court appearance of the student.
- C. Medical appointment of the student.
- D. Pregnancy-related issues (see also Policy 5751).
- E. Approved school activity.
- F. Insurmountable conditions. Insurmountable conditions are extreme weather conditions, communicable disease outbreaks, and local conditions determined by the School District which, after taking into account the material circumstances, would render impracticable a student's attendance at school. (F.A.C. 6A-1.09513)
- G. Other absences with prior approval of the principal or designee.
- H. Attendance at a center under Children and Families Services supervision.

- I. Significant community events with prior permission of the Principal.
- J. Religious instruction or religious holiday.
- K. Death in the immediate family.
- L. Appointments for a therapy service provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to Florida law for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder including, but not limited to, applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

Absences not included in excused absences listed above shall be unexcused.

Students may not be given excused absences to remain out of school for the purpose of working unless the job is an integral part of the student's instructional program.

Discipline

No student will be suspended for unexcused tardiness, lateness, absence, or truancy, but the student may be assigned to detention or placed in existing alternative programs.

Any student who fails to attend any regularly scheduled class and has no excuse for absence should be referred to the appropriate administrator. Disciplinary action should include notification to parents or guardians.

A student's grade in any course is based on his/her performance in the instructional setting and shall not be reduced for reasons of conduct. If a student violates the attendance or other rules of the school, s/he should be disciplined appropriately for the misconduct, but his/her grades should be based upon what the student can demonstrate s/he has learned.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures that:

- A. provide the student and his/her parents the opportunity to challenge the attendance record prior to notification and that such notification complies with applicable Board rules;
- B. require a school session that is in conformity with the rules of the State Board;
- C. govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with the rules of the State Board;
- D. identify the habitual truant, investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs and interests;
- E. require that students whose absence has been excused have an opportunity to make up work they missed and receive credit for the work if completed;
- F. require that any student who, due to a specifically identifiable physical or mental impairment, exceeds or may exceed the District's limit on excused absence is referred for evaluation for eligibility either under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or other appropriate accommodation.

Habitual Truancy

Whenever any student has a total of fifteen (15) unexcused absences from school within ninety (90) calendar days, with or without the knowledge or consent of the parent, s/he will be considered habitually truant. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to inform the student and his/her parents of the record of excessive absences as well as the District's intent to notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, if appropriate. The Superintendent is authorized to file a truancy petition under F.S. 984.151 if a student has accrued at least five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a ninety (90) calendar day period or has had more than fifteen (15) unexcused absences in a ninety (90) calendar day period.

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Legal

F.S. 984.151

F.S. 1002.20

F.S. 1003.02

F.S. 1003.21

F.S. 1003.23

F.S. 1003.24

F.S. 1003.26

F.S. 1003.27

F.A.C. 6A-1.044, Pupil Attendance Records

F.A.C. 6A-1.09512, Equivalent Minimum School Term for Compulsory Attendance Purposes

F.A.C. 6A-1.09513, Parents' Responsibility for School Attendance

F.A.C. 6A-1.09514, Excused Absences for Religious Instruction or Holiday

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Walkers / Bikers

All walkers crossing highways or streets must cross at points where school guards are posted and obey police and crossing guards at all times. Bicycle riders under the age of 16 must wear a helmet according to state statute. Students who ride bicycles to school must place them in the bike rack located in front of the school. To insure bike safety, students should place locks on their bicycles while they are parked. No skateboards, hover boards, skates or bicycles will be allowed on school walkways or playgrounds.

Bus Students

Students riding the bus must obey the bus rules posted on the bus. Failure to obey the bus rules or the bus driver could result in an accident. Inappropriate bus conduct will be reported to the principal and continued misbehavior may lead to suspension from the bus. Chronic misbehavior on the bus may lead to suspension from school.

Children may ride only assigned buses. If a parent or guardian wishes his/her child to vary from this policy, he/she **must contact the district transportation department for permission to change buses. This must be**

done well in advance of the child boarding the bus. Children will not be permitted to board a bus other than their own unless they have a form approved by the district transportation department (863)773-4754

TRAFFIC IN SCHOOL ZONES

Parents and guardians are expected to obey all traffic signs on and around school grounds. Do not block driveways, streets or enter bus loading zones; especially important is maintaining the 15-mph speed limit within our school zone.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Healthy breakfasts and lunches are served each day at no charge for ALL students through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Breakfast is served from 6:50-7:25 A.M. Students wishing to eat breakfast should report to the cafeteria to receive and eat their meal.

Lunch is served each day between 11:00-12:23, depending upon the grade level of your child.

VISITORS

The School Board welcomes parents, community members, and educators to visit our schools. However, to protect the learning environment and prevent disruptions, visitor controls must be enforced.

All visitors are required to:

- Present a government-issued or other credentialed photo identification prior to entering the campus
- Sign in at the MAIN OFFICE upon arrival
- Wear a name badge and/or credentials the entire time while on campus
- Return to the MAIN OFFICE and sign-out at the end of their visit

If a safety drill is conducted while visiting the campus, all visitors are required to participate.

The principal holds ultimate authority over the school campus. The principal may deny entry to or remove anyone whose presence disrupts school order. If an individual refuses to leave or causes a disturbance, the principal can call local law enforcement for assistance. The principal also regulates the time, duration, and supervision requirements of any visit.

Unauthorized entry is strictly prohibited. Persons desiring to meet with a teacher or student on school premises must arrange for an appointment through the principal and follow the procedures set forth above.

Classroom visitations must be pre-arranged with the teacher. Items that need to be delivered to your child or your child's classroom need to be brought to the front office. The office staff will make arrangements to get the item(s) to the student.

To view the entire school board policy, please go to www.hardee.k12.fl.us.

Reference: po9150 - School Visitors.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

The school publishes newsletters, and other notices as needed. The school also sends notes and letters home to parents, report cards every nine weeks, mid-nine week progress reports, and contacts parents for conferences when necessary. Additionally, the ZSE Facebook page will be used to send school wide messages to parents.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Each teacher will contact the parents or guardians of the students in their class during the first nine weeks for a “get to know you” conference. At that time the teacher will discuss classroom policies and procedures.

We encourage parents to meet regularly with their child’s teacher to monitor progress and maintain an open line of communication. If a conference is requested, both parents/guardians and teachers should make every effort to attend. To schedule a conference, please contact your child’s teacher by calling (863)773-5473 or by sending in a note.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Parents are encouraged to participate in the School Advisory Council (SAC). The purpose of this group is to actively involve parents, community members and business partners in making decisions concerning the progress of our school programs. Four meetings are held during the school year. Written notification will go home to voting members. Please contact the front office for meeting times.

PARENT / TEACHER ORGANIZATION

All parents and other interested persons are encouraged to attend the Zolfo Springs Elementary PTO activities. Several meetings and/or programs are held during the school year. Information concerning the PTO can be obtained by calling the school office (863)773-5473.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to our school. Families and community members will be given opportunities to contribute to the education of our students in many ways. Special events, parties, field trips, etc. are some of the opportunities you will find to be involved in your child’s classroom.

Volunteer applications must be updated every year and must be submitted at least two weeks prior to your first volunteer date. This will allow time to screen the applicant and place them on the school's approved volunteer list. The assistant principal is the coordinator of the volunteer program. Please contact the school if you have any questions or are interested in serving as a volunteer.

A volunteer log book is maintained in the front office. Volunteers should report to the office to sign in and receive a volunteer badge before serving. Volunteers should sign- out before leaving. School volunteers should not bring non-school age children or any other guests (that are not approved volunteers) with them when they are volunteering.

All volunteers are required to:

- Present a government-issued or other credentialed photo identification prior to entering the campus
- Sign in at the MAIN OFFICE upon arrival
- Wear a name badge and/or credentials the entire time while on campus
- Return to the MAIN OFFICE and sign-out before leaving campus

If a safety drill is conducted while on campus, all volunteers are required to participate.

Volunteers are to perform all service under the supervision of a staff member. It is the supervising staff member's responsibility to give the volunteer a clear understanding of their duties, procedures, expectations, and any other knowledge needed for performance in the school setting. School volunteers are not to establish lesson plans or instructional objectives, assume responsibility for an entire class in the absence of staff supervision, or work under the direction of a substitute.

Any person who plans to chaperone a field trip must be a district approved volunteer.

SAFETY DRILLS

Safety of students is a priority at Zolfo Springs Elementary School. We hold monthly fire drills throughout the school year in order to prepare students and teachers for such emergencies.

Long buzzing sounds will indicate a fire drill. At the teacher's direction, students will move out of the building quickly and quietly. Students will line up in assigned areas and quietly return to their classrooms when the all-clear signal is given.

In addition to fire emergencies, students will practice tornado and safety drills. Drill procedures will be reviewed with students regularly.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for the proper care of school property. Students who purposely destroy school property must pay restitution. Payment may be in cash or by serving community service on the school campus during or after school hours. If required to serve, after school transportation will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. Accidental property damage will result in similar consequences as a purposeful act.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

All personal property (such as sweaters, coats, caps, etc.) should be labeled with the child's name. Remind your children not to bring valuables from home, as they may be lost. Toys are not permitted at school.

TEXT AND LIBRARY BOOKS

Textbooks and library books are furnished free to students by the taxpayers of the State of Florida. Students are responsible for taking proper care of books issued or checked out to them. In accordance with Florida Statute 233.47, the student's parents/guardians shall pay for lost or damaged books.

Guidelines for the care of textbooks and library books are as follows:

- Do not mark or underline in textbooks or library books.
- Do not damage or allow damage to occur to textbooks or library books.

MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center can be an exciting place, and we encourage children to use it. Students may begin using the library at 7:00 each morning and any time their teacher gives permission during the school day.

The following rules apply in the library:

1. Students must check out books in order to take them from the library.
2. Books checked out are due back in the library in two weeks.
3. Books destroyed or lost must be paid for by the child's parents/guardians (Florida Statute 233.47).
4. All other appropriate school rules apply when using the library.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

During Physical Education, our students are expected to:

1. Practice good sportsmanship
2. Practice Safety
3. Remain in the designated area
4. Follow the instructions of the coach
5. Participate in all activities unless excused by a physician or a note from home.
Extended non-participation will require a note from a doctor.

RECOMMENDED DRESS CODE

We feel that students should take pride in their grooming and general appearance by selecting appropriate dress for school in order that they may develop proper and acceptable habits.

- A. Student dress and appearance should fall within the limits of cleanliness, good grooming, and proper taste.
- B. Wearing apparel shall be free of inflammatory, suggestive or inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork
- C. Clothing which provokes or may tend to provoke violence or disruption in the school shall not be worn .
- D. No head coverings will be allowed inside the building. Hats and sunglasses will be allowed outside only.
- E. Sleeveless shirts and blouses must be at least two inches on the shoulder (muscle shirts, tank tops, or halters will not be permitted.
- F. Pants are to be worn at the waist.

- G. Body piercings (other than ears) are not allowed to be worn at school.
- H. The stomach is not showing if the arms are lifted up.
- I. Shorts, skirts or dresses should not be excessively short in length.
- J. The wearing of bicycle shorts (spandex) is not permitted.
- K. For safety reasons, students should wear athletic shoes at PE.
- L. Cleats or skate shoes (even with wheels removed) are not to be worn at school.

We ask the cooperation of parents in creating an environment that will serve the best interest of the students and encourage student achievement.

GRADE REPORTS

Grades for Kindergarten and First Grade Language Arts and Mathematics will be expressed in terms of A, B, C, D, and F as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Less than 60%

*Language Arts grades are comprised of Reading (50%), Writing (25%), Grammar (10%), Spelling (10%), and Handwriting (5%).

Kindergarten and First Grade will issue grades in Social Studies, Science, and Conduct as follows in terms of E, S, N, and U:

E	Excellent (90-100)
S	Satisfactory (80-89)
P	Progressing (70-79)
N	Needs Improvement (60-69)
U	Unsatisfactory (0-59)

Second through Fifth Grade will issue Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies grades as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Less than 60%

*Language Arts grades are comprised of Reading (50%), Writing (25%), Grammar (10%), Spelling (10%), and Handwriting (5%).

Second through Fifth grade will express grades for Conduct in terms of E, S, N, and U as follows:

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

All parents/ guardians will be sent a **Progress Report** at the midpoint of each grading period. If your child is not demonstrating satisfactory progress, please call and set up an appointment with his/her teacher as soon as possible. We, like you, want your child to be successful in school.

A **Report Card** will be sent to parents/guardians after each nine-week grading period closes. The card should be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the classroom teacher no later than three (3) days after it is issued. An explanation of the grading system is printed on the report card.

Grades can be accessed online at any time using the **Focus Parent Portal** (<https://focus.hardee.k12.fl.us>). Parents are strongly encouraged to register for use of this site by visiting the district website at (www.hardee.k12.fl.us), and accessing the registration link on the ZSE website. Please note, after starting the registration process, you will need to bring a photo id to the front office so they can allow you access to the account.

AWARDS

An awards assembly will be held each 9 weeks recognizing students who have excelled in various areas. Academic awards are based upon performance while enrolled at Zolfo Springs Elementary. The “Cool Cat” award will be given each nine weeks to select students that have good behavior, assume responsibility, demonstrate a positive attitude, show outstanding academic effort, and are considerate to others. Students who have been enrolled and present at ZSE for 45 days each 9 weeks and 180 days for the year will receive an award. Being tardy to school and/or signing out early will prevent a student from receiving this award.

In addition to the above awards, our school offers various other incentives for students to strive for excellence. These may be in the areas of reading, math, writing, character development and others.

PICTURE USAGE

There will be pictures taken throughout the year for the newspaper, Facebook, the schools yearbook, and website. Please let your wishes be known for use of your child’s pictures by completing the Picture Usage Agreement found in the ZSE back to school packet.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Our school offers a variety of activities and incentives to encourage students to strive for excellence in areas of interest. These activities are included but are not limited to:

- Battle of the Books
- Book Skirmish
- Music Club
- Art Club
- Running Club
- Safety Patrol

- Student Council
- Odyssey of the Mind

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned by teachers/grade level as an enrichment to the educational program. **A notarized emergency card for your child must be on file before he/she is allowed to go on a field trip.** This card goes with the student in case of illness or injury. Permission slips **MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED** to school prior to each trip. Children who do not meet the deadlines for emergency cards and/or permission slips may not be allowed to go on the trip. In addition, students must demonstrate proper behavior and the ability to follow directions in the classroom and on school grounds to be eligible to attend field trips. Classroom behavior and school attendance may be considered when approving a student to participate in a field trip. **A parent conference will be held prior to addressing any concerns prior to denying a student's approval to attend a field trip.**

Field Trip Chaperones:

Adults who plan to chaperone field trips and supervise students must:

1. Be a district approved volunteer (application must be done annually)
2. Complete all chaperone requirements within the grade level timeline.
3. Agree not to bring any other children/guests to the field trip.

Note: Once chaperone names have been submitted, chaperone changes are not permitted. All monies collected for students and chaperones is nonrefundable.

DOGS AND PETS

Please do not allow your dog to follow you to school. You will be held responsible if your dog bites someone. Dogs found on the school grounds may be removed by animal control at the owner's expense.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

School insurance is not required, however, it is recommended. Two types of insurance are available. One covers the student during school hours, the other covers the student twenty- four hours a day. Both cover for a one year period. Information is available at the open house.

HEAD LICE

If a student is found to have head lice, he/she will be excluded from school and will not be permitted to return to school until his/her head is free from lice and nits. The student must be re-assessed by the nurse and given written permission from the nurse before being admitted to class. The student will be excused from school for **one day** after being sent home due to head lice.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Any child suspected of having a communicable disease shall immediately be excluded from school and may not return to school until the disease has completely subsided and/or the child presents a written statement by a physician or the Health Department that he/she is free of communicable diseases and may return to school. If

the child is to be out of school for an extended length of time, the school should be notified, and a doctor's note should accompany the child upon returning to school.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

If a student becomes ill or injured at school, he/she should notify the teacher, who will make necessary arrangements for care. A student must have a completed medical permission form on file in order to be seen by the school nurse. The school has responsibility for first aid only. In case of illness, the child will be cared for until the parent arrives or he/she returns to the classroom. In case of minor injuries, first aid will be administered to the child and he/she will return to class. In case of major injuries, first aid will be administered and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

Menstrual hygiene products are available in the school clinic for students free of charge, regardless of consent for school health services.

IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SCHOOL TO HAVE CURRENT PHONE NUMBERS TO REACH YOU IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY. Please leave a phone number where you can be reached and the number of others who will be responsible if we are unable to reach you. **Please keep these numbers updated if there is a change.**

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Florida Law 81-18 requires that parents and guardians be informed that children in school will receive noninvasive screenings during the school year. Such screenings and examinations will be for vision, hearing, height, weight, dental, scoliosis, head lice, etc. These screenings are visual checks for any health problems that the child might have. Should we find any problems, you will be notified at once.

Invasive screenings, such as immunizations, tuberculin tests, etc. will **always** require prior written permission from parents or guardians.

MEDICATION

Florida Law permits the school to administer medication only under the following conditions:

- You, or someone chosen by you, may come to school and give the medication to your child.
- You may get a copy of the Authorization for Medication form from your child's school and take it to your child's physician, medical provider, the Health Department or a walk-in clinic. This form must be filled out and signed by the doctor/mid-level practitioner and by you. Once completed, return this form to your child's school. Medication may be given at school only when an Authorization for Medication is on file!
- You may choose to discuss with your doctor/mid-level practitioner a schedule for giving medication outside of school hours.
- Medication will not be given without a signed authorization form **FROM THE DOCTOR.** If medications are to be given at school, they **MUST** be brought to school by parents, **not by students**. Florida Law permits the school to administer medication **only** under the following conditions:

The medication must be in its original container with a pharmacy label noting the following:

- the name of the student for which the medicine was prescribed

- the dosage instructions including how much is to be taken
- the name of the doctor who prescribed the medication

CAFETERIA

PROCEDURES:

1. Use an inside voice once seated
2. Use good table manners
3. Be respectful
4. Keep hands and feet to self
5. Stay Seated

CONSEQUENCES:

1. Warning
2. Silent Lunch or loss of recess
3. Referral to office

Note: Glass containers and carbonated beverages are not allowed in the cafeteria.

Electronic Devices

Disciplinary action or criminal penalties for possession of an electronic communication device by a student while on school property or in attendance at a school function will not automatically occur. However, using an electronic communication device to commit a criminal act may result in the imposition of disciplinary action or criminal penalties.

Students may possess electronic communication devices while in attendance at school functions. Use of the electronic communication device is **NOT** permitted while the student is on school property during the school day or on a school bus unless approved in advance by a school authority. When the possession of the device disrupts the educational process or when the electronic communication device is used without prior approval, disciplinary action will be administered and the device may be confiscated for return to a parent or guardian. **Possession by students of electronic communication devices with sound or photographic recording features is prohibited on school campuses during school hours or on school buses.**

POLICY STATEMENTS ON MATTERS OF MAJOR INTEREST TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS

1. **Personal Search:** (including vehicles parked in the school's parking lot): Students, their backpacks and vehicles in the parking lot may be searched if school officials have reason to believe that the health and safety of that student or any other student are in jeopardy, the pupil is told of the reasons for the search or the student gives his consent to be searched. If the student refuses to be searched, he/she will be removed to an area away from the other students and law enforcement officials will be called to conduct the search.
2. **Release of Students to Law Enforcement Officials:** Students may only be released into the custody of law enforcement officials (police, sheriff, federal agent, Division of Youth Services, Social and Economic Services, etc.) if the officer has properly identified himself/herself and the officer has filled out the Release of Student to Law Enforcement Officials form.
3. **Parents Right to Know:** Parents have the right to request the following information:

- a. Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- b. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- c. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- d. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Step 1: If a student, currently enrolled in the Hardee County School District, has a complaint, based on an alleged discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, marital status or handicap, the student has the right to voice this complaint to the school principal.

Step 2: The student may appeal to the superintendent or his/her designee, if not satisfied with the decision in Step 1. The superintendent, or his/her designee, will hear the complaint, investigate the facts and render a decision as to the proper disposition of the complaint. This decision will be final unless the student wishes to proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: The student may appeal to the School Board by requesting in writing that the superintendent place the appeal on the agenda for the next Board meeting. The Board, after hearing the facts, shall take whatever action is deemed appropriate. The decision of the Board is final.

STUDENT RECORDS MAINTAINED BY THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 grants parents and/or students, over the age of eighteen (18) years, the right to inspect/review, to challenge and to control the release of personally identifiable information contained in education records.

EDUCATION RECORDS

A permanent cumulative education record is maintained for each student from entrance into school through the twelfth grade or its equivalent. The school which initially enrolls a student is responsible for establishing the record. Each school principal has the legal responsibility for maintaining the record.

Educational records are those records, documents and other materials which contain information directly related to the student and which are maintained by an educational institution or agency. Information contained in the record is classified as follows:

Category A: Permanent educational importance which is retained indefinitely. This information includes the student's full name, location and dates of last school attended, days present, days absent, date of enrollment and withdrawal, courses taken, achievement record, graduation date and requirements.

Category B: Temporary information of clear education importance which will be periodically corrected and/or eliminated as prescribed by law. This information includes but is not limited to health information, test scores, honors/activities, disciplinary records, exceptional student records, driver education certificates and correspondences from external agencies.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR HARDEE COUNTY SCHOOLS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students may ask Hardee School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record that they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorized disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure with consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials or another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

(NOTE: In addition, a school may want to include its directory information public notice, as required by S99.37 of the regulations, with its annual notification of rights under FERPA.)

IDENTIFICATION OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

The Hardee County School District actively seeks to locate exceptional students and maintains information on those students screened and identified as exceptional. The term “exceptional student” includes the mentally handicapped, the speech and language impaired, the deaf and hearing impaired, the blind and partially sighted, the physically handicapped, those with specific learning disabilities and the gifted.

Information gathered may include the student’s social, emotional, physical, psychological, academic, and communication behaviors and abilities.

Information is collected through screening programs, checklists, teacher observations, standardized tests and from such individuals as parents, guardians, teachers, psychologists, audiologists, social workers, physicians, other professional personnel and the child himself/herself.

Information is used to assist in the development of appropriate educational programs for exceptional students and for reports to the state and federal agencies.

Students are screened periodically for vision, hearing, speech and academic achievement as the initial step in the process of identifying those students with suspected exceptionalities. If your child is selected for further testing, you will be notified and the contents of the evaluation and the procedural safeguards will be made available to you.

Exceptional Student Education Reports will be destroyed five (5) years after the student graduates (or its equivalent in time). Parents or guardians may contact the school and receive an official copy of these records prior to destruction.

504 PLANS

A student that has a physical or mental condition that substantially limits a major life activity and, as a result, requires instructional or other accommodations within the school environment may be eligible for a 504 Plan. A 504 Plan lists accommodations related to the student’s disability and required by the student so that he or she may participate in the general classroom setting and educational programs. Questions or concerns regarding 504 Plans can be addressed by contacting the school counselor or Tamara Taylor 504 Coordinator, 200 South Florida Avenue, Wauchula, Florida 33873, ttaylor@hardee.k12.fl.us, 863-773-2600

HARDEE COUNTY SCHOOLS STATEMENT OF STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The fundamental objective for the Hardee County Public School System is to help develop each student’s potential to the fullest. This development applies not only to his learning activities but also to his interaction with other people. It follows then, that the student’s conduct has a very large effect upon his progress in every facet of his life.

The purpose of this document is to assist students, parents and school administrators in developing and maintaining an understanding of our local Code of Student Conduct relative to the rights and responsibilities of students, the grounds for disciplinary action and the procedures to be followed in response to acts requiring discipline, including corporal punishment.

Each student, parent, teacher and school administrator should read and understand this document so we can collectively ensure the daily development of a better atmosphere in the Hardee County Schools.

Section 1: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Students, of course, have all the rights of any citizen of the United States of America. Their rights are guaranteed in the Constitution and shall not be abridged.

Rights, however, are accompanied with very grave responsibilities based almost entirely on respect for others as well as for oneself. For example, no student has the right to interfere with the education of his fellow students. He/she must respect himself/herself enough to respect others.

We must base all our statements concerning student conduct on one major idea - RESPECT. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of all those involved in the process of education. Accompanying responsibilities follow the exercise of rights. Equal in value among these are the following:

- Respect for Oneself
- Respect for Individual Dignity
- Respect for the Property of Others
- Respect for Others and Their Rights

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES APPLY TO AND SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY ALL STUDENTS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

1. Attendance: All children of school age in Florida have the right to attend public school. At the same time, each student, between the ages of 6 and 16, has the legal responsibility to attend school when not ill or prevented by any other major circumstances. This responsibility extends to the student's parents, who According to Florida Statute 232.09, "...shall be responsible for such child's attendance as required by law".
2. Respect for Persons and Property: Students have the constitutional right of property. That right, however, is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, welfare and safety of all its students. The student has the responsibility not to carry or conceal any prohibited material. The student also has the responsibility to accept the consequences for the contents stored within his/her backpack. Finally, students and backpacks are subject to reasonable searches.
3. Knowledge and Observation of Rules of Conduct: Students have the right and responsibility to know and observe all school rules, as stated in the student handbooks of the various school centers. They have the responsibility to accept the consequences that come with violations of these rules.
4. The Right to Learn: Each student has the right to learn as much as he/she is capable of learning - free from interruption by those who take this right lightly. He/she has the responsibility to exercise this right to the fullest extent, learning all that he/she can, preparing himself/herself for a full life.
5. Free Speech and Student Publications: One of the school's important rules is to provide effective avenues through which students may freely express themselves on a wide range of subjects, including the stating of opinions on issues. Students have the responsibility to adhere to student handbook guidelines and school policies regarding the posting of material on bulletin boards or wall areas designated for use by students and student organizations.
They must also accept the responsibility for the effect that posting, publishing or distributing this literature might have on normal school activities. Students have the responsibility to refrain from posting or otherwise distributing libelous and / or obscene materials, to obtain full information on the topics about which they write, and to observe the normal rules of responsible journalism. Principals may suppress or recall literature which they consider primarily commercial in nature or material which could endanger the orderly operation of the school.
6. Assemble: The right to peaceful assembly is guaranteed in the Constitution. It is not right, however, to

damage property, to disrupt scheduled activities or to endanger substantially and directly the physical health or safety or others. Students also have the responsibility to plan for, seek approval of and conduct those activities which are consistent with the education objectives of the school.

7. **Participation in School Programs and Activities:** Each student has the right to participate in school programs and activities regardless of race, sex, color creed or political belief. This includes both curricular and extracurricular programs and activities. The responsibility is his, however, to enter into and to participate in each program and activity in such a way as to enrich classes and activities through cooperative and constructive behavior.

Section II: CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The Code of Student Conduct is a separate document, which outlines minimum consequences infractions. It is offered to students and parents in the belief that full knowledge of school rules and regulations helps avoid accidental violations and promotes good school citizenship. This document is available to parents in the school office.

IMPORTANT DISTRICT POLICIES

Parent Complaints Regarding Concerns of Student Welfare & Services

Any parent with a concern regarding the implementation of the provisions of F.S. 1001.42 (8)(c) at their child's school may file a written complaint with the school's Principal.

- A. The written complaint can be provided in a format chosen by the parent.
- B. The written complaint must be delivered to the Principal of their child's school via hand delivery, U.S. Mail, or e-mail.
- C. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the Principal will review the concerns and communicate with those involved. The Principal, after reviewing the concerns and communicating with those involved, may meet with the parent (in-person or electronically) to try to resolve the complaint informally. This process must be completed within seven (7)calendar days of receipt of the parent's written complaint.
- D. If the parent notifies the Principal of their child's school that their written complaint remains unresolved, the Principal shall notify the Superintendent. The District must, within thirty (30) days after such notification from the parent, either resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction or provide a written statement of the reasons for not resolving the concern.

If a concern is not resolved by the District, a parent may seek to pursue those remedies available under F.S. 1001.42 (8)(c)7.b.(I-II).

5505 – Academic Honesty

The School Board values honesty and expects integrity in the District's students. Violating academic honesty erodes the trust between teachers and students as well as compromises the academic standing of other students. So that students are judged solely on their own merits, the Board prohibits any student from presenting someone else's work as their own, using artificial intelligence platforms in place of one's own work, providing unauthorized assistance to another

student, and cheating in all its forms.

All school work submitted for the purpose of meeting course requirements must be the individual student's original work. It is prohibited for any student to unfairly advance their own academic performance or that of any other student. Likewise, no student may intentionally limit or impede the academic performance or intellectual pursuits of other students.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- A. plagiarism (of ideas, work, research, speech, art, music, etc.);
- B. forgery of another's work;
- C. utilizing artificial intelligence platforms and Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools to create content and then submitting the content as one's own (See Policy 7540.08 - Artificial Intelligence (AI));
- D. downloading or copying information from other sources and presenting it as one's own;
- E. using language translation work of someone else when the expectation is doing one's own translation;
- F. copying another person's work;
- G. allowing another person to copy one's own work;
- H. stealing another person's work;
- I. doing another person's work for them;
- J. distributing copies of one's work for use by others;
- K. distributing copies of someone else's work for use by others;
- L. intentionally accessing another's work for the purpose of presenting it as one's own;
- M. distributing or receiving answers to assignments, quizzes, tests, assessments, etc.
- N. distributing or receiving questions from quizzes, tests, assessments, etc.

Faculty and the administration have the responsibility for monitoring students' work for compliance with this policy.

Consequences for Violation of Policy

Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary consequences.

Disciplinary consequences for significant violations may include issuance of a failing grade for the course, removal from student leadership positions, elimination of eligibility for honors recognition, loss of membership in honor organizations, as well as other disciplinary consequences appropriate to the nature of the violation.

Parents shall be contacted as soon as practicable to report any alleged acts of academic dishonesty by their child.

Repeated violations of this policy may result in additional disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Student and/or parent appeals of disciplinary consequences resulting from violation of this policy may be made within five (5) business days to the Principal whose decision shall be final. If the Principal was the staff member responsible for the disciplinary consequence being appealed, then student and/or parent appeals should be directed within five (5) business days to the Superintendent (or designee) whose decision shall be final.

7540.08 – Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The School Board recognizes the positive impact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology may have in the District's educational program and operations. The Superintendent is authorized to support the use of artificial intelligence technology when its use is consistent with the District's mission, goals, and operational integrity.

Any use of artificial intelligence technology in the District's educational program or

operations must be in accordance with State and Federal law as well as Board policies. Student use of Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing Tools (AI/NLP tools) Utilization of AI/NLP tools is strictly prohibited for the completion of school work. The use of AI/NLP tools, without the express permission/consent of a teacher, undermines the learning and problem-solving skills that are essential to academic success and that the staff is tasked to develop in each student. Students are encouraged to develop their own knowledge, skills, and understanding of course material rather than relying solely on AI/NLP tools and they should ask their teachers when they have questions and/or need assistance. Unauthorized use of AI/NLP tools is considered a form of plagiarism and any student found using these tools without permission or in a prohibited manner will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Notwithstanding the preceding, students can use AI/NLP tools in the school setting if they receive prior permission/consent from their teacher, so long as they use the AI/NLP tools in an ethical and responsible manner. Teachers have the discretion to authorize students to use AI/NLP tools for the following uses:

A. Research assistance: AI/NLP tools can be used to help students quickly and efficiently search for and find relevant information for their school projects and assignments.

B. Data Analysis: AI/NLP tools can be used to help students to analyze, understand, and interpret large amounts of data, such as text documents or social media posts. This can be particularly useful for research projects or data analysis assignments – e.g., scientific experiments and marketing research.

C. Language translation: AI/NLP tools can be used to translate texts or documents into different languages, which can be helpful for students who are learning a new language or for students who are studying texts written in a different language.

D. Writing assistance: AI/NLP tools can provide grammar and spelling corrections, as well as suggest alternative word choices and sentence structure, to help students improve their writing skills.

E. Accessibility: AI/NLP tools can be used to help students with disabilities access and understand written materials. For example, text-to-speech software can help students with specific learning disabilities or visual impairments to read texts and AI-powered translation tools can help students with hearing impairments understand spoken language.

As outlined above, under appropriate circumstances, AI/NLP tools can be effectively used as a supplement to and not a replacement for traditional learning methods. Consequently, with prior teacher permission/consent, students can use such resources to help them better understand and analyze information and/or access course materials. If a student has any questions about whether they are permitted to use AI/NLP tools for a specific class assignment, they should ask their teacher. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary consequences. Students may be disciplined for violations, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Staff may be disciplined for violations, up to and including suspension or termination of employment. The administration will refer any illegal acts to law enforcement.

5512 - TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

The School Board recognizes that the use of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices, is a health, safety, and environmental hazard for students, staff, visitors, and school facilities. The Board is committed to

providing students, staff, and visitors with a smoking and tobacco-free environment on school property and at off-campus, school-sponsored events.

The Board also believes accepting gifts or materials from the tobacco industry will send an inconsistent message to students, staff, and visitors.

The Board recognizes that adult staff and visitors serve as role models for students. The Board embraces its obligation to promote positive role models in schools and to provide an environment for learning and working that is safe, healthy, and free from unwanted smoke or aerosol and other tobacco use for the students, staff, and visitors.

5517 - ANTI-HARASSMENT

I. General Policy Statement

It is the policy of the School Board to maintain an educational and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all School District operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against discriminatory harassment on the basis of race (including anti-Semitism [as defined in Bylaw 0100]), ethnicity, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation, gender status, or gender identity), disability (including HIV, AIDS, or sickle cell trait), pregnancy, marital status, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information which are classes protected by State and/or Federal law (collectively, "protected classes") (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment), and encourages those within the School District community as well as Third Parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of unlawful harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

2260 - NONDISCRIMINATION AND ACCESS TO EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

I. General Statement

Any form of discrimination or harassment can be devastating to an individual's academic progress, social relationship and/or personal sense of self-worth. As such, the School Board will not discriminate nor tolerate harassment in its educational programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation, gender status, or gender identity), disability (including HIV, AIDS, or sickle cell trait), pregnancy, marital status, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information, which are classes protected by State and/or Federal law (collectively, "protected classes").

The Board also does not discriminate on the basis of protected classes in its employment policies and practices as they relate to students.

Equal educational opportunities shall be available to all students, without regard to the protected classes, age (unless age is a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any legitimate objective of the program/activity), place of residence within the boundaries of the District, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in this District. Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students

These and other important district policies may be viewed online at

<https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/hardee/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Electronic communications should never be considered completely private. Hardee County School Board is subject to Florida Statutes regarding public information access. As such, all electronic messages are a matter of public record.

****If you have any objection to your child accessing the Internet or a networked computer, notify the principal in writing with your specific objections.**

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Chapter 1002.22, Florida Statutes, defines student directory information as information that includes a student's name, address, telephone number (if it is a listed number), date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.

Pursuant to **Chapter 1002.22, Florida Statutes**, any educational institution (including Hardee County schools) may publish and release to the general public directory information relating to any student, the student body in general, or a portion thereof. For example, such information is often published in newspaper articles and on school websites pertaining to student athletic events, graduating seniors, recipients of academic honors and recognition awards, and general school/classroom activities. Other examples of directory information releases would include the University of Florida's School of Dentistry Survey, Palmview Hospital's Operation Breakthrough Program and the United States Military Recruitment Programs.

If an adult student or minor student's parent or guardian desires that directory information or images/video pertaining to their child or children not be published, released, or utilized then the adult student or the minor student's parent or guardian must send a signed letter identifying the student by name and date of birth, requesting that the student's directory information not be published or released or images/video not be used, and send that letter to the school to the attention of the school principal, to be placed on file with the student's records. School Board Policy now allows the adult student or minor student's parent or guardian to choose between two different levels of suppression of information since he, she or they may wish to have some information released by the school district, such as awards or photos published in newspapers, school websites or school related brochures/materials. The adult student or minor student's parent or guardian must indicate in

the letter which level of directory information suppression is desired (if any) and return this letter to the school principal.

For more information contact your school administration or Mary Farr, District Equity contact, at 863-767-0662.

ASBESTOS REPORT

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Response Act (AHERA). The law required all schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to be inspected for asbestos-containing materials.

Hardee County School Board contracted with PSI to bring our schools into compliance with AHERA regulations. PSI is the nation's largest and most experienced environmental engineering and analytical testing firm specializing in asbestos.

The objectives of our contract with the consulting firm were to:

1. Sample, analyze and quantify asbestos-containing materials in our schools.
2. Determine any potential for exposure of building occupants to asbestos fibers.
3. Provide recommendations for corrective actions.
4. Establish priority levels for abatement activities.
5. Provide estimates for removal and replacement of asbestos containing materials.

Our schools were inspected, in accordance with the law by EPA accredited PSI inspectors. We are happy to report that we have cleared all friable asbestos from our district. The only asbestos remaining is floor tile which has been removed in many areas. We are happy to report there is no dangerous asbestos in any area.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Asbestos Management/Planner at 863-735-2055. A copy of the Management Plan is on file for your review at the school administration office.

FortifyFL

Fortify FL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows you to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials.

From this site, you can anonymously report school concerns directly to law enforcement as well as school administrators. This is available to students, educators, parents, and any member of the public.

The app, which is available for download on Apple and Android mobile devices, is critical to ensuring all Florida schools are safe environments where students and educators can experience and share the joy of learning without fear. Tips can also be reported online at: getfortifyfl.com

Important Notice: Florida Statute 943.082 states that if, following an investigation, it is determined that a person knowingly submitted a false tip through FortifyFL, the Internet protocol (IP) address of the device on which the tip was submitted will be provided to law enforcement agencies for further investigation, and the reporting party may be subject to criminal penalties under s. 837.05. In all other circumstances, unless the reporting party has chosen to disclose his or her identity, the report will remain anonymous.