WARE COUNTY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2026-2027

HANDBOOK

ONE PURPOSE.

We are WARE.

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Nondiscrimination Clause

The Ware County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or gender in employment decisions or educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent, or other individuals who believe he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the school district based upon any of the factors listed above should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or to the appropriate coordinator as listed below, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor.

The 504, Title VI, Title IX Coordinator and Sports Equity Coordinator is the Director of Student Services and Director of Human Resources, 1301 Bailey St., 912-283-8656.

The Americans Disability Act Coordinator is the Director of Special Education, 1301 Bailey St., 912-287-2306.

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

Administrative Discretion

The principal, as the designated administrative leader of the school, is responsible— alongside faculty and staff—for ensuring the safe, orderly, and effective operation of the school environment. In situations involving disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous behavior not specifically addressed within this Code of Conduct, the principal is authorized to take appropriate corrective action that supports the best interests of both the student and the school community. Such actions must remain consistent with school board policies, established procedures, and applicable laws. The responsible exercise of administrative discretion is a necessary and recognized part of enforcing and interpreting the provisions of this handbook.

Principals

Center Elementary	Mr. Le Var Garner	lgarner@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2366
Memorial Drive Elementary	Mrs. Loni Hines	lhines@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2327
Ruskin Elementary	Dr. Erin Harvey	erin.harvey@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2325
Wacona Elementary	Mrs. Jeri Ray	jeri.ray@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2362
Waresboro Elementary	Mr. Max Stieve	max.stieve@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2393
Williams Heights Elementary	Dr. William Epps	bill.epps@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2399

Superintendent

Ware County Board of Education	Dr. Lynn Barber	lynn.barber@ware.k12.ga.us	912-283-8656

Board of Education Members

District 1	Mrs. Alisa"Toni" Nelson	Board Vice-Chair
District 2	Ms. Karen Ethridge	Board Member
District 3	Mr. Edward L. Tyre	Board Member
District 4	Mr. Rusty Ganas	Board Member
District 5	Mr. Wendell Bagley	Board Member
District 6	Mrs. Brandi Waters	Board Member
District 7	Mr. Barry Deas	Board Chair

Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower minds and shape futures. We are WARE.

Motto

Empowering minds and shaping futures: We are WARE.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a premier school system where our schools are safe, caring environments and high expectations promote opportunities for lifelong success.

We Believe

1. Education is essential and a lifelong process.
2. Each person has dignity and worth and will be treated with respect.
3. Educational excellence is a responsibility we all share.
4. Everyone has the ability to reach their full potential.
5. Teamwork, cooperation, and a growth mindset drive progress.
6. Effective communication is essential to achieving our goals.
7. Learning extends beyond the classroom.
8. Developing employability skills will prepare students for success after high school.

Ware County Board of Education Purposes

- To provide a sound program of study which results in a quality education for all Ware County students.
- To offer a curriculum which best serves the Ware County School System community.
- To encourage and support opportunities for experimentation, progress, and challenges in all curriculum areas.
- To review existing programs.

Making Ware County Schools Safe

The Ware County School System staff and administration are making every effort possible to maintain Ware County Schools as "Safe Schools." Our endeavor to create safe environments is not only dependent on staff and administration but also on parents, students, and the community.

Action Steps for Students

Students are asked to talk to their teachers, administrators, parents, and/or counselors about anything that might affect the safety of our schools by reporting threats, intimidation, weapon possession, drug selling, gang activity, graffiti, and vandalism.

- Read the "Student Handbook."
- Know the students' "Code of Conduct."
- Model the responsible behaviors outlined in the behavior code.
- Avoid being 'part of a crowd' when a fight breaks out and refrain from teasing, bullying, and intimidating peers.
- Be a role model – take personal responsibility by reacting to anger without physically or verbally harming others.
- Always respect others and respect that they may be different from you.
- Call the anonymous safety hotline established by the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation at 1-877-SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867).

Tips for Parents

- Review the school's discipline expectations and Student Code of Conduct with your child. Help your child understand the importance of following school rules and making positive choices.
- Talk with your child about the messages they receive from television, social media, video games, and other sources. Help them understand the impact and consequences of violence, bullying, harassment, and unsafe behaviors.
- Encourage your child to express feelings of frustration, anger, or disappointment in healthy and respectful ways that do not harm themselves or others.
- Help your child understand the importance of respecting and accepting individual differences among people.
- Maintain open and ongoing communication with your child, even when conversations may be difficult.
- Encourage your child to speak with a trusted adult if they are experiencing problems or have concerns about their own safety or the safety of others.
- If your child shares concerns about a friend or classmate who may be struggling emotionally, exhibiting concerning behaviors, or expressing thoughts of self-harm or harm to others, notify an appropriate school staff member immediately. School counselors, school psychologists, administrators, teachers, school social workers, and mental health professionals are available to help.

- Partner with your child's school to support attendance, academic success, positive behavior, and overall well-being.

2026–2027 Grading Periods

First Semester

- First Nine Weeks: **August 6, 2026 – October 6, 2026**
- Second Nine Weeks: **October 7, 2026 – December 18, 2026**

Second Semester

- Third Nine Weeks: **January 6, 2027 – March 11, 2027**
- Fourth Nine Weeks: **March 12, 2027 –May 19, 2027**

Attendance Policy

Attending school regularly is essential to student success. Georgia law requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school regularly unless they have a lawful excuse for absence. In addition, any child who is enrolled in a public school before the age of six (6) and has attended school for twenty (20) or more days is subject to Georgia's compulsory school attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150). The State of Georgia defines the school year as 180 instructional days.

The Ware County School System utilizes a progressive attendance intervention process to support student attendance and address barriers to school participation. Parents may receive attendance notifications, be invited to conferences, participate in school-based Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team meetings, or be referred to the District Attendance Review Panel (DARP) when attendance concerns arise.

Through Ware County's MTSS framework, school teams work collaboratively with students and families to identify barriers to attendance, develop intervention plans, monitor progress, and connect families with available school and community resources. The goal of these interventions is to improve attendance, support student success, and address concerns before legal action becomes necessary.

Students who accumulate more than five (5) unexcused absences during the school year may be considered truant in accordance with Georgia law.

Continued unexcused absences may result in referrals to the appropriate court system and other actions authorized by state law.

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1, any Georgia resident who has control or charge of a child and violates compulsory attendance requirements may, upon conviction, be subject to a fine of not less than $25.00 and not more than $100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties for each offense.

Arrival and Dismissal Times

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

- The school doors open at 7:15 a.m.
- Students are tardy after 7:45 a.m.
- Students are to remain for the full school day. Students should not arrive at school prior to the designated arrival time.
- Please refer to the school or district website for the specific start and end times.
- The school day ends at approximately 2:30 p.m.

The Ware County Board of Education provides supervision for students during designated school hours. Students should not arrive at school prior to the school's designated arrival time and should be picked up promptly at dismissal.

The Ware County Board of Education is not responsible for the supervision of students who arrive before the designated arrival time or who remain on campus after dismissal without authorized supervision.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that students are dropped off and picked up in a timely manner. Repeated failure to pick up a student after dismissal may result in intervention by school administration and, when student safety concerns exist, referral to appropriate agencies (Ex: Department of Family and Children Services-DFCS).

At Administrator Discretion

Absences, Tardies, and Early Check-Outs

Students are expected to attend school regularly and arrive on time each day. Upon returning to school following an absence, students must provide a written excuse from a parent/guardian or healthcare provider on the first day they return to school. The excuse should include the date(s) of the absence, the reason for the absence, and the signature of the parent/guardian or healthcare provider.

If a student has frequent absences, tardies, or early check-outs, the principal or designee may require additional documentation, including medical documentation, to verify future absences.

Only **five (5) parent handwritten excuses will be accepted per semester**. All absence documentation, including parent notes and medical excuses, must be submitted within ***three (3) school days (72 hours)*** of the student's return to school. *Documentation received after this deadline may not be accepted for attendance purposes.*

Parents must sign in students who arrive after the designated start time. Students arriving after the designated start time will be considered tardy. For early check-outs, a parent, guardian, or authorized adult must report to the school office and present valid government-issued identification before a student may be released.

Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, and other appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. Students should remain at school for the entire instructional day unless an excused absence, tardy, or early check-out is necessary. Students who check out before completing one-half of the instructional day will be counted absent for the day. **For elementary schools, attendance for one-half of the school day is established at 11:00 a.m**.

The Ware County School System utilizes a progressive attendance intervention process to support student attendance and address barriers to school participation. Parents may receive attendance notifications, be invited to conferences, participate in school-based Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team meetings, or be referred to the District Attendance Review Panel (DARP) when attendance concerns arise.

Through Ware County's MTSS framework, school teams work collaboratively with students and families to identify barriers to attendance, develop intervention plans, monitor progress, and connect families with available school and community resources. The goal of these interventions is to improve attendance, support student success, and address concerns before legal action becomes necessary.

Parents may be required to attend a District Attendance Review Panel (DARP) meeting if a student accumulates seven (7) unexcused absences or twenty (20) unexcused tardies and/or early check-outs. Please see the section entitled "District Attendance Review Panel (DARP)" in this handbook for additional information.

Tardies

A tardy occurs when a student arrives after the designated school start time or enters a classroom or instructional setting after the scheduled beginning of class without a valid excuse.

The accumulation of unexcused tardies may result in disciplinary action. Excessive tardies and early check-outs may also be considered when reviewing attendance concerns and determining appropriate interventions.

Examples of excused tardies and early check-outs may include:

- Illness documented by a parent/guardian or healthcare provider
- Medical or dental appointments documented by a healthcare provider
- Professional and/or court appearances
- Required religious observances
- Death or serious illness of an immediate family member
- Vehicle trouble (limited to two occurrences per school year)
- Other circumstances approved by the principal

Documentation regarding tardies and early check-outs should be submitted to the school office on the day of the occurrence.

At Administrator Discretion

Notification and Discipline Consequences for Unexcused Tardiness

- As soon as possible after the tenth (10) tardy, designated school personnel shall notify the parent of their child's unexcused tardies.
- As soon as possible after the twentieth (20) tardy, designated school personnel shall notify the school counselor who will schedule the parent for the Attendance Review Panel.

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

Excused Absences

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

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

After five (5) parent handwritten excuses have been submitted during a semester, subsequent absences must be supported by appropriate medical, governmental, court, or other approved documentation in order to be considered excused. All documentation must be submitted within three (3) school days (72 hours) of the student's return to school.

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

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

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and can result in a penalty as imposed by Georgia's compulsory attendance law. Any absence not covered in (one)-(ten) above shall be declared unexcused. It is the policy of the Ware County Board of Education that no unexcused absences are allowed.

Any student who reaches ten (10) unexcused absences will have truancy charges filed against the parent and or child (twelve years of age or older). If the parent keeps their child out for other reasons, such absence shall be deemed unlawful and therefore unexcused. Classwork missed due to an unexcused absence must be made within a reasonable time frame. within three (3) days. For any absence beyond five (5) days, the parent shall be required to provide medical, governmental or court documentation.

Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences

The Ware County School System will make a parent contact as stated below and document it in Infinite Campus:

- when a student accumulates 3 unexcused absences
- when a student accumulates 5 unexcused absences
- when a student accumulates 7 unexcused absences
- when a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences

If a student has three (3) days absent, a parent/guardian will be contacted via phone or note home by the classroom teacher, Community Service Provider, and/or counselor. Documentation will be logged into Infinite Campus by the classroom teacher/counselor. Upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences the Community Service Provider will receive a referral, initiate contact, and document in Infinite Campus.

1. At five (5) unexcused absences a referral will be sent to the school social worker, who will initiate contact and log into Infinite Campus. In addition a letter will be mailed home by the school notifying the parent of the students missed days and the compulsory attendance law.

2. Any student who has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences, the parent/guardian will be invited to attend an Attendance Review Panel (ARP) meeting. Parents whose student has reached five (5) unexcused absences will be asked to sign an Attendance Agreement form.

3. At seven (7) unexcused absences, a letter will be mailed home by the Community Service Provider inviting the parent to a District Attendance Review Panel meeting (DARP).

4. At nine (9) unexcused absences, a letter will be sent from the Student Services Department notifying the parent of the consequences of not sending their student(s) to school.The Attendance Review Panel will consist of the parent, counselor, community service provider, and social worker. At the panel meeting, the counselor will present the case and review interventions and history. A contract will be developed to assist the student and parent with attendance. A copy of the contract will be distributed to the student's cumulative folder, central file in the social worker's office, and to the parent. If the terms of the contract are not met, the parent will be referred to the District Student Attendance and School Climate Committee or The District Attendance Review Panel (DARP. District Student Attendance and School Climate Committee or DARP are the final steps in the intervention process of assisting parents before charges will be filed in State or Juvenile Court.

5. Once a student reaches 10 unexcused absences Ware County Schools will file charges against the parent in state court for truancy.

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

1. **Parental Notification -** The Ware County School System will notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has three (3), five (5) and seven (7) unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense.

2. **Notification by Mail** - After two reasonable attempts (via phone contacts, virtual meeting or home visit to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge of the student), the Ware County School System will send written notice via first class mail.

   The Ware County School System requires that all its public schools provide the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.

3. **Statement of Receipt** - By September 1 of the new school year or within thirty (30) school days of a student's enrollment in the Ware County School System, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in school must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.

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

Excessive Absences

The following provisions apply to absences during a school year:

1. Days students are absent due to out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused absences for the purposes of determining truancy (S.B.O.E. 160-5-1-.10).
2. Unexcused Absences: After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused absences without response, the school shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by first class mail. The letter is to include a copy of the Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1).

Absence During Testing

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

District Attendance Panel Meeting

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

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

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

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

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

Making Up Missed Assignments or Tests

It is the student's and parent's responsibility, not the teachers', to make arrangements for make-up work. Students should ask their teacher for any missed assignments on the first day they return to school. The number of days allowed to complete make-up work will be determined by the principal or his/her designee but will not exceed the number of days absent. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in a grade of zero (0) being given for graded assignments missed during an absence.

Absences due to suspension from school are considered unexcused. Students assigned Out of School Suspension (OSS) will be allowed to make-up work upon return to school within a reasonable time frame during the semester. In situations where students are suspended from school during the period of semester exams, principals will make arrangements to allow students to complete their exams.

Perfect Attendance

A student qualifies for perfect attendance awards when he/she has not been absent and has not accumulated seven (7) unexcused tardies and/or seven unexcused early checkouts for the calendar year.

Centralized Registration and Enrollment

Centralized Registration

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

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

Intradistrict transfers (moving within Ware County School zones) will be handled at the school level. Please visit the new school

for which your address is zoned with a current proof of residence and be prepared to update the student's census information. Please contact the school your student will be attending if additional information is needed.

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

The student handbook is available for review on our website, and documentation of receipt is stored under the student's profile in Infinite Campus.

Infinite Campus Portal

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

Infinite Campus Parent Portal includes:

1. Census Verification Annual Update - Update/verify household information and emergency contacts and verify/sign all required beginning-of-the-year paperwork (handbook, compulsory attendance, school and district Title I documents, Occupational Survey, McKinney Vento, and more.

**Must be completed annually by a parent or guardian in the household. Census Verification updates all students in the household using the same application. The census verification process must be completed in addition to any school-required paperwork.*

2. View progress reports, report cards, student grades for every assignment, and in-progress grades for every course.
3. View assignment information, including missing assignments.
4. View attendance.
5. View school and district announcements and more!

Enrollment and Withdrawal Age Requirements

The criteria below shall be applied to determine if a child is of eligible entrance age for enrollment in a Ware County Public School. Children eligible to enroll in kindergarten must be:

1. Five years of age by September 1 of the school year in which the student is to be enrolled, or
2. Five years of age by December 31 of the school year in which the student is to be enrolled if the student has been: prior to moving to this state, **and**

    a) Legally enrolled in a public kindergarten or a kindergarten accredited by a state or regional agency, or the equivalent thereof, **and**

    b) The child is otherwise eligible for enrollment as prescribed in O.C.G.A. 20-2-150. Valid evidence
        a. Must be provided for items 2a and 2b.

Attendance Zones

Students are expected to attend the school assigned to the attendance zone in which their custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) reside. Attendance at a school outside of a student's assigned attendance zone requires approval in accordance with Ware County School System procedures.

If a family moves to a residence located within a different attendance zone during the school year, the student must transfer to the school serving the new attendance zone by the end of the current nine-week grading period. Students who have completed more than one-half of the school year at their current school may be permitted to remain at that school through the end of the school year, provided they do not have significant attendance or disciplinary concerns. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation when a student attends a school outside of his or her assigned attendance zone.

Intra-District Transfer (School Choice)

Parents/guardians may apply for an Intra-District Transfer (School Choice) to enroll their child in a school outside of the assigned attendance zone when classroom space is available after enrollment of students residing within that attendance zone.

Students must be enrolled in the school serving their assigned attendance zone (home school) before requesting consideration for an Intra-District Transfer (School Choice).

The application period for Intra-District Transfers is during the month of **February** each year. The Ware County Board of Education will notify families annually regarding schools with available capacity. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation for students attending a school through the School Choice process.

Students approved for an Intra-District Transfer may continue attending the approved school through the highest grade level served by that school, provided the student remains a resident of Ware County and continues to meet district requirements.

Approval of an Intra-District Transfer is contingent upon available capacity and compliance with Board policy and administrative procedures.

Residency Requirements

Students determined not to be legal residents of Ware County and who have not been approved through established district procedures may be withdrawn from the Ware County School System and referred to their county of residence.

In accordance with Georgia law, the Ware County School System may seek reimbursement for the educational costs associated with enrolling a non-resident student, including attorney's fees when authorized by law.

For additional information regarding attendance zones, residency requirements, or School Choice transfers, please contact the Student Services Department.

Custody

Parents shall provide to the school a certified copy of all court order(s) regarding the custody of the child. Student enrollment forms, as well as other official documents of the school, must be signed by the natural parent or legal guardian with whom the child resides. Educational decisions concerning the child are reserved for the enrolling parent, although both parents can be involved in the enrollment process. If there is a disagreement between the parents, the educational decision of the enrolling parent shall supersede the educational decision of the non-enrolling parent. If there is a disagreement and both parents have enrolled the child, then the parent with primary physical custody shall have the educational decision making authority, unless the parties have a court order that directs otherwise.

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-780, it is a crime for any person to make or attempt to make a change of custody of a minor child by removing the child from school without permission of the person who enrolled the child in school, even if the person attempting to remove the child has a court order granting that person custody. Court orders that specifically authorize or direct the release of custody by the school will be followed. The school will not interject itself in custody or visitation disputes between parents. Ware County School District encourages all parents to discuss educational decisions with each other prior to notifying the district of educational changes regarding their students.

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

Guardianship

If a student resides with any person other than a natural parent, a certified copy of the court documents that establish legal guardianship will be required at the time of enrollment. Any person who has assumed responsibility for the care and custody of a child shall be expected to begin the process of seeking legal guardianship before enrollment of the child, and an approximate completion date must be given. The school will contact and meet only with the legal guardian of the student unless written consent from the enrolling guardian is given. If not provided at the time of enrollment, a copy of the final Court Decree for guardianship is required within 30 days of enrollment

When a certified copy of the Court Decree is received declaring the district resident to be the legal guardian of the student, such decree must declare that the guardianship was formed for a purpose other than establishing residency for school district attendance purposes. Any Legal Guardianship formed for the purpose of establishing residency for school district attendance

purposes shall not be recognized by the Ware County Board of Education.

For information regarding petitions for temporary guardianship, please contact the Probate Court of Ware County at 912-287-4315.

Proof of Residence

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

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

Centralized Registration staff, the principal, or his/her designee will accept the following records as proof of residency:

1. Proof of Residency in Ware County in the parent/guardian's name must be a **SERVICE** provided to the family's home. Acceptable Proofs of Residency include utility bills (electric, propane, landline telephone, water, cable/satellite, trash pickup) listing the physical address of the residence, a notarized lease agreement, a rental agreement, or a mortgage statement. Utility bills need to show your street address as receiving service, may not be over 60 days old, and cannot be a final disconnection notice.

If you receive your bills online, please obtain a copy from your account before beginning the enrollment process.

The occupant's name, service address, and current date must be plainly visible on documents provided.

OR

2. A Ware County Schools Statement of Legal Residence may also serve as Proof of Residency. A parent who resides full-time in Ware County but is unable to provide the consistent records listed above may complete a *Ware County Schools Statement of Legal Residence*. The statement shall be signed by all applicable parties in the presence of a notary public. In addition, the legal owner or authorized tenant of the property where the student and parent reside provides the documentation required as proof of residence, as noted above in section 1. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to deliver the original paperwork and the required proof of residence, as noted above in section 1, to school system personnel along with their documentation. The statement will be in effect until the parent provides proof of residence as required by this policy, but no longer than the end of the current school year.

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

Emergency Contact Information

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

Physical Examination and Immunizations

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

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

requesting a temporary waiver due to religious reasons must provide the school district with a sworn Affidavit of Religious Conflict with Immunization Requirements form.

When the Department or a County Board of Health determines that an epidemic or the threat of an epidemic exists, the Department or Board shall immediately notify the governing authorities of all schools and childcare facilities within the affected area. Under those circumstances, the Department or Board may require immunization for those who object on the grounds of religious beliefs and may prohibit attendance at schools or childcare facilities within the area by unimmunized children.

Grade Placement

If acceptable documentation for determining grade placement is not presented at the time students are enrolled, students will be temporarily assigned to a grade until a determination as to final grade placement can be made. Students transferred from Home schools or unaccredited schools must take a grade placement test which will be administered at the school in which the student is enrolled.

Social Security Number

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

New & Returning Transfer Students

The school must receive a certified copy of the student's academic transcript and disciplinary record from the school previously attended. A student may be admitted provisionally if the parent or guardian provides the name and address of the school last attended and signs an authorization permitting the release of all academic and disciplinary records to the school administration. Official records must be received within the timeframe required by state law and district procedures.

Transcripts from non-accredited schools will be evaluated on an individual basis. Additional information and/or testing may be required to determine the amount of credit that may be accepted from the student's previous school. Credit earned through non-accredited schools or under the instruction of an individual tutor may not be accepted.

Ware County School District will enroll a student who is under suspension or expulsion from another school district; however, the student must serve the disciplinary consequence imposed by the previous school district before being permitted to attend a Ware County school, unless otherwise required by applicable law or district policy.

Withdrawal from School

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

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

Learning, Teaching, Assessment

Curriculum

All elementary schools in the Ware County School System utilize the Georgia Standards of Excellence and provide courses in the following subject areas:

Kindergarten: Kindergarten classes are provided in all Ware County Elementary Schools. It is the function of kindergarten to provide readiness activities so that students will be successful in first grade. Activities are provided in language arts, mathematics, science, social science, career education, health, art, music, and motor skill development.

Primary (Grades 1-3): It is the major role of the primary grades to help the students become proficient in listening, speaking,

reading, writing, and number concepts. The majority of the school day at this level is spent in reading and language arts activities.

Intermediate (Grades 4-5): Mathematics, science, social science and language arts assume equal importance in the curriculum.

Instructional Materials

Textbooks and other instructional materials are the property of the school and are given to students to use during the school year. Students are expected to handle these materials carefully and to keep them in good condition. Students should be sure their name is in each of their textbooks. Replacement textbooks will not be provided until the school receives payment for any textbooks lost or damaged by students.

Media Center

The purpose of the school media center is to support and enrich the curriculum by offering a rich assortment of materials to students and teachers. It serves as a reading room, a learning lab, and a work center for the entire school. All students who follow media center rules are permitted to check out materials. To ensure smooth and efficient operation, the following rules apply:
Hours of Operation: The media center is open during the school day and is available for returning books at any time throughout the day.

1. **Check-Out Procedures:** Books must be checked out by the borrower at the circulation desk. Students must use their media card or student folder with barcode to check out materials. They are responsible for all items until they are returned and checked in by the media center staff. To renew a book, the student must bring both the book and their media card or folder.

2. **Reserved Books:** Books may be placed on reserve at a teacher's request. Circulation terms for reserved materials will be determined by the requesting teacher.

3. **Lost Books:** Lost books must be reported to the media specialist immediately. If the book is not found within a reasonable amount of time, the student must pay a replacement fee. If the book is returned in good condition within the same school year, the replacement cost minus a $3.00 processing fee may be refunded.

4. **Damaged Books:** If a book is returned with damage beyond normal wear, a damage fee will be assessed based on the extent of the damage. Only the media specialist should attempt to repair damaged books.

5. **Overdue Books:** Students with overdue books may not check out additional items until all media center records are cleared. Fines and replacement costs will be made available in each media center.

6. **Instructional Materials:** Students are issued instructional materials at the beginning of each school year and are responsible for their care and return. Lost or damaged materials fees must be paid.

7. Failure to pay for lost or damaged instructional materials, library books, or media items may result in the following consequences, at the principal's discretion:

   a. The school may withhold additional school-issued materials until payment is made. This may apply across school years and district schools.
   b. Participation in end-of-year activities, including high school graduation and the receipt of diplomas or certificates, may be withheld until restitution is made. However, schools may not prevent a student from enrolling or sending records to another school.
   c. Students may be restricted from participating in extracurricular activities until payment is received.

If you have questions or need help finding or checking out materials, the media specialist is available to assist students and staff.

Homework

The Ware County School District believes in the philosophy of assigning students homework in grades K-5 based on the following best practice. **Homework should**:

   a. Provide time for students to practice what they have learned in class.
   b. Prepare for new information or elaborate on information that has been introduced.

Grading System

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

The goal of the Ware County Schools is to ensure that every child reaches mastery in all areas. During each grading period, there will be numerous opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of the standards. Student achievement will be evaluated based on accuracy of classroom and homework assignments, summative assessments, and special projects. Students will have their progress monitored towards mastery of the state's identified standards. Students and parents will receive feedback via the report card every grading period. Progress Reports are made available every 4.5 weeks. Grade reports are made available every 9 weeks. Specific grade reporting dates are identified on the Ware County Schools calendar.

Letter grades and numeric grades are defined as follows:

A: 90-100
B: 80-89
C: 70-79
F: Below 70

Promotion, Placement, and Retention

Promotion, placement, and retention decisions are made in accordance with Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11 and Ware County Board of Education policies. Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 are subject to state promotion requirements associated with the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments. Students who do not meet state-established performance requirements may be provided additional instructional support, retesting opportunities, and review procedures as required by state law. Parents/guardians will be notified of any promotion or retention concerns and provided information regarding applicable review and appeal procedures.

A student who meets the minimum proficiency level on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment is not automatically promoted to the next grade. In addition to any state-mandated promotion requirements, local promotion criteria have been determined by the Ware County Board of Education to be as follows:

Kindergarten
First grade promotion or placement decisions are made on an individual basis and are informed by the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) results, minimum promotion requirements, teacher recommendations, and other relevant information. Students who do not meet all of the above criteria shall be referred to the Retention Review Committee as described in paragraph 4 of this policy.

Grades 1-2 Promotion Criteria
To be eligible for promotion from first grade to second grade and second grade to third grade, local promotion criteria have been determined by the Ware County Board of Education to be as follows: The student must pass with 70% or above on report grades in reading/language arts and mathematics. Students who do not meet all of the above criteria shall be referred to the Retention Review Committee.

Grades 3-5 Promotion Criteria
Meeting the minimum proficiency level on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment does not automatically qualify a student for promotion. In addition to state promotion requirements, promotion from third to fourth grade, fourth to fifth grade, and fifth to sixth grade requires a final grade of 70 or above in reading/language arts, mathematics, and at least one of the following subjects: science/health or social studies. Students who do not meet all of the above criteria shall be referred to the Retention Review Committee.

For students receiving special education services, promotion and retention decisions will be considered in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements, and the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team shall serve as the Retention Review Committee when required by law.

Physical Education
All students are expected to participate in physical education unless excused for a valid reason. In order to be excused, a student must bring a note from home. When the request to be excused is for more than one day, the note should be from a doctor and include the anticipated length of time the child will be unable to participate. The classroom teacher or physical education teacher will excuse students who become ill at school.

Standardized Testing
Standardized tests are administered to students as required by law. Students in grades 3 through 5 take the State-approved Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment in the spring of each school year. Students in Kindergarten are administered

GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills). The results of each such test are used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in academic areas, and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs. Parents will be notified when test scores are returned to the school. Questions about test scores should be directed to the principal or building level testing coordinator.

Programs and Services

Parents may access their child's grades via the Parent Portal on the school system website. Parent passwords may be obtained through the school's front office.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

The Ware County Schools implement The Georgia Multi-Tiered System of Supports (GaMTSS). GaMTSS is a system designed to help all children succeed by providing different levels of support based on student needs. This approach ensures that every student gets the support they need at the right time.

Components of Ware's MTSS

By integrating academic, behavior, and wellbeing practices, educators will be able to address barriers to learning and improve student performance. GaMTSS is a way for schools to organize the support students need to be successful.



The Ware County School System utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to provide academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and attendance supports that help all students succeed.

Within Ware County's MTSS framework, families can expect:

- A collaborative team approach that maximizes time, resources, and expertise to support student success.
- A structured problem-solving process that uses data to make informed decisions and improve student outcomes.
- A focus on prevention and early intervention to address student needs before challenges become barriers to success.
- Ongoing partnerships with parents, families, and caregivers to support student growth and achievement.

Through Ware County's MTSS framework, schools work to create a positive, supportive learning environment that recognizes and responds to the unique strengths and needs of every student. The resources and services described in this handbook are available to support students as they work toward reaching their full potential.

Community Service Providers

Community Service Providers serve as liaisons between the school, home, and community. They support student attendance and engagement by communicating with families, assisting with attendance interventions, conducting home visits when appropriate, and connecting families with available community resources. Community Service Providers work collaboratively with school counselors, social workers, administrators, and other school personnel to address barriers that may affect student success.

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

The Early Intervention Program (EIP) provides additional academic support to eligible students in kindergarten through fifth grade who are performing below grade-level expectations in reading and/or mathematics. The goal of EIP is to help students develop the skills necessary to achieve academic success and meet grade-level standards. Parents seeking additional information

should contact their child's school or the Student Achievement Department

Gifted Education (WINGS)

The Ware County School System provides gifted education services (WINGS) for students who meet eligibility criteria established by the Georgia Department of Education. Students may be referred for consideration by parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, or through district screening procedures. Parents seeking additional information should contact their child's school or the Student Achievement Department.

School Counseling Services

School counselors provide academic, career, college readiness, and social-emotional support services to students. Counselors work collaboratively with students, families, and school personnel to support student success. Parents, teachers, and students may request assistance from a school counselor at any time.

School Mental Health Services

The District employs licensed mental health professionals who provide prevention, intervention, assessment, counseling, and support services to students experiencing social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health concerns. Parents seeking additional information should contact their child's school.

School Psychologists

School psychologists support students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional success through consultation, assessment, intervention, counseling, and participation in Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Student Support Teams (SST).

School Social Workers

School social workers assist students and families by connecting them with school and community resources, supporting attendance and engagement, and helping address barriers that may interfere with student success.

For additional information regarding student support services, please contact the Student Services Department.

Section 504 – Notice of Rights of Students and Parents

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Parents and/or students are provided with the following rights through the implementing regulations of Section 504.

The Ware County School System encourages parents/guardians and school personnel to work collaboratively to resolve concerns regarding a student's identification, evaluation, educational program, accommodations, services, or placement under Section 504.

Parents/guardians who have concerns are encouraged to first contact the school's Section 504 Coordinator or Administrator to discuss the concern and seek an informal resolution. If the concern cannot be resolved at the school level, the parent/guardian may request a meeting with appropriate district personnel to review the concern, discuss available options, and work toward a mutually agreeable resolution.

As part of the informal resolution process, school and district personnel may facilitate problem-solving meetings with parents/guardians and other individuals knowledgeable about the student to review concerns, clarify information, and explore potential solutions. These collaborative meetings are intended to promote communication and resolve concerns prior to initiating a formal due process hearing. Participation in the informal resolution process is voluntary and does not limit or delay a parent's right to request an impartial due process hearing or file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). If concerns remain unresolved following discussions at the school and district levels, parents/guardians have the right to request an impartial due process hearing.

If you have questions, need additional assistance, or want more information regarding Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and/or Grievances/Complaints, please visit the Ware County School System website at www.ware.k12.ga.us or contact the school's 504 Coordinator. Additional concerns can be addressed by contacting The Director of Student Services:

Ware County Schools 1301 Bailey Street
Waycross, GA 31501

Parents and guardians are encouraged to address concerns through the established chain of command. Concerns should first be discussed with the school principal or designee. If the concern cannot be resolved at the school level, parents may contact the Director of Student Services for assistance in reviewing the matter, facilitating communication, and exploring possible resolutions.

Special Education Services

Special education services are provided to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Programs and services are available for students in all disability categories recognized by the State of Georgia and are provided based on each student's individual educational needs. Each school has a Special Education Coordinator to assist in ensuring that services, supports, and communication are provided to students and families.

If your child is experiencing academic, developmental, behavioral, or functional difficulties, or if you suspect your child may have a disability, please contact your child's school principal, the school's MTSS Coordinator, or the Special Education Department for assistance and more information.

Under the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program, parents of eligible students receiving special education services may have options to transfer their child to another public school or participating private school in accordance with state law. Additional information regarding special education services, eligibility, procedural safeguards, and the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program may be found on the Ware County School System website at www.ware.k12.ga.us under the Department of Special Education.

Child Find

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

Title I Program

The federally funded Title I program provides instructional support in reading and mathematics as a supplement to students' regular classroom instruction. The program aims to accelerate the learning of students who are not functioning at the expected achievement level for their age and grade. Eligibility for Title I services is based on the academic performance of students. For additional information, contact the principal or the Student Achievement Department.

School Nutrition Program

Ware County Schools will continue to operate under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). What does this mean for you and your children enrolled in the Ware County School System? All enrolled students can receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at no charge to your household each day. No further action is required of you. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit a meal application. For questions or concerns, please contact the Ware County School Nutrition Program at 912.287.2304

Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide students with a positive, effective, and safe learning environment as governed by the Ware County Board of Education policy JCDA. Included in this section are prohibited behaviors and consequences for such behaviors.

The principal, as the designated administrative leader of the school, is responsible—alongside faculty and staff—for ensuring the safe, orderly, and effective operation of the school environment. In situations involving disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous behavior not specifically addressed within this Code of Conduct, the principal is authorized to take appropriate corrective action that supports the best interests of both the student and the school community. Such actions must remain consistent with school board policies, established procedures, and applicable laws. The responsible exercise of administrative discretion is a necessary and recognized part of enforcing and interpreting the provisions of this handbook.

Expectations

Student expectations are taught through lessons aligned with each school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Behavioral expectations are consistently taught, reinforced, and displayed throughout the school.

Each student is expected to:

- Behave responsibly at school, on school buses, at school bus stops, and at all school-sponsored activities on or off campus.
- Demonstrate courtesy, respect, and consideration for others.
- Attend school and all assigned classes regularly and on time.
- Come to class prepared with appropriate materials and complete all assigned work.
- Follow all district and school rules and cooperate with school employees and volunteers in maintaining a safe, orderly, and positive learning environment.
- Communicate with his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding academic progress, behavior, and school-related information.

Disciplinary procedures apply to students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, applicable Georgia Board of Education rules, and district procedures. Students with disabilities are subject to the same Code of Conduct as their nondisabled peers unless otherwise required by federal or state law, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Ware County's Framework for Positive Behavior and Support (PBIS)

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

Additional Behavior Requirements

Each elementary school within the district may impose campus, classroom, or club/organization rules in addition to those found in the student handbook. These rules may be listed or posted in an application packet, or national organization bylaws, and/or constitutions. Sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities may require and enforce additional standards of conduct for student participation in extracurricular activities.

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

The Code of Conduct governs students' behavior on school grounds; off school grounds at a school activity; off school grounds at a non-school activity, but where the misconduct leads to a disruption of school or any other violation of the Student Code of Conduct; in route to and from schools, or any school-sponsored activity; on the bus; and at the bus stop.

The Code is organized into five (5) categories of prohibited behaviors: Level 1 Offenses, Level 2 Offenses, Level 3 Offenses, Level 4 Offenses, and Level 5 Offenses. Additional information regarding prohibited behaviors and disciplinary actions follows these levels.

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

At Administrator Discretion

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

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

a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;

b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education or otherwise substantially infringing upon the rights of a student;

c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or

d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying also includes acts of cyberbullying that originate on school property or involve the use of school equipment, including, but not limited to, acts that occur within a school-sponsored online activity.

Prohibited Behavior

Bullying of a student by another student, school employee, or third party is strictly prohibited.

This includes acts occurring:

- On school property;
- At school-related functions or activities;
- At designated school bus stops;
- On school buses and vehicles; or
- By use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

Reporting Procedures

Any student, parent, guardian, or school employee who witnesses or has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall report the incident to a school administrator or designated staff member as soon as possible.

1. Reports may be made verbally or in writing. Anonymous reports will be accepted and investigated to the extent possible.
2. School administrators must document all reported incidents of bullying and promptly initiate an investigation to determine whether bullying has occurred.

Reports of bullying may be made by students, parents, guardians, employees, or community members. Reports may be submitted verbally, in writing, or anonymously when permitted by school procedures.

School administrators will promptly investigate reports of bullying to determine whether bullying has occurred and whether additional actions are necessary. Reports of retaliation against individuals who report bullying or participate in an investigation are prohibited and will also be investigated and addressed.

Acts of bullying may result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may include counseling, behavioral interventions, restorative practices, or other appropriate corrective actions.

Upon a finding that a student has committed an act of bullying or has been the victim of bullying, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student will be notified by the school administrator or designee.

Information regarding the prohibition of bullying and the consequences for violating this prohibition will be provided to students and parents through school communications, the Student Code of Conduct, and the student/parent handbook.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or participates in the investigation process is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

Discipline Definitions

Some of the disciplinary actions that may be used for student violations of the Code of Conduct include the following:

Loss of Privileges*:* Students may be denied the privilege or right to recess time, rewards, and field trips.

Warning/Reprimand*:* Students will be warned that they may be punished if the misbehavior continues.

Reflection Room: The purpose of the Reflection Room is for students to reflect on their behavior, restore relationships, and learn

skills to correct their misbehavior. The Elementary Reflection Room can be assigned at the administrator's discretion.

Short-Term Suspension: Students subject to a short-term suspension will be suspended from school for not more than five (5) consecutive days.

Long-Term Suspension: Students subject to a long-term suspension will be suspended from school for more than five (5) consecutive days but not beyond the end of the current semester.

Behavior Contract: *A student may be placed on a Behavior Contract at the administrator's discretion. Expulsion:* Students subject to expulsion will be suspended from school beyond the end of the current semester.

Permanent Expulsion: Students subject to a permanent expulsion from school will be permanently suspended from school at all times after the effective date of the permanent expulsion beyond the current semester and not allowed to attend any Ware County Schools.

Suspension or Expulsion from School

Detention, Out-of-School Suspension or Expulsion shall also include suspension from all regular school activities, extracurricular school activities, athletic participation, and other school events. While students are suspended pending a disciplinary hearing, they will be allowed to make up school work during the suspension time.

Cell Phone/Electronic Devices

Distraction-Free Learning

In accordance with Georgia's Distraction-Free Education requirements and Ware County School System procedures, students are expected to maintain a distraction-free learning environment throughout the instructional day. Personal electronic devices, including cell phones, smart watches, smart glasses, headphones, and similar devices, must remain turned off and stored as directed by school personnel.

The unauthorized use or possession of electronic devices during the instructional day may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Students bring personal electronic devices to school at their own risk. The school is not responsible for investigating, searching, and/or replacing in the event of any lost, stolen, or damaged electronic device.

Reminder: Cell phones, smart watches, and smart glasses are **NOT** allowed on a student's person during school hours. All devices, including headphones, tablets, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, etc., must be **turned off** and placed in student bookbags and are prohibited during school hours unless administrative permission is granted.

If students fail to follow the policy, electronic devices will be confiscated, and the following discipline consequences will be applied:

1st Offense:	Warning and parent/guardian phone call.
2nd Offense:	Phone/device will be taken and given back until the end of the day; phone call to parent/guardian.
3rd Offense:	Teacher will take the phone/device and turn it into the office; the phone/device may be picked up at the end of the school day; the teacher will call the parent/guardian.
4th Offense:	Phone/device will be taken and turned into the office; office staff will contact the parent/guardian. Student will be assigned to the reflection room.

*Phones/devices may be picked up prior to closing of the school at the end of the school day.

Refusal to Relinquish Device:

If a student refuses to turn devices (phones, smart watches, smart glasses, headphones, tablets, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, etc.) over to a staff member when requested, the following consequences will be enforced: Admin discretion applies.

1st Offense	1 day OSS; device/phone submitted to office; parent/guardian called.

2nd Offense:	2 days OSS; phone/device submitted to office; parent/guardian called.
3rd Offense:	3 days OSS; and the student will be placed on a Behavior Contract: phone/device withheld for 5 school days. Parent/guardian contacted.
4th Offense:	4 days OSS; phone/device withheld for 5 school days, parent/guardian called.

The following Levels are the five (5) categories of offenses that are prohibited behaviors in the Code of Conduct

Level 1 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 1 offense can result in disciplinary action. At the principal's discretion, a student may be assigned Out-of-School suspension up to three (3) days for any Level 1.

1. **Behavior Detrimental to Learning:** Such behavior includes but is not limited to unexcused tardies to school or class and conduct that disrupts the learning environment.
2. **Bullying**: Participation in repeated written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A.§ 20-2-751.4 (1 offense).
3. **Bus Conduct:** Violation of the bus conduct policy
4. **Disrespectful Behavior:** Being disrespectful to students, school personnel, or other persons.
5. **Dress Code:** Violation of the dress code policy
6. **Electronic Resources:** Violating the policies for using electronic resources
7. **Encouraging Prohibited Behavior:** Inciting, encouraging, counseling or advising others to engage in prohibited behavior that violates the Elementary Student & Parent Handbook or any policy of the District. A student violates this rule when he/she verbally or physically encourages others to engage in prohibited behavior, which may include oral instruction or physically showing a student how to engage in prohibited behavior.
8. **False Information:** Deliberately giving false or misleading information, including but not limited to forgery and altering records.
9. **Gambling:** Includes, but is not limited to, betting money or other items on card games, dice games, or the outcome of athletic contests or other activities, and/or possession of gambling materials or paraphernalia.
10. **Hazardous Objects:** Possession of any hazardous objects on school grounds, school busses, school bus stops or school events *without intent to use*
11. **Inappropriate Items and Activities:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any material, substance, food item, or personal belonging that is inappropriate for school.
12. **Inappropriate Physical Contact between Students:** Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate display of affection, inappropriate touching which does not amount to sexual harassment, pushing, shoving or fighting that *does not result in visible bodily injuries*.
13. **Insubordination:** Being insubordinate to school personnel or school volunteers.
14. **Miscellaneous Violations:** Violating any other Board of Education or school rule, including, but not limited to, failing to report to detention.
15. **Misuse of Electronic Communication Devices:** Displaying or using a cell phone, pager, or other electronic communication device during the school day without the consent of the principal or his/her designee.
16. **Over-the-Counter Medication**: Using or possessing over-the-counter medication at school without the written consent of the principal or his/her designee.
17. **Profanity:** Using profane, vulgar, obscene, insulting, or threatening language, gestures, graphics, or materials, whether spoken, written, gestured, or communicated in person or via any electronic device.
18. **Skipping School:** Leaving school, skipping school, or skipping class without permission.
19. **Tobacco Products and Paraphernalia:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any tobacco product or smoking paraphernalia which includes electronic cigarettes and smoking devices.

20. **Unauthorized Areas:** Being in an unauthorized area without permission.

Level 2 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 2 offense can result in disciplinary action. At the principal's discretion, a student may be assigned Out-of-School suspension up to five (5) consecutive days for any Level 2 offense.

a. **Bullying**: Participation in repeated written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4 (2nd offense).
b. **Disruption of School:** Causing or contributing to the disruption and interference of school operations. An example of prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to participating or encouraging a fight.
c. **Entering into Areas Designated for the Opposite Sex:** Entering, directing, or soliciting another student to enter into an area designated for the opposite sex only.
d. **Failure to Report:** Failure to report to a teacher or administrator the knowledge of an event, device, object, or substance that could cause harm to self or others.
e. **False Representation of Substances:** False representation of substance to be a drug for which the student has no valid prescription or false representation of the substance to be an illegal drug as defined under the laws of the State of Georgia.
f. **Fighting:** For the purpose of this offense, fighting shall include, but not be limited to, hitting, kicking, pinching, slapping, or other physical contact that results *in visible bodily harm to the victim.*
g. **Gang Affiliation:** Exhibiting gang affiliation, as evidenced by a common identifying sign symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic.
h. **Giving False Information:** Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.
i. **Medical Substance Containing Alcohol:** Possessing any substance containing alcohol which normally used for medical purposes that has not been reported to the appropriate school official in accordance with the Medicine Policy.
j. **Misdemeanor Conduct:** Any misconduct occurring within the jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct that has not been specifically detailed in the Code of Conduct, but satisfies the elements of a misdemeanor offense under Georgia law.
k. **Possessing Obscene Materials:** Possessing obscene or vulgar materials when such conduct does not involve another student.
l. **Possession of Prescription Drugs:** Possession of prescription mediation prescribed to you by a doctor, but has not been reported to appropriate school officials in accordance with Medical Policy.
m. **Terroristic Threats:** A terroristic threat occurs when one threatens, whether spoken, written, or transmitted by an electronic device, to commit an act of violence against any person, and that person has reason to believe they may suffer immediate harm.
n. **Theft:** Theft including, but not limited to, attempted theft, extortion, bribery, theft by deception, and/or possession of stolen property.
o. **Unintentional Physical Contact with School Personnel:** Unintentional but inappropriate physical contact or action with school personnel.
p. **Vandalism:** Damaging or vandalizing school or personnel property, regardless of whether there is a monetary loss of value.
q. **Verbal Abuse:** Verbally abusing others, including but not limited to, threats, or intimidation, including but not limited to, harassing or taunting in person, on the Internet, or other mode of electronic communication.
r. **Viewing Obscene Materials:** Accessing or viewing obscene or vulgar materials when such conduct does not involve another person.
s. **Violation of Electronics and Technology Policy:** Misuse of electronic or technological resources or devices, including but not limited to unauthorized access to the system network, creating or using false usernames, passwords, or proxies, transmitting unauthorized or malicious programs or viruses.

Level 3 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 3 offense can result in the student being assigned five (5) – ten (10) days of Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to the Director of Student Services.

A. **Alcoholic Beverages:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, receiving, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage whether at school or any school-related activity.
B. **Counterfeit Money:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, receiving, or exchanging any counterfeit money.
C. **Bullying, Third Offense:** The 3rd offense of participation in repeated written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4.
D. **Damaging or Setting Off Fire Alarm:** To willfully damage or destroy a school fire alarm so as to endanger human life, or to set off a school fire alarm with no reasonable belief that a fire exists on the school premises.

E. **Drugs:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, receiving, or being under the influence of any Schedule I, II, III, or IV drug as defined by the Official Code of the State of Georgia, or any substance or chemical that is mood altering when taken that has not been prescribed to the student taking the substance or the chemical.
F. **Felony Misconduct:** Any misconduct occurring within the jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct that has not been specifically detailed in the Code of Conduct, but satisfies the criminal elements of a felony under Georgia law.
G. **Gang Related Activity:** Engaging in gang-related activity that encourages, solicits, promotes, condones, causes, assists or abets any illegal or disruptive act.
H. **Physical Abuse:** The intentional use of *excessive physical contact* with a student or person other than school personnel referenced in Level 4 hereof, that results in marking, scratching, swelling, bruising, cuts or other visible injuries to the student or person with whom contact was made.
I. **Prescription Medication:** Possessing, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, distributing, or receiving any prescription drug not prescribed to the student in possession thereof or wrongfully possessing, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, distributing, or receiving any prescription drug that is prescribed to the student or the use of any substance represented to be a prescription drug prior to or after attending school or school related activity that was not prescribed for the student.
J. **Sexual Misconduct:** Sexual misconduct shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment, indecent exposure, using any electronic or other device to take or forward inappropriate, indecent, vulgar, sexual, or obscene pictures of students, minors, or school employees; touching the breast, buttocks, genitals, or genital area of a female or male.
K. **Theft, greater than $500:** Theft including, but not limited to, attempted theft, extortion, bribery, theft by deception, and/or possession of stolen property when the value of the property is greater than $500.00, as estimated by school officials.
L. **Vandalism, damage greater than $500:** Damaging or vandalizing school or personal property, with the cost of damages being greater than $500.00 as estimated by school officials.

Level 4 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 4 offense can result in the student being assigned five (5) – ten (10) days of Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to the Director of Student Services.

Attempting to make inappropriate physical contact or action with school personnel.

1. **Intentional physical contact or action of an insulting or provoking nature with school personnel**.

Level 5 Offenses

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 5 offense can result in the student being assigned five (5) – ten (10) days of Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to the Director of Student Services.

1. ***Possession of a Firearm, Dangerous Weapon or Explosive Compound*:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering or exchanging any firearm, dangerous weapon, explosive compound, or an object that can reasonably be considered and/or used as a weapon.
2. ***Intentional physical contact or action that causes physical harm to school personnel*:** Any intentional act which causes physical harm to school employees.
3. ***Adjudication or Conviction of a Felony ("Seven Deadly") :*** The adjudication or conviction of an enrolled student or a student seeking enrollment committed offense that involve one or more of the following violent criminal offenses:
   a. Murder (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-1);
   b. Voluntary Manslaughter (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-2);
   c. Rape ((O.C.G.A. § 16-6-1);
   d. Aggravated Sodomy (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-2);
   e. Aggravated Child Molestation (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-4);
   f. Aggravated Battery (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-24); and
   g. Aggravated Armed Robbery (O.C.G.A. § 16-8-41)

4. ***Adjudication or Conviction of Felony (All others):*** The adjudication or conviction of an enrolled student or a student seeking enrollment of an offense that is designated as a felony under the laws of the State of Georgia or a felony under the laws of the United States of America.

Enrolled Students Disciplinary Hearing for Level 5 Offense Violations Only

If the Director of Student Services finds that an enrolled student has engaged in or attempted to commit any Level 5 offense, the enrollment of the student will be reviewed and a determination will be made for the most appropriate placement.

Ware Academy (Elementary Alternative Placement Program)

Ware Academy provides a structured educational setting for fourth- and fifth-grade students who may benefit from additional behavioral, social-emotional, and academic supports or who have been assigned through the disciplinary process. The goal of Ware Academy is to help students develop the skills necessary to successfully return to and participate in their home school environment.

Students may be assigned to Ware Academy through one of two placement processes:

MTSS Team Placement (Intervention Placement) at Ware Academy

A student may be referred to Ware Academy by the school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team when the team determines that a short-term placement with targeted behavioral instruction, counseling, social-emotional support, and structured interventions would benefit the student. This placement is designed to help students develop coping skills, improve decision-making, strengthen social skills, and gain a better understanding of behavioral expectations. The primary purpose of this placement is intervention, support, and skill development.

Administrative/Disciplinary Placement at Ware Academy

A student may also be assigned to Ware Academy as a result of a disciplinary infraction through an administrative hearing, disciplinary waiver, tribunal decision, or other disciplinary process authorized by Board policy and state law. Placement decisions are based upon the severity of the offense, student safety considerations, prior disciplinary history, and other relevant factors.

Students assigned to Ware Academy continue to receive instruction aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and participate in behavioral, counseling, and social-emotional learning activities designed to support academic and personal growth. Attendance is required, and student progress is monitored throughout the placement period.

Prior to placement in Ware Academy or upon returning to the home school, a student may be required to enter into a Behavior Contract with the student, parent/guardian, and school administrator. The Behavior Contract outlines behavioral expectations, interventions, supports, and consequences designed to promote student success, increase accountability, and support a successful transition to and from the alternative setting.

The overall goal of Ware Academy is to provide students with the skills, supports, and structure necessary to successfully transition back to their home school and become productive members of the school community.

Students Seeking Enrollment with a Level 5 Offense

If the Director of Student Services finds that a student seeking enrollment in the Ware County School District has committed a Level 5 offense, the Director of Student Services and the Superintendent will determine the most appropriate placement for the student.

Jurisdiction for Disciplinary Action

Ware County Schools has discipline authority over its students whenever the interests of the school districts are involved. Therefore, the Code of Student Conduct handbook applies at the following times and places:

- On school grounds at any time;
- Off school grounds at a school bus stop or at a school activity, function, or event;
- While the student is on a school bus or School District-sponsored transportation;
- When either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is in route to or from school, or to or from a school activity, function, or event;
- Off school grounds while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school related activities, such as field trips, conferences, or athletic events, or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities;
- Off school grounds while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another school system in Georgia;
- Off school grounds when the behavior of the student could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(c);
- Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a School District employee, or volunteer and is related to the victim's affiliation with the School District;
- Off school grounds when a student leaves school without permission of a school official; and
- Off school grounds when the misconduct adversely affects the safety and welfare of the school

community or the orderly mission and function of the school.

The authority to take disciplinary action may also extend to certain off-campus conduct, including criminal acts or other serious misconduct, when such conduct has a direct and substantial impact on the school environment, school operations, or the safety and welfare of students and staff.

At Administrator Discretion

Criminal Charges, Juvenile Adjudications, and Student Placement

The Ware County School System may receive information from courts, law enforcement agencies, or other authorized entities regarding students who have been charged with, adjudicated for, or convicted of certain criminal offenses as permitted by Georgia law.

When a student's alleged or adjudicated conduct presents a concern for the safety, welfare, or orderly operation of the school, the Superintendent or designee may review the student's educational placement and determine whether additional disciplinary action, an alternative educational placement, or other appropriate interventions are warranted in accordance with Georgia law, Board policy, and applicable due process requirements.

Students recommended for long-term suspension, expulsion, or alternative educational placement shall be afforded the procedural rights provided under Georgia law, including disciplinary hearings when required pursuant to **O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-750 through 20-2-759**.

Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the Ware County Board of Education to take disciplinary action authorized by state law or Board policy.

Criminal Charges, Felony Offenses, and Student Placement

Students who are charged with or convicted of a felony, or who are adjudicated by a juvenile court for conduct that would constitute a felony if committed by an adult, may be subject to disciplinary action or a review of their educational placement when authorized by Georgia law and Ware County Board of Education policy.

The Ware County School System may receive information from courts, law enforcement agencies, or other authorized entities regarding certain criminal charges, convictions, or juvenile adjudications as permitted by Georgia law. When such information indicates that a student's continued presence may pose a threat to the safety or welfare of students or staff or substantially disrupt the educational environment, the Superintendent or designee may determine the appropriate educational placement or recommend disciplinary action in accordance with Georgia law, Board policy, and applicable due process requirements.

Students recommended for long-term suspension, expulsion, or alternative educational placement shall be afforded all procedural rights required by **O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-750 through 20-2-759**. For more information, contact The Department of Student Services.

Disciplinary Authority of Teachers & Administrators

Administrators have the latitude of assigning discipline in relation to the misbehavior. For example, students who engage in more serious acts of misbehavior, such as fighting, are not entitled to a warning before any other disciplinary action is taken.

Progressive Discipline Procedures and (PBIS) Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

All school classrooms are expected to follow the PBIS matrix. When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student, and other relevant factors.

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program.

Gang Related Activity

The Board recognizes that the harm done by the presence and activities of gangs in the public schools exceed the immediate consequences of such activities such as violence and destruction of property. Gang activities also create an atmosphere of intimidation in the entire school community. Both the immediate consequences of gang activity and the secondary effects are disruptive and obstructive of the process of education and school activities.

It is therefore the policy of the Board of Education that gangs and gang activities are prohibited in the Ware County School System, according to the following:

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

Students who engage in gang-related activity are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including long-term suspension, expulsion, referral to law enforcement, or other disciplinary action authorized by Georgia law and Ware County Board of Education policy

Student Disciplinary Hearings (Tribunals)

Students who are alleged to have committed serious violations of the Student Code of Conduct may be referred for a disciplinary hearing (tribunal) in accordance with Georgia law and Board policy. The purpose of the hearing is to determine whether a violation occurred and, if so, the appropriate disciplinary consequence.

Parents/guardians and students will receive written notice of the hearing, including the alleged violation(s), the date, time, and location of the hearing, and information regarding the student's rights during the hearing process.

Students and parents/guardians have the right to:

- Present evidence and witnesses;
- Question witnesses presented by the school district;
- Be represented by legal counsel at their own expense; and
- Receive a written decision following the hearing.

Possible outcomes of a disciplinary hearing may include long-term suspension, assignment to an alternative educational setting, expulsion, or other disciplinary actions authorized by law and Board policy.

Decisions of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer may be appealed in accordance with Georgia law and Ware County Board of Education procedures. Interpreter and translation services are available upon request.

Academic Honesty

Coursework submitted by a student must be the student's own, original work. Students shall not cheat on any assignment by giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or commit the act of plagiarism. Students who commit such acts are subject to receiving a grade of zero (0) on the assignment in question as well as disciplinary action.

Alcohol, Drugs and Any Unapproved Item or Substance

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

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

Battery
Intentional touching or striking of another person to intentionally cause bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between battery and fighting is that fighting involves mutual participation.)

Bus Conduct
Bus drivers will be given a copy of the PBIS expectations. Bus drivers have complete charge of students riding the bus and will report misbehavior to the school administration. School administrators or his/her designee are responsible for disciplining students for bus misbehavior. To help maintain order on the bus, drivers have the authority to assign a special seat on the bus to any student. Video/audio recorders are placed on school buses for the purpose of aiding supervision and may be used as evidence that misbehavior has taken place. For the safety of all students who ride the bus, students are expected to obey the following rules:

1. Always stand a safe distance from the road (at least **12** feet).
2. Students will not be allowed to enter or leave a bus at any place other than at the students' usual stop or school unless authorized by the principal or his/her designee.
3. Students may not ride a different bus unless they present to the driver a note from the parent that has been approved by the principal or assistant principal.
4. If students must cross the road to board a bus, wait until the bus has come to a complete stop, the proper warning signs are displayed, and the driver motions for you to cross.
5. Students who must change buses at any school must follow the rules of that school.
6. Students may not reserve seats, and must stay in their seats while the bus is in motion.
7. Students must keep the center aisle of the bus clear at all times.
8. Students must obey the directions of their bus driver.
9. Students are not allowed to consume food or drink on the bus.
10. Students may not transport balloons, flowers, glass containers, or animals (dead or alive, including insects) on the bus.
11. Students must not litter the bus, throw anything out of the window, or cause damage to the bus.
12. Students must obey all bus safety rules and all rules listed in the *Code of Conduct.* In addition, Georgia law prohibits the following acts while on a bus:

Acts of physical violence.

13. Bullying.
14. Physical assault or battery of persons on the bus.
15. Verbal assault of persons on the bus.
16. Disrespectful conduct toward bus drivers or other persons.
17. Unruly behavior.
18. Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices with or without headphones or ear buds during the loading and unloading process. Students should keep electronic equipment packed away when preparing to board and when getting off the bus. Use of electronic devices while onboard the bus with headphones or ear buds, is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the driver's operation of the school bus.
19. Using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the driver's operation of the bus.
20. Students must maintain silence at all railroad crossings until the driver has crossed and gives the all clear.

If students violate the rules for bus conduct, school administrators may take disciplinary action, including suspension from riding the bus for as many as ten (10) days and/or suspension from school for as many as five (5) days. If bus misbehavior is severe, a disciplinary hearing may be called.

Fighting on a bus is among the most serious offenses committed by students, as it endangers everyone riding the bus by causing the driver's attention to be diverted. Fighting, or any other offense deemed to be serious, on a school bus may result in immediate suspension from the bus and/or school with no prior warning or progressive disciplinary action being taken. At the principal's discretion, a student may be suspended for the remainder of the *semester or school year*. It is within the principal's discretion to use other forms of punishment in lieu of bus suspension, including, but not limited to, school suspension or corporal punishment.

During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from

school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy. If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus. At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.

Chronic Disciplinary Problems
A student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics, willful and persistent violation of student codes of conduct, which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur.

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

Criminal Offenses
Students who violate regulations in the Code of Conduct are subject to discipline by Ware County Schools. Students who commit offenses that violate local, state, or federal laws are subject to charges by law enforcement authorities.

Damaging or Setting Off a Fire Alarm
It is a crime to willfully damage or destroy a school fire alarm so as to endanger human life, or to set off a school fire alarm with no reasonable belief that a fire exists on the school premises.

Defiance/Willful Refusal
Failure to comply with instructions; Blatant insubordination; willfully and defiantly refuses to immediately follow school staff directives.

Disorderly Conduct
Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff or others. (Includes disruptive behaviors on school buses).

Disrespect to Teacher/Staff
Disrespect to school personnel is generally considered disrespectful action, which includes inappropriate language towards school personnel.

Disruption of a Public School
It is unlawful for any person, including parents, to disrupt or interfere with the operation of a public school. Georgia law prohibits the upbraiding, insulting or abusing of any teacher, administrator, or bus driver upon the premises of any school in the presence and hearing of a student.

Unexpected School Closure
Any unexpected school closures (e.g., weather-related, etc.) do not count toward a student assigned Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) days for disciplinary reasons.

Dress Code
It is the Board of Education's belief that it should have and enforce hair and dress codes that will assist in preventing disruption of the educational environment, prevent health or safety hazards, and prevent interference with the learning of other students. The following regulations regarding the dress code apply to students while on school grounds, while participating in school athletic events, while participating in school extracurricular activities or while on any transportation vehicle owned or used by the Ware County Board of Education.

1. Hair should be clean, neat, and well-groomed and must not cover the eyes. Hair in rollers is prohibited.
2. Extreme styles of clothing that, in the opinion of the principal or the principal's designee, would interfere with learning, cause a disruption of the educational environment, or be a health or safety hazard are not permitted. Clothing should be clean, neat, and worn properly (pants and skirts shall be worn at the waist). Clothing should not be too tight, too loose, too short, or too long and should not have inappropriate writing or pictures, including but not limited to clothing which advertises alcohol, tobacco, drugs, any prohibited product, sex, depicts or suggest violence or which contain suggestive writings, pictures, or emblems that are inflammatory, vulgar, or discriminatory. No crop-tops where mid-drifts are visible with arms are down or raised.
3. Hats, scarves and other headpieces will not be worn within the school building unless approved by the principal or the principal's designee.
4. Students are prohibited from wearing pants and jeans with noticeable splits or holes above the knee.

5. Shorts, skirts, split skirts, or dresses must be fingertip or longer in length while being worn correctly with no noticeable splits or holes above the knee and appropriate for school.
6. Immodest clothing is prohibited. Tight-fitting clothing, such as spandex or bicycle type clothing and/or any similar is prohibited.
7. Jewelry, clothing, or other items that have pictures, logos, lettering, writing or other symbols that the principal considers vulgar, profane, offensive, suggestive, or disruptive, or that reflect sexual or obscene overtones, or that advertise any alcohol, tobacco or controlled substances are prohibited. Spike jewelry or chains are not permitted.
8. Wearing any clothing, jewelry, or other item symbolizing gang affiliation is prohibited.
9. Shoes should be worn that are appropriate, comfortable, and pose no safety hazard to the student. Shoes with heels more than 2 inches are not appropriate. Flip-flops, cleats, bedroom shoes and shoes with wheels are not allowed. Tennis or athletic shoes should be worn during physical education classes.
10. Earrings or other jewelry of such size or style that, in the opinion of the principal or the principal's designee, would interfere with learning, would cause a disruption of the educational environment, or would be a health or safety hazard are prohibited. Body piercing jewelry (or anything similar) on any visible area of the body (including the tongue) other than the ear is prohibited.

Violations of the Dress Code Policy will be referred to an administrator or designee for resolution.

Drug

The term drug does not include prescriptions issued to the individual, aspirin or similar medications and/or cold medications that are taken according to product use recommendations and board policy. Caffeine pills are considered drugs. All medications that are to be taken at school must be brought to the appropriate staff person responsible for administering them in containers clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, and the appropriate dosage. Exceptions may be made in accordance with local board policy to authorize the self-administration of asthma medications by a student who has asthma and needs to have such medication in his/her possession at school or at a school-sponsored activity.

Drug Possession

Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics; or any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school.

Acceptable Use Policy/Procedures

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

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

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

General Usage Guidelines

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

All WCS network/Internet users **must**:

- Respect the privacy of others and self.
- Keep all personal information about self or others confidential. This includes, but is not limited to, home telephone or cell phone numbers, home E-mail addresses, home addresses, pictures with name identifications, or information regarding a specific student's location at any given time.
- Refrain from sharing passwords with others or using passwords not belonging to the user.

- Respect the network as a shared resource. The user shall not deliberately attempt to degrade or disrupt system performance or to interfere with the work of others.
- Observe all laws, including copyrights, licensing agreements, and trade secret laws.

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

Internet Acceptable Use Guidelines

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

Responsible users **may**:

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

Responsible users **may not**:

- Use the Internet for any illegal purpose, including, but not limited to, copyright violations.
- Conduct unethical or illegal activities of any kind.
- Use proxy systems to circumvent firewall content filtering.
- Use the Internet for social networking.
- Use the Internet or other media to download/install any files or programs without approval of the technology department, the exception being updates to programs installed by the district technology department.
- Use the Internet to "cyberbully," stalk, intimidate, or threaten another person.
- Use search engines to locate material that is not appropriate in an educational setting.
- Attempt to gain unauthorized access to any computer, electronic device, systems, networks, or programs.
- Broadcast messages or forward chain email.
- Change workstation settings or install hardware on the network.
- View, transmit, or receive any media (text, images, movies, sound, etc.) that contain pornography, nudity, profanity, obscenity, racism, threats, or language that is harmful, offends or tends to degrade others, is graphically violent, or is inappropriate in an educational setting.
- Change or vandalize files or data belonging to another user.
- Wastefully use finite resources such as bandwidth, disk space, and printing.
- Use the Internet for any commercial or for-profit activity, solicitations, or purchases of a personal nature. Downloading copyrighted material requires permission from the owner of the materials and should adhere to Federal Copyright Laws – http://www.copyright.gov.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Guidelines

The Ware County School System allows the usage of AI with caution. There are potential risks to using AI, and several safety measures should be followed while interacting with generative AI websites. AI programs can have implicit bias, and even present incorrect information. Users should always think critically when using AI, and be sure to fact-check using primary sources. AI should only be used in support of learning, and users should produce work that is primarily their own while acknowledging assistance received from AI. The primary goal should be understanding and skill development, not merely to complete an assignment.

Responsible users of AI may:

- Use AI programs as smart search engines that present information in ways that are easy to read and understand.
- Ask AI programs for clarification or explanations when help is needed.
- Use AI programs to brainstorm ideas, topics, and writing prompts.
- Cite AI text and images properly when used for school work, just as if it were from a human source.

Responsible users of AI may not:

- Use AI programs to avoid doing their own work.
- Copy text or images from AI programs without proper citation.

- Use AI text or images without fact-checking and exploring potential plagiarism issues.
- Use AI when the teacher expressly forbids it.
- Use AI to bypass necessary steps in assignments, such as reading or analysis.

Network Safety and Security

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

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

Google Apps for Education (GAFE)

The Ware County School System uses Google Apps for Education to enhance teaching and learning. GAFE is a core suite of productivity applications Google offers to schools and educational institutions. These communication and collaboration apps, such as Gmail, Calendar, Drive, Docs, and Classroom, exist in the cloud, meaning that they can be accessed from any device with an Internet connection.

System administrators control access to these and dozens of other collaborative tools supported by Google through the Admin Console. Administrators have the ability to filter messages based on where they are from, where they are going, or the content they contain. WCS will use this technology protection measure to block or filter, to the extent practicable, access to content that is obscene or harmful to minors over the network.

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

The Internet User Contract will be sent home for parent/guardian and student signatures.

Student Electronic Communication Guidelines

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

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

Student Due Process

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

Guidelines for Devices Issued to Students and Staff Members

School district technological resources may be provided to select students for school-related purposes. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible, efficient, and legal activities that support learning. Use of school district technological resources for political purposes or for commercial gain or profit is prohibited. Student personal use of school district technological resources for amusement or entertainment is also prohibited.

School district technological resources are installed and maintained by the Technology Department. Students and employees shall not attempt to perform any installation or maintenance without the permission of the Technology Department. Under no circumstance may software purchased by the school district be copied for personal use.

Students and employees agree to comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as cheating, as stated in the Student Code of Conduct.

Users must not engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing, transmitting or receiving images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages, or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive, or considered to be harmful to minors.

All users must comply with Board policies on Bullying, including but not limited to IFBGE and JCDAG, when using school district technology.

Warranties

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

Supervision and Monitoring

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

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

Vandalism

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

Acceptance

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

Expulsion

Suspension of a student from a public school beyond the current school quarter or semester. Such action may be taken only by a disciplinary tribunal.

Extortion

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

Extra-Curricular Activities

The school shall not allow a student to participate in any extra-curricular activities or cooperative work experience if the student was not counted present for the school day. For absences after the fifth (5th) unexcused absence, the student shall not be allowed to participate without a physician’s note.

Fighting

Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and an intent to harm (Note: The key difference between fighting and battery is that fighting involves mutual participation.)

Fireworks

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

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

Homicide
Includes but is not limited to shooting, stabbing, choking, bludgeoning, etc.

Inappropriate Language
Use of vulgar or inappropriate language towards another student or adult.

Kidnapping
The unlawful and forceful abduction, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will.

Laser Pointers
Students are not permitted to possess or use laser pointers. Students who commit such an act are guilty of committing a Level 1 Offense.

Off-Campus Behavior
Any student who is arrested, indicted, or has a Juvenile Court complaint filed against him/her which alleges the child committed a felony or a delinquent act which would be a felony if committed by any adult, and who makes their continued presence at school potentially disruptive to the school or a danger to persons or property at the school, shall be immediately suspended from school and all school activities with the matter being submitted to the Director of Student Services.

If the Director of Student Services finds there is sufficient evidence to believe the child committed a felony or a delinquent act which would be a felony if committed by an adult, and the student's continued presence at school would be potentially disruptive to the school or a danger to persons or property at the school, a disciplinary tribunal hearing will be conducted and the consequence could be short-term or long-term suspension or expulsion from school, or placement of the student in an alternative educational program as deemed appropriate by the Disciplinary Hearing Officer/Director of Student Services.

Personal Belongings
Personal belongings such as toys, large quantities of money, music devices, electronic games, playing cards, blankets, and cameras may not be brought to school or on class field trips unless they have been approved as part of a class assignment. If such items are brought to school, they may be taken up and kept in the school office until parents come to claim them. Also, students are subject to disciplinary actions for bringing inappropriate items to school without the consent of school administration. The Ware County School District or individual school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal belongings.

Providing False Information
Issuing false reports on other students, school staff, and school personnel will not be tolerated.

Reporting Criminal Conduct
Any action or failure to act by a student which is a violation of any law or which an administrator or teacher believes may be a violation of a law may be reported to the building level administrator or Director of Student Services.

Robbery
The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. (Note: The key difference between robbery and larceny/theft is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)

School Safety Zone
School safety zones are defined as in, on, or within 1000 feet of any real property leased, owned, or occupied by Ware County Schools. It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess, or have under his/her control any weapon or explosive compound while within a school safety zone, at a school building or school function, or on school property or a vehicle furnished by the school. Violation of this law is a felony.

However, an individual over the age of 21 years old (except students) who are in possession of a weapon and/or has a weapon

locked in a compartment of a motor vehicle and has a lawful gun license or permit, may transit through a designated school zone to carry or pick up a student. Furthermore, it is unlawful for any person to remain within the school safety zone without a legitimate cause or need. Failure to leave the premises when requested is grounds for a charge of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. Disruption of or interference with the operation of any public school shall be considered a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

Serious Bodily Injury
Infliction of "bodily harm" that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement: or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. Includes but not limited to any behavior that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes substantial risk of death.

Sexual Harrassement
The Ware County Board of Education is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. Sexual harassment by students, employees, volunteers, or third parties is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions;
- Requests for sexual favors;
- Unwelcome touching or physical contact of a sexual nature;
- Repeated sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or remarks;
- Displaying sexually suggestive materials;
- Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his or her appearance;
- Pressure for sexual activity;
- Sexual violence or other unwanted sexual conduct; and
- Employees or volunteers engaging in romantic or inappropriate relationships with students.

Any student who believes he or she has experienced sexual harassment, or who has knowledge of possible sexual harassment involving another student, employee, volunteer, or third party, should immediately report the concern to a principal, assistant principal, or school counselor. .

All reports of sexual harassment will be promptly reviewed and investigated. Retaliation against any person who reports sexual harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

For additional information regarding complaint procedures, please refer to Ware County Board of Education Policy JCAC and the District's Title IX procedures.

Student Allegations of Employee Misconduct
Instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student should be reported to the principal or to the Director of Human Resources. As authorized by Georgia law, if it is determined that a student deliberately falsified or misrepresented information alleging employee misconduct, the student will be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion.

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

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

Guardian Ad Litem: The Guardian Ad Litem is a trained professional appointed by the court to represent the best interests of minor children in court cases. Any request to interview a student or to inspect the student's school record should be submitted, in writing, along with court documentation establishing the Guardian Ad Litem relationship with the child.

Law Enforcement: School Resource Officers, as well as Probation Officers of the Juvenile Court, are permitted to question

students at school without prior parental approval. Law enforcement officers from other agencies investigating non-school related matters may question students with the consent of the parent/guardian. Law enforcement officers who have a detention order or warrant for arrest, or states that the situation involves pursuit of a suspect linked to a felony crime may question students without parental consent. **All School Resource Officers are employees of the Ware County Board of Education.**

Student Searches
To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student desks, and student lockers at any time. In addition, a student may be searched if administrators have reason to believe the student is in possession of an article or substance which is illegal, prohibited by school rules, or dangerous. Students are given the opportunity to produce the item sought or to voluntarily empty their pockets, pocketbooks, or book bags.

Students may be asked to remove their jacket, vest, shoes, or socks. A School Resource Officer may be summoned if there is reason to believe any search should be continued beyond the parameters set forth above. A student that refuses to allow an administrator to search him/her will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.

Taunting
Teasing, demeaning others, picking, emotional stress (not on a repeated basis).

Theft
The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity (e.g., school) without threat, violence or bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between larceny/theft and robbery is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)

Threat/Intimidation
Any threat through written or verbal language or act which creates a fear of harm and/or conveys a serious expression of intent to harm or violence without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to an actual physical attack.

Tobacco Possession
Students shall not possess, sell, purchase, transmit, or use tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, or any substance represented or believed to be tobacco-related paraphernalia including electronic cigarettes or smoking devices.

Trespassing
Entering or remaining on a public school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry. (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering- Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.)

Vandalism or Damage to School Property
Students who deface or destroy school property will be charged with the full cost of the damage and will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Possession of Firearm, Dangerous Weapons, Hazardous Object, or Explosive Compound
It is unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under his/her control while within a school safety zone or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the District any dangerous weapon, firearm, or explosive compound. Any person violating this rule will be reported to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

Dangerous Weapon: means any weapon commonly known as a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, hand grenade, or other similar weapon designed to explode.

Explosive: Includes any bomb, firebomb, Molotov cocktail, firecracker, fireworks, stink bomb, bullet, shell, gunpowder, grenade, missile, or any other type of explosive device and/or substance. A student in possession of any such item will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Conduct, with the matter being reported to law enforcement authorities.

Firearm: Includes but is not limited to a handgun, rifle, shotgun, or other weapon, which will or can be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or electrical charge.

Hazardous Object: any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapons, or any failing instrument consisting of two or more ridge parts connected in such a

manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or taser. This list is not all inclusive.

Any student in possession of or having under his/her control a firearm or dangerous weapon while at school or a school function on or off campus, on school property, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school system, will be immediately suspended from school. The matter will be submitted to a Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing and reported to law enforcement authorities. Per Georgia law, students found to have committed this offense by the Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing will be expelled from Ware County Schools for not less than one (1) calendar year. Upon appeal, the Ware County Board of Education may modify this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Toys such as cap pistols, Nerf guns, Airsoft guns or the like, water guns, and rubber knives are not permitted. Please caution your child concerning toys that resemble weapons. Possession of these items can result in suspension or expulsion from school.

General Information

Accidents

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

Birthdays

The school faculty and staff are happy to recognize student birthdays. However, because learning time is very important, birthday parties will not be allowed.

Book Bags, Sports Bags, and Other Bags

Students are allowed, but not required, to use a book bag to carry textbooks and school supplies. Additionally, students are not allowed to use a rolling book bag because such bags often create tripping hazards. Luggage-type bags that are too bulky for students to safely hold in their lap are prohibited on the bus. For safety reasons, book bags may not be placed in the center aisle of the bus. All student bags are subject to search.

Bus Transportation and Safety

Video Cameras - Each bus may be equipped with a video camera. Students may be videoed on each trip. The videos provide a record of students' behavior on the bus.

Transportation To and From Designated Bus Stops - Students will be picked up at their designated bus stop and returned to their designated bus stop. Students may ride their assigned bus only. It is the responsibility of the Ware County School System to transport students from bus stop to school and from school to bus stop.

Parents should ensure students are at their assigned bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives. Contact the Director of Transportation for information regarding bus pick-up/drop-off times and locations or to discuss any concerns regarding bus routes or drivers. Parents should not interrupt bus routes or attempt to board buses to discuss issues with drivers.

Administrators have the authority to act on any disciplinary violations that occur at bus stops. Students should adhere to the following safety rules at the bus stop:

1. Students who must cross the road to board a bus should never do so until the bus has come to a complete stop, the proper warning signs are displayed, and the driver motions for the student to cross.
2. Students should cross the road in front of the bus, and never cross the road behind the bus.
3. Students should always stand a safe distance from the road (at least twelve feet).
4. Students who must cross the road after exiting from the bus should always cross at least twelve (12) feet in front of the bus after looking in both directions for traffic and after the driver motions for students to cross.
5. Students should never run to or from the bus.
6. Students should be at their assigned bus stop five (5) minutes prior to the arrival of the bus.

Bus Precautionary Measures

- The bus driver may provide hand sanitizer to each student upon boarding the bus.
- Students who are sick should not board the bus.
- If a student is sick and a parent is not home, an additional bus will be used to transport the student to the school until a parent is available to pick the child up. The student will remain in an isolated area until the parent arrives.
- Weather permitting, bus windows will be lowered during the route to provide ventilation.
- Buses will be sanitized after each morning and afternoon route.
- There are no bus transfers of students on any routes. Students must stay on the same bus from the beginning to the end of the route.
- Parental Bus Route App for Parents
  1. Correct home address in Infinite Campus
  2. Correct email address on file
  3. Contact Transportation for instruction/details
- Riding a bus is a privilege. Please be considerate of these recommendations.

Stopfinder (Transporation)

Stopfinder is the all-in-one, easy-to-use app for viewing your student's bus stop information.

What the app can do

- Using the GeoAlerts feature, view your student's daily transportation start and stop points
- Send private messages to the Ware County School District Transportation Department
- Receive notifications and updates related to transportation

Install the App

The Stopfinder app is available for download on the App Store and Google Play.

Cancellation of School

In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, official information about school closing will be broadcast on the official Ware County School's website, app, local radio, or local television station. Parents should be aware that severe weather or other emergencies could cause the school to be canceled during the school day. Parents should plan accordingly.

Child Abuse

Georgia law requires that school employees report to the local Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in prosecution of the employee. Once a report has been made, official representatives of DFCS have the right to come to the school to interview the child. Parental permission need not be obtained by DFCS or the school to conduct the interview of the child.

If a Ware County Board of Education employee has reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred involving a person who attends to any child as an employee or volunteer of the school, the employee must report their suspicion of abuse to the Department of Family and Children Services and their school Principal or the Principal's designee. Reports of suspected child abuse shall be made immediately, but not more than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred. Reports may be made orally, by telephone or other oral communication, or a written report may be made by electronic submission or facsimile to the Department of Family and Children Services and to the school Principal or the Principal's designee.

Pursuant to Code Section 19-7-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A), Ware County Schools must notify individuals who volunteer in the school district of their obligations as mandated reporters for suspected child abuse.

Child abuse includes but is not limited to the following:

a. Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker by non-accidental means; physical forms of discipline do not count, as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
b. Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof; or,
c. Sexual abuse or
d. Sexual exploitation of a child.

Requirements:

Georgia law requires that all volunteers:

a. Report, **not investigate**, any suspicions of child abuse as defined above to the principal, supervisor, or designee of the facility within which you are volunteering immediately, but in no case later than the end of the school day or school event for which

you are serving as a volunteer.

b. If the above individuals are not available, then Georgia law requires that you make an oral report or a written report by electronic submission or facsimile of suspected child abuse immediately to the Department of Family and Children Services, an appropriate police authority, or a district attorney within 24 hours.
c. If you suspect the child is in immediate danger, you are directed to call 911 immediately.

Guidance

a. Your verbal report of any suspicions of child abuse should be made in person or by telephone and followed by a report, in writing, if requested. When a report is being made by electronic submission or facsimile to the Department of Family and Children Services, it shall be done in a manner specified by the division.
b. **Do not contact the parent or guardian**.
c. In causing a report to be made to a child welfare agency, or participating in any judicial proceeding or any other proceeding that results, you are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, provided that you are doing so with good intentions.
d. If you have questions, please contact the principal, school designee, or Director of Student Services, at 912-283-8656.

Clubs and Organizations

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

The meetings of any school activity group will be conducted under the supervision of an adult professional advisor. Students who participate in such activities must follow the rules established by their school. Clubs will meet on a scheduled basis so as not to conflict with academic instruction.

Emergency Management Plan/Emergency Drills

The Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and local law enforcement agencies will review the school system's comprehensive School Safety Plans. A copy of this confidential plan will be maintained by the principal and superintendent. An annual safe schools audit of each school in the district will be conducted in conjunction with local agencies by the Student Services Department.

Fire/evacuation drills will be held on a monthly basis. Drills for severe weather, lockdown of the school, and bus evacuation will be held at least once each year. Parents should remind their children that during emergency drills students must respond quietly and quickly, and must follow the directions given by their teachers and administrators.

Field Trips

Classroom teachers schedule educational field trips to nearby locations throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. As noted in the Ware County Board of Education policy GAK, all long-term volunteers (including chaperones) must be granted security clearance through the Visitor Management System.

Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip and will be asked to sign a field trip permission form. A student may not participate in the field trip unless the child is a student enrolled in the school, present on the day of the trip, and the specific grade scheduled for the field trip. Students must ride on school- provided transportation to the field trip unless authorized by a school administrator. Children not included on the approved student field trip roster are not part of the field trip group and cannot participate in any of that group's activities.

Any student who exhibits inappropriate behavior that is unbecoming may be required to have a parent/guardian accompany him or her on field trips or may be ineligible to attend.

Food Allergies/Dietary Needs

Any student with special dietary needs will be required to complete a form indicating these needs. These forms can be obtained in the school office.

Gum Chewing

Gum at school and on the bus is prohibited. Students are expected to follow this policy.

Head Lice/Bed Bugs

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) students diagnosed with head lice or bed bugs do not need to be sent home early from school. However, they must receive appropriate treatment upon identification. Parents/guardians of any child found to be infected with head lice or bed bugs will be notified. A letter giving information about the treatment and prevention measures will be given to parents when they come to the school.

Homeless Children and Youth

The term "homeless children and youths" is defined as provided in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (the Act).
In accordance with the Act, every child of a homeless individual and every homeless child or youth shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students. The District shall assign and admit a child or youth who is homeless to a District school regardless of residence or whether the parent or student is able to produce records normally required for enrollment.

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

The Superintendent or designee will review and revise as necessary regulations or procedures that may be barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths. In reviewing and revising such regulations or procedures, the District will consider issues of transportation, immunization, residence, birth certificates, transfer of school records and other documents required for enrollment. Anyone having a concern or complaint regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a homeless child or youth should first present it orally and informally to the District homeless liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as defined in the state plan for the education of homeless children and youths.

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

- Immediate enrollment into school;
- Assistance with obtaining records, birth certificates, school records immunizations, proof of residency, etc.;
- Transportation to and from the school based on the students address, or the school of origin should the student have to move during the school year;
- Access to all services received by their non-homeless counterparts;
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness, segregation based on a student's status as homeless is prohibited;
- Assistance with school supplies;
- Assistance with tutoring, special education, and English language learner resources;
- Assist students so they can participate in sports, field trips, and school activities regardless of their ability to pay or to provide their own transportation.
- Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I and similar state or local programs, educational programs for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, career and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.
- Appropriate secondary education and support services will be provided to ensure that homeless youths receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

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

Overview

The law indicates that the LEA liaison shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination of activities with other entities and agencies.
- Homeless children and youth enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools of the LEA.
- Homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which such families, children and youth

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

What is Homelessness?

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

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

Frequently Used Terms

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

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

Shelters - a place of temporary residency for homeless persons.

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

Substandard housing - without electricity, water, or heat.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Sandra Osburn, Homeless Liaison, at 912-283-8656.

Honors-Awards

For a student to receive the "A" Honor Roll for the semester or the year, the student shall earn an A, or P in every subject. For a student to receive the "A and B" Honor Roll for the semester or the year, the student shall earn an **A**, **B**, and/or **P** in every subject. Honors criteria and awards are determined by each school.

School Nurse and Clinical Services

School nurses serve as care providers and advocates for the promotion and protection of the health status of students. School nurses collaborate with parents, educators, and community health resources to provide information and/or services to address students' needs. For additional information, contact the principal or the Nurse Coordinator. The school houses a school health clinic with a nurse available to see students on a periodic basis. Permission slips must be on file from parents before any treatment can be administered.

Illness & Injury

If a student becomes too ill to remain in class or has an injury at school, his/her parent(s) will be contacted so the student may be cared for at home. If the parent cannot be reached, persons listed for emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up the child. If a student is involved in an accident while at school, the student and his/her parents are financially responsible for needed medical treatment unless otherwise determined.

Students should not return to school until vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fever have been resolved for 24 hours. Regarding fever, a student with a fever (oral temperature of 99.5 degrees or higher with other symptoms of illness present OR temperature of 100.4 degrees regardless whether other symptoms are present) should stay home until there is 24 hours without having a fever and without the use of fever reducing medicine within that 24-hour period.

The principal and nurse should be notified, in writing, if a student has a chronic disability or illness that could require special or emergency treatment. Parents are urged to keep the front office updated with current phone numbers so parents may be reached. No one will be excused from physical education class unless a statement is received from a doctor specifying that there is a problem that prevents the child from participating in physical education.

Contagious Illness

If a school receives a written report from a doctor/licensed healthcare provider which states that a student has a "notifiable disease/condition," the school system will follow the infectious disease reporting protocol including recommendations from the Ware County Health Department. The parent/guardian must provide a release to the school signed by a medical doctor indicating the date the student can return to school.

List of Contagious Illnesses and guidelines from the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) & Department of Public Health (DPH) for when to return to school:

- Chickenpox: When all lesions have crusted. If there is no crusting (i.e. breakthrough cases), children can return to school after no new lesions appear after 24 hours.
- Impetigo: After at least 24 hours of antibiotics
- Ringworm: Once treatment begins; ringworm on scalp requires oral medication
- Scabies: After treatment has been completed
- Measles: At least 5 days after the start of the rash.
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease (Coxsackievirus): After 24 hours without fever and child well enough to participate
- Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis): 24 hours after treatment begins
- Flu (Influenza): No fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Strep Throat: After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment

Telemedicine

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

The services offered are:

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

Consent for Telemedicine Services is located on the Parent-Guardian Consent for School Health Services.To receive information about these services, check with the school nurse or District Nurse Coordinator.

Administration of Medication to Students during School Hours

Periodically, parents and/or physicians request that medication be given to students during school hours. Parents and guardians are encouraged to cooperate with the physician to develop a schedule so the necessity for taking medications at school will be minimized. School personnel, if authorized by the responsible administrator, may assist students who must take prescribed medication during school hours. The school nurse will closely monitor the medication administration procedures and medications will be administered as ordered by the physician.

Parental Guidelines for Medication Administration at School

- Medication cannot be transported by a student. A parent/guardian must bring medication into the school to the school nurse or designated staff.
- Please provide the most current properly labeled prescription container and medication. It is recommended that a monthly

dose be provided for routine medications.

- Upon receipt at the school, all medications must be counted by the parent/guardian and the school nurse (or designee) with the amount received properly documented.
- The ***Plan of Care*** form must be completed and signed by the student's physician as well as signed by a parent. If any information changes, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the clinic in writing. If the medication or dose is changed, a new form must be completed.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep up with providing the medication in a timely manner to the nurse BEFORE the student is out of medication.
- Non-prescription medications (over-the-counter) must be brought to the clinic by the parent/guardian in a new unopened original container. Dosing will be based on the medication directions listed on the medication label. Dosing requirements in excess of the recommendations listed on the medication label will require a physician's authorization/order.
- Parents or legal guardians are responsible for picking up unused medications at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from the school. The nurse will destroy any medications remaining at the school after the last scheduled day of school for the current school year.

Medication Discontinuation

If the physician discontinues the student's medication order, the ***Medication Discontinuation*** form should be completed and signed by the physician. It is preferable that the parent signs this also. If the parent wishes to discontinue the medication without physician directive and the student has medication currently in the clinic, it is recommended that the parent sign the ***Medication Discontinuation*** form in order to stop the medication. The parent will be instructed to pick up the medication from the clinic or the medication can be disposed of by the nurse at the parents request.

Receiving Medication from the Parent/Guardian

Parents should check with the front office of the school and remain in the front office until the nurse is available. This will assure confidentiality. This gives the parent/guardian an opportunity to discuss the student's health related needs with the school health representative. Ensure the parent has signed the *Plan of Care* form. One month of medication should be provided to the clinic if at all possible. Pharmacy's will provide a separate labeled bottle for school doses when medication is given both at home and at school.

When the parent/guardian delivers medication to the school health representative, the information will be recorded on the student's *Medication Chain of Custody & Count form*. The school health representative will count or measure the amount of medication received with the parent/guardian present. The date, number of pills received, medication name, medication strength, amount per dose, number of pills per dose, & when to give med at school will be recorded on the form and both the school health representative (school nurse) and the parent/guardian will sign off the information verifying accuracy.

Emergency Medications Carried by the Student

Medications should not be in the possession of a student at any time on a school campus, on any school transportation vehicle, or at school sponsored functions with the exception of students who have a plan of care for Asthma, Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency, or Diabetes and have physician instructions for the student to carry emergency medications. This may include Inhalers for Asthma, Epinephrine for Severe Allergies, or Insulin/Glucagon for Diabetes.

The physician and parent/guardian will verify that the student has been trained in its use, is responsible, and may carry that medication on his/her person at all times. When this is the case, the student must always carry these medications on his/her person. These medications may not be left in lockers, book bags, classrooms or anywhere other than his/her physical possession.It is recommended that the parent supply a second inhaler, EpiPen, and/or Insulin/Glucagon to keep in the school clinic so that these emergency drugs will be available in the event of an emergency if the student forgets to bring his/her medication. If a second emergency drug is kept in the clinic, the parent should rotate this when the prescription is refilled due to expiration dates. At no time is the student permitted to allow the emergency medication to be in the possession of another student.

Auto-Injectable Epinephrine

School employees or agents are authorized to administer Epinephrine, if available, to a student upon the occurrence of perceived allergic reaction. Any school employee or agent, who has completed training or received the information provided by the Board on how to recognize the symptoms of allergic reactions and the correct method of administering Epinephrine, may:

Administer Epinephrine to any student, such employee, or agent who believes in good faith is experiencing perceived allergic reaction, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for Epinephrine.

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

1. An Allergy Plan of Care from a licensed physician containing the following:

- A statement detailing the name of the medication, method, amount, and time schedules by which the student is to take the medication
- A statement confirming the student is able to self-administer auto-injectable epinephrine

2. A written statement from the student's parent/guardian expressly acknowledging:
   - The parent/guardian grants the student permission to self-administer the prescription auto- injectable epinephrine as provided by the student's licensed physician
   - That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed medical release that gives school personnel permission to consult with the student's licensed physician regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication.
   - That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed authorization releasing the school system, Board of Education, and its employees and agents from civil liability if the self-administrating student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of the student self-administrating auto-injectable epinephrine.

Parents shall provide the above statements at least annually, however, if the student's medication, dosage, frequency of administration, or reason for administration changes, the parents shall provide updated statements to the school.

Albuterol/Levalbuterol Sulfate for Asthma and Respiratory Distress

School employees or agents are authorized to administer levalbuterol sulfate, if available, to a student upon the occurrence of perceived respiratory distress. Any school employee or agent, who has completed training or received the information provided by the Board on how to recognize the symptoms of respiratory distress and the correct method of administering levalbuterol sulfate, may:

Administer levalbuterol sulfate to any student, such employee, or agent who believes in good faith is experiencing perceived respiratory distress, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for levalbuterol sulfate.

Students are authorized to carry and self-administer prescription Albuterol/Levalbuterol Sulfate provided the student's parent/guardian provides the following:

1. An Asthma Plan of Care from a licensed physician containing the following:
   - A statement detailing the name of the medication, method, amount, and time schedules by which the student is to take the medication
   - A statement confirming the student is able to self-administer an inhaler

2. A written statement from the student's parent/guardian expressly acknowledging:
   - The parent/guardian grants the student permission to self-administer the prescription inhaler as provided by the student's licensed physician.
   - That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed medical release that gives school personnel permission to consult with the student's licensed physician regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication.
   - That the parent/guardian has provided the school with a signed authorization releasing the school system, Board of Education, and its employees and agents from civil liability if the self-administrating student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of the student self-administrating Albuterol/Levalbuterol Sulfate.

Parents shall provide the above statements at least annually, however, if the student's medication, dosage, frequency of administration, or reason for administration changes, the parents shall provide updated statements to the school.

Diabetes Medical Management Plan

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

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

Upon written request of a student's parent or guardian and if authorized by the student's Diabetes Medical Management Plan, a student with diabetes shall be permitted to perform blood glucose checks, administer insulin through the insulin delivery system

the student uses, treat hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, and otherwise attend to the monitoring and treatment of his or her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school or school grounds, and at any school-related activity, and he or she shall be permitted to possess on his or her person at all times all necessary supplies and equipment to perform such monitoring and treatment functions. The district shall provide information in the recognition of diabetes-related emergency situations to all bus drivers responsible for the transportation of a student with diabetes.

Insurance

Parents are responsible for providing accident or medical insurance coverage for their child. Ware County Schools does not maintain insurance coverage for students. As a service to parents, information regarding accident insurance that can be purchased at a nominal cost is sent home at the beginning of each school year. Students must submit proof of insurance coverage prior to registration for any athletic activity. Please check with the principal to determine which, if any, class or activity may require insurance**.** If an activity requires that a student maintain insurance and the student cannot provide proof of such insurance, then the student will not be eligible to participate in the activity.

Lost and Found

Each school has a "Lost & Found" area where lost items are turned in and may be claimed. Items that are not claimed by the end of the school year will be discarded or donated to our local Salvation Army or Good Will store. Items of clothing that may be removed, such as coats and sweaters, should be labeled with the student's name.

Make-up Work

Excused or Unexcused Absence: Any student, who misses assignments or tests due to an absence, shall be allowed to make up such assignments or tests. It shall be the student's responsibility to get the make-up work from the teacher(s) and complete the work within a reasonable time frame.

Notice of Equal Opportunity

The Ware County Board of Education maintains a policy of equal educational, athletic, and employment opportunities. The Ware County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, veteran status, genetic information, or age in its programs and activities. If students and/or parents have concerns, then they should bring such concerns, in writing, to the attention of the principal. If employees have concerns, then they should bring such concerns, in writing, to the attention of their immediate supervisor. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries and concerns regarding the District's non-discrimination policies:

Ms. Mandy Harper Executive Director of Student Support Services Ware County Schools 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 912-283-8656 mandy.harper@ware.k12.ga.us	Dr. Lezley Anderson Director of Human Resources Title IX/Equal Opportunity Contact Ware County Schools 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 912-283-8656 lezley.anderson@ware.k12.ga.us

All employees are required to comply with our Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.
Administrators and supervisors are expected to cooperate fully in meeting our equal employment opportunity objectives and their compliance with this policy will be monitored closely. For additional information, please see local board policies GAAA, GAE, GAE (1), JAA, JAA-E (1), and JCAC.

Notice of Gifted Education Services

Gifted education services are available to students in grades K-12 who meet the eligibility criteria established by Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2.38, Education Program for Gifted Students. Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, students will be evaluated for gifted education services through the use of the Response to Intervention model as specified by the Georgia Department of Education's Response to Intervention Guidance (section 8.3) for Gifted Learners.

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

For additional information about Ware County's educational services for high-achieving and gifted learners, please contact your child's principal, the gifted coordinator at your child's school, or the PK-12 Director of Student Achievement.

Dr. Shelli Tyre
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching
and Learning (PK-12)
Ware County Schools 1301
Bailey Street
Waycross, GA 31501
912-283-8656
shelli.tyre@ware.k12.ga.us

Notice of Pictures of Students

Unless the parent/guardian requests otherwise, pictures and/or recordings of students may be taken by the news media, individual schools, or the school system during the school day or at school events. Such pictures or recordings of students may appear on school and school system websites, or in other public places. If the parent/guardian wishes to prohibit the taking of any picture or audiovisual recording of their child by the news media, the school, or the school system, the notification must be filed, in writing, within **30 days** of the beginning of the school year or the date of enrollment. Pictures and/or recordings that identify students as receiving Special Education instruction will not be publicly displayed. Regardless of parental consent or notification, the school system has the right to record students with video cameras for safety and or /instructional purposes, and at extracurricular activities.

Parent's Right to Request a Teacher's and a Paraprofessional's Qualifications

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

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

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualifications, please contact Superintendent Dr. Lynn Barber, 1301 Bailey Street, Waycross GA 31501, 912-283-8656.

Parent–Teacher Conferences

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

Parent–Teacher Groups

Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent- Teacher Organization (PTO) at their child's school. These organizations provide opportunities for parents and teachers to work together for the betterment of the school and the benefit of students. Parent-teacher groups hold regular meetings in the schools.

Parties/Outside Food Policy

It is the intent of the Ware County School System to promote a healthy school environment for all students. Under the current conditions, no outside food will be allowed including food from fast food restaurants.

Pets

No pets of any kind are allowed at school without permission from the school. Teachers may give special permission for pets to be brought to school as part of a special display or activity if approved by the principal. Under no circumstance is a potentially

dangerous pet to be brought to school. Pets or animals are not allowed on the school bus.

School Supplies
Parents are expected to furnish pencils and paper for their child's use at school. If assistance is needed, please contact the school counselor.

Silent Reflection
At the start of each school day, the school shall conduct a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than 60 seconds. This moment of quiet reflection is not intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service or exercise but shall be considered as an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day.

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

Suspensions
For the purposes of the districtwide attendance protocol, suspensions shall not be considered unexcused absences. Any student who serves a short-term suspension out of school shall be allowed to make up missed assignments and tests. It shall be the student's responsibility to obtain the missed work from the teacher(s) and complete the work within three(3) days of returning to school. It shall be the teacher's duty and discretion to allow additional time for lengthy assignments.

Student Records
In accordance with state and federal regulations, the Ware County Board of Education has established policies and procedures to ensure the confidentiality of student records. Parents have the right to inspect their child's student records maintained by the school. (minimal notification of three school days) Parents having questions regarding their child's student record information should contact the school principal.

The practices observed concerning student records are described below:
Directory Information: Directory information is that which may be considered of general interest to students, parents, or the public. The following student information is classified as directory information:

1. The student's name, address, date and place of birth, and photograph;
2. The weight and height of members of athletic teams; and/or,
3. Awards and other recognition connected with student performance at school.

Unless the parent/guardian or eligible student requests otherwise, directory information may be disclosed to the public upon request.

The parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to refuse to allow any of their student information to be designated as directory information. To exercise this right, written notification must be filed with the principal within **thirty (30) days** of the date of enrollment.

Academic Information: Academic information includes items such as individual student attendance and discipline records, transcripts, and test results. Such information is confidential and access is restricted. Student records are available to students' parents/guardians. The rights afforded to parents/guardians can transfer to the student when the student reaches eighteen years of age.
Professional personnel, in the normal functions of the school and as approved by the Superintendent, may access student records. Exceptions to restricted access of student records include the following:

a. In the event that part or all of a student's record may be made available in compliance with a judicial order or any lawfully issued subpoena, advance notice of such compliance will be given to parents and eligible students.
b. In the event of an emergency, appropriate persons will be given access to a student's records if knowledge of information contained therein is necessary to protect the health and safety.
c. If students move to another attendance area within the school system or seek to enroll in a school outside of the system, students' records will be sent to the new school upon official request from that school.

In questions of record inaccuracy, misleading information, or information in violation of the privacy or rights of students, parents/guardians should contact the principal to request an opportunity for correction or deletion of said material in the student's

record.

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

Telephone Use
Students will not be allowed to use the office telephone except in case of an emergency as defined by the principal or principal's designee. If students become ill, their parents will be contacted by someone on the school staff. If students need to make the arrangements to go home with someone else, they must have their parents send a note to school. Students may not call home to make such arrangements after arriving at school.

Textbook and Instructional Orders and Inventories
Schools are expected to use those textbooks/instructional resources that are adopted as the school system's curricular materials. The Office of Student Achievement will place textbook orders based on the next school year's projected enrollment. The principal or his or her designee is responsible for maintaining an accurate inventory of textbooks and informing the department of needs in a timely manner. Textbooks that are lost, stolen, or damaged must be paid for by the student at the true replacement cost**. If students lose or damage textbooks and/or media materials, parents will be charged the full replacement cost and students may be subject to disciplinary action**. Replacement textbooks and media materials may not be issued until restitution is made. Georgia law provides that grade reports, diplomas, or certificates of progress may be withheld for failure to pay for lost or damaged textbooks, or other instructional materials for which the student is responsible.

Transportation Changes (Car riders)
Students may not make transportation changes in the way they usually go home unless a note signed by their parent is presented to school. Parents should give specific dates and instructions to explain any transportation change to the way their child should be transported home. **The principal or designee must approve the note.**

FYI: Last minute requests for transportation changes can confuse and upset students. To avoid such confusion and disruption of the school during dismissal time, parents are asked to notify the school as early as possible if it becomes necessary to make an unanticipated change in the way their child should be transported home.

Visitors
Parents are encouraged to visit the school for educational purposes and scheduled events. Parents or guardians are to bring identification. Parents can only have lunch during scheduled events. Parents or students may not bring relatives or friends to school as "spend-the-day" visitors. Advanced notice and approval by the principal or his/her designee is required for any visitor to observe in classrooms.

As required by Georgia law, visitors to the school must report to the school office to sign in when they arrive. Visitors must wear a visitor's badge while at the school.

***All visitors must sign in with the school office*.**
To ensure minimal disruption to the learning environment, we have established the following guidelines for classroom visits:

Advance Notice: Parents wishing to visit a classroom must submit a request at least 24 hours in advance. School administration may vary in minimal timeframe requests.

New Visitor Safety Procedures
Security Note: All bags are subject to search by school staff.

- **Clear Bag Procedure for School Events**
- During the school day, the clear bag rule does NOT apply to students and students can still use a regular backpack or bookbag.
- To keep everyone safe at school events, Ware County Schools has a new clear bag policy. This applies to anyone (parents, guardians, visitors) coming to see events at our school (fields, buildings, etc.).
    - Clear Bags Only for Events: When you come to a school event, you'll need to bring a clear bag made of plastic, vinyl, or PVC (clear material). No other types of bags are allowed.
    - Clear Bags Only: Your bag must be completely see-through and made of clear plastic, vinyl, or PVC (clear bag material).
    - Size Matters: The bag cannot be bigger than 12 inches wide, 6 inches tall, and 12 inches deep. Think of a standard lunchbox size.

- Small Clutch Exception: You can bring a small clutch purse (no bigger than 4.5 inches wide by 6.5 inches tall) with you, even if it's not clear. It can have a strap.
- No Bag Check: If your bag does not meet these rules, we will not have a place to store it for you. Please leave it at home or in your vehicle.

Principal's Discretion: All classroom visits are subject to the approval of the principal. The principal reserves the right to deny a visit if it is deemed disruptive to the educational process or for any other reason. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe, productive and focused learning environment for all students.

Federal Laws and Guidelines

The Ware County School System complies with all applicable federal and state laws protecting the rights of students and prohibiting discrimination, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Additional information regarding these laws and related Board policies is available on the Ware County School System website or by contacting the district office.

Please review the following selection of federal laws and regulations pertaining to your child:

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

B. Gender Equity in Sports
- As required under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315), students are hereby notified that the Sports Equity Coordinator for the Ware County School District is the Director of Student Services, at 912-283-8656. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity or alleged gender discrimination in sports may be submitted to the Sports Equity Coordinator. For additional information please see local board JAA-E (1).

C. Student Records
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education record as follows:

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

The Ware County School District has designated the following types of personally identifiable information about students as directory information:

- Student's name, address and telephone number;
- Student's date and place of birth
- Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
- Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
- Dates of attendance at the Ware County School System: and
- Awards received during the time enrolled in the Ware County School System;
- Video, audio or film images or recordings;
- Photograph;
- Grade level;
- Major field of study; and
- The name of the most recent previous educational agency, institution, or school attended by the student.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within fifteen (15) days after officially enrolling in school.

You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event; unless you, as a parent/guardian object in writing to your student being photographed, videotaped or interviewed, to the principal of the school where your student is enrolled. You must notify the principal of your objection by the specified period stated above.

Research and Student Surveys (PPRA)

The **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)** provides parents and eligible students (18 years of age or older) certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical examinations.

Parents have the right to:

- Review certain surveys and instructional materials before they are administered or used;
- Receive notice and, when applicable, opt their student out of participation in protected information surveys, certain non-emergency physical examinations or screenings, and activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing purposes; and
- Review the district's policies regarding these rights.

The Ware County School System provides annual notification of these rights and will notify parents of applicable surveys or activities as required by federal law.

Additional information regarding PPRA rights and district procedures is available on the Ware County School System website or by contacting the district office.

Title IX Parent/Student Grievance Procedure
The Ware County School System prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity and complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and all applicable federal regulations.

Any student, parent, guardian, employee, or community member who believes that discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or retaliation prohibited by Title IX has occurred should promptly report the concern to a school administrator. If the concern cannot be resolved at the school level, or if the complaint involves a school administrator, the concern should be reported to the District Title IX Coordinator.

The District will promptly review and investigate reports in accordance with Board Policy and established Title IX procedures. Informal resolution options may be available when appropriate and when all parties voluntarily agree to participate.

Retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination, harassment, or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Individuals also have the right to file a complaint directly with the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Questions regarding Title IX or requests for copies of the District's Title IX grievance procedures should be directed to the District Title IX Coordinator.

Ms. Mandy Harper Executive Director of Student Support Services Ware County Board of Education 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 Phone: 912-283-8656 mandy.harper@ware.k12.ga.us	Dr. Lezley Anderson Director of Human Resources Ware County Board of Education 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 Phone: 912-283-8656 lezley.anderson@ware.k12.ga.us