

Ware County Schools



Elementary Handbook

for Parents & Students

2025-2026

Table of Contents

Absences, Tardies, and Early Check-Outs	4
Arrival and Dismissal Times	4
Attendance Information	4
Attendance Zones	10
Bullying	23
Bus Conduct	33
Bus Transportation Safety	44
Cancellation of School	45
Cell Phone Policy	46
Centralized Registration & Enrollment	9
Child Find	22
Code of Conduct	22
Community Service Providers	19
Curriculum by Grade	13
Custody	10
Disciplinary Definitions	25
District Attendance Panel Protocol	8
Dress Code	34
Early Intervention Program	19
Electronic Resources	36
Elementary Alternative Program	31
Emergency Contact Information	12
Emergency Management Plan and Drills	48
Enrollment and Withdrawals	10
Equal Education Opportunities	55
Expectations	23
Federal Laws and Guidelines	59
General Information	44
General Use Guidelines	36
Gifted Education (WINGS)	19
Grade Placement	12
Grading System	14
Guardianship	11
Homeless Children and Youth	48
Homework	14
Hospital/Homebound Services	15
Infinite Campus Parent Portal	9
Instructional Materials	13
Internet Acceptable Use Guidelines	37
Learning, Teaching, and Assessment	13
Make-Up Work	8
Media Center	13
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)	19
Network Safety and Security	38
Online Registration Process	9

Participation in Extracurricular Activities	8
Promotion, Placement, and Retention	16
School Counselors	19
School Mental Health Specialists	20
School Nurse and Clinical Services	51
School Nurse Services	20
School Nutrition Program	22
School Psychologists	20
School Social Worker Services	20
Section 504 Rights	20
Social Security Number	12
Special Education Services	22
Standardized Testing	15
Student Communication Guidelines	39
Supervision and Monitoring	44

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 Title VI and Title IX Coordinator and Sports Equity Coordinator is the Director of Student Services and Community Relations, 1301 Bailey St., 912-283-8656.

The Section 504 and 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	Mrs. Julie Augustine	Julie.augustine@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2325
Wacona Elementary	Mrs. Jeri Ray	jeri.ray@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2362
Waresboro Elementary	Dr. Biff Lee	blee@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2393
Williams Heights Elementary	Dr. William Epps	bill.epps@ware.k12.ga.us	912-287-2399

Superintendent

Ware Co. 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	912-285-8011	atnelson84@gmail.com
District 2	Ms. Karen Ethridge	Board Member	912-285-9937	Kethridge911@gmail.com
District 3	Mr. Edward L. Tyre	Board Member	912-614-0520	btyre@ware.k12.ga.us
District 4	Mr. Rusty Ganas	Board Member	912-285-2475	rganas@bellsouth.net
District 5	Mr. Wendell Bagley	Board Member	912-550-9475	wendell.bagley@ware.k12.ga.us
District 6	Mrs. Brandi Waters	Board Member	912-406-2297	brandi.waters@ware.k12.ga.us
District 7	Mr. Barry Deas	Board Chair	912-285-7073	barrydeas@bellsouth.net

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 counselor 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

- Discuss the school’s discipline policy with your child. Show your support for the rules and help your child understand the reasons for the rules.
- Talk with your child about the violence he or she sees – on television, social media, video games, and possibly in the neighborhood. Help your child understand the consequences of violence.
- Help your child find ways to show anger that do not involve verbally or physically hurting others.
- Help your child understand the value of accepting individual differences.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child – even when it is tough.
- Listen to your child if he or she shares concerns about friends who may be exhibiting troubling behaviors. Share this information with a trusted professional, such as a school psychologist, school counselor, principal, or teacher.

2025-2026 Grading Periods

1st Semester

-
- 1st Nine weeks = August 8– October 8
 - 2nd Nine weeks = October 9 – December 19

2nd Semester

-
- 3rd Nine weeks = January 7– March 12
 - 4th Nine weeks = March 13– May 20

Attendance Information

Attending school regularly is very important if students want to succeed in school. Georgia law requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school unless they have a lawful reason to be absent. In addition, students under the age of six (6) who have been on roll for twenty (20) or more days fall under the provision of the Georgia Mandatory Attendance Law 20-2-150(c). State policy defines the school year as 180 attendance days.

Students who reach five (5) days of unexcused absences during the school year will be considered truant. The legal penalties for truancy include referral of students to Juvenile Court and referral of parents to State Court. Any Georgia resident who has control or charge of a child who is convicted of violating mandatory school attendance requirements will 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 per absence.

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 is not responsible for the supervision and safety of students prior to the beginning of the school day or after the end of the school day for unattended children. The Ware County Board of Education does not expect its staff to exercise charge over students who are left at the school campus before the beginning of the school day or who are not picked up after school in a timely manner after 3:00 p.m. Failure to pick up your child may result in a report to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS).

At Administrator Discretion

Absences, Tardies, and Early Check-Outs

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes regularly and on time. On the **FIRST DAY**, students return to school from an absence, parents should provide the school with a written note explaining the reason for the absence. The note should include the date(s) of the absence, the reason(s) for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student. If students are frequently absent and tardy, the principal may ask the parent to provide more information, such as medical documentation, about absences, tardies, and early checkouts. Only **five (5)** handwritten notes will be accepted from parents per semester. No notes will be accepted after three (3) school days (72 hours).

Parents must sign in students who arrive at school after the designated start time. Students arriving after the designated start time are considered tardy. For early checkouts, parents must go to the school office with their government identification to sign out their child.

Parents are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours. Parents should not check out students for the purpose of avoiding car rider traffic. Disciplinary action may be taken against students not in attendance for the full school day for reasons that cannot be excused. Any child who checks out before attending half of the school day will be considered absent for the school day at 11:00 a.m.

Additionally, parents will be required to attend a District Attendance Panel Meeting if their child accumulates seven (7) unexcused absences or twenty (20) unexcused tardies/checkouts. Please see the section entitled "District Attendance Panel Meeting" in this handbook for more information.

Tardies means the failure by a student to be in the assigned classroom or instructional space at the assigned time without a valid excuse, or arriving at school after the morning tardy bell (check appropriate school's bell schedule).

A student is tardy when he or she enters the classroom or homeroom after the ringing of the tardy bell. The following disciplinary procedures will be followed each semester for tardies to school (homeroom and class).

The accumulation of unexcused tardies may warrant disciplinary action. The accumulation of excused tardies will not warrant disciplinary action; however, there are very few excuses for tardies which will be accepted as a valid reason for tardiness. Leaving school for unauthorized purposes before the end of the instructional day will be counted as checked out early. Parents should not pick their student up before the end of the school day except where there is a legitimate emergency. The excuses for tardies are as follows:

- Illness when documented by the parent/guardian or a physician (chronic, repetitive offenses must have documentation by the physician).
- Professional and/or court appearance.
- Medical or dental appointments (must be documented by medical professional)
- Car trouble (two per year).
- Required religious observances (not retreats).
- Death or serious illness of a family member.

Notification of tardies/early checkouts must be received in writing to the front office staff the day of the tardy/early checkout. Attendance for half of the school day is at 11:00 am.

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. If such parent has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, a student shall be granted excused absences, up to five (5) school days per school year, for the purpose of visiting/attending military related events.

9. Extreme circumstances that cannot be resolved outside school hours; parent or guardian must request and receive approval from the principal or designated representative.
10. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the Ware County Board of Education to have merit-based circumstances.

After five handwritten per semester parent notes, parents will be required to present appropriate medical, governmental or court documentation for the purpose of validating the absence. After exhausting the five handwritten notes, subsequent absence will be categorized as unexcused unless proper documentation is received within the three (3) day (72-hour) time period.

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 student's 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 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 student's 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.

5. 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 Attendance Task Force or The District Attendance Review Panel (DARP. District Attendance Task Force or DARP are the final steps in the intervention process of assisting parents before charges will be filed in State or Juvenile Court.
6. 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 age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local system's policy.

Excessive Absences

1. The following provisions apply to absences during a school year:
2. 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).
3. 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.

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 one 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.
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 must attend the school in their assigned attendance zone where their custodial parents/legal guardians (“parents”) reside. Students may not attend schools outside of their assigned attendance zone, except with prior written permission of the Ware County Board of Education. If during the current academic year, parents move to a new residence within Ware County and the new residence is in a different attendance zone, parents must transfer their student to the appropriate school within their attendance zone by the end of the 9 weeks grading period. However, if the student has been enrolled in an attended the school for more than half the school year, the student may remain in the initial school of origin. This shall not apply if such student has chronic disciplinary or attendance problems. The parents are responsible for transporting their child to and from school while attending a school outside of their assigned attendance zone. For additional information, please contact the Student Services Department.

Through Intra-district Transfer (School Choice), parents may elect to enroll their child in a school outside of their attendance zone if such school has classroom space available after its assigned students have been enrolled. However, the home school must have the enrollment to grant the release. The Board of Education shall notify parents by July 1 of each year regarding which schools have available space. The window of time to apply for Intra- district transfer is the month of February of each school year. If parents elect to enroll their child in a school outside their attendance zone, the parent is responsible for transporting their child to and from school. A student who is allowed to transfer to another school under the school choice provision may continue to attend such school until the student completes all grades of that specific school as long as they remain a resident of Ware County.

A non-resident student who is not approved by the Student Services Department shall be withdrawn from the Ware County School District with notice to the parent/legal guardian and referred to the student’s county of residence. Georgia law authorizes the School District to seek reimbursement from the parent/guardian for the costs of educating a non-resident student and for attorney’s fees if legal action is necessary.

Custody

Parents shall provide to the school a certified copy of 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.

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 name and address of the school last attended and authorization to release all academic and disciplinary records to the school administration is not provided. Transcripts from non-accredited schools will be considered on an individual basis. Additional information and testing may be required in order to make a determination of how much credit may be accepted from the student's previous school. School credits or work completed under an individual tutor may not be accepted for credit.

Ware County Schools will enroll any student who is under suspension or expulsion in another school system but said student must serve the given disciplinary consequence from that suspension/expulsion before any consideration will be given to their enrollment in Ware County Schools.

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 must be paid for.
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 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

Hospital - Homebound

Home instruction is provided for a student who is expected to be absent for an extended period of time (at least 10 school days). To be eligible for hospital/homebound educational services, a medical referral form with a specific diagnosis must be submitted to the school nurse and signed by the licensed treating physician/psychiatrist, or treating the specific condition. This form must be obtained at the school. Included in this form shall be a statement by the physician, psychiatrist, or advanced practice provider that the student will be absent a minimum of 10 (ten) school days, verification that the illness confines the student to the hospital, nursing facility, or home, and a statement that the student is physically able to participate in educational instruction.

Students are not eligible for hospital/homebound instructional services if absence is due to communicable disease, pregnancy (unless school attendance would endanger the life of the mother or child), if the illness does not confine them to a facility/home, or if such services are not specified in the individualized education program (IEP) of a special student. All work should be turned in within 10 (ten) school days of the date of return from hospital / homebound. Services will not take effect until the HHB form has been signed by the treating physician and the Educational Service Plan has been completed by the school. Pregnant student guidelines allow for up to six weeks to make up schoolwork if they decide not to take the online option.

A student can be released from a HHB program for the following reasons: (a.) as of the projected return date on the Application for Hospital/Homebound Services medical referral or if the licensed physician indicates that the medical condition has changed or as defined in the ESP, (b.) when the student is employed in any capacity, goes on vacation, regularly participates in extracurricular activities, or is no longer confined to home., (c.) on the last day of school of the regular school year, (d.) when the student returns to school or is able to return to school for any portion of the school day other than to participate in state-mandated standardized testing, (e.) when the parent/guardian cancels three HHB instructional sessions without providing 24 hour notice, (f.) When the conditions of the location where HHB services are provided, are not conducive for instruction, or threaten the health and welfare of the HHB teacher.

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.

Promotion, Placement, and Retention

- 1) The promotion of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 shall be determined in accordance with state Board Rule 160-4-2-.11 PROMOTION, PLACEMENT AND RETENTION that requires those students to achieve grade level on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment. Promotion of a student shall be determined as follows:
 - a) No third-grade student shall be promoted to fourth grade if a student did not receive a grade level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment in reading and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.
 - b) No fifth grade student shall be promoted to sixth grade if a student did not receive a grade level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment in reading or does not attain an achievement level of "Developing Learner," "Proficient Learner," or "Distinguished Learner"

on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment on the second attempt and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.

- 2) If the parent, guardian, or teacher(s) of a student in grades 3, 5, or 8 who does not meet the promotion requirement described in section one appeals the decision to retain the student, the school principal or designee shall establish a Retention Review Committee comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), and principal or designee. Promotion or placement of such students shall be based on a review of factors specified within the district's rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, the student's performance on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment.
- 3) A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed for each student who does not achieve grade level performance in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment (s) whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year.
- 4) When a student does not perform at grade level in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessments, then the following shall occur:
 - a) Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment individual student scores, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student his/her below- grade-level performance on the assessment(s); the specific retest(s) to be given the student and testing dates; and the opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment.
 - b) The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity.
 - c) The student may be retested with the appropriate section(s) of the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and the local board of education.
- 5) When a student does not perform at grade level on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment(s) in grades 3, 5, or 8 and also does not perform at grade level on a second opportunity to take the assessment, then the following shall occur:
 - a) The school principal or designee shall retain the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided for in this rule.
 - b) The school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher(s) regarding the decision to retain the student. The notice shall:
 - (i) Describe the option of the parent or guardian or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student.
 - (ii) Describe the composition and functions of the placement committee and the option of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), or principal to invite individuals who can provide information or facilitate understanding of the issues to be discussed to attend the placement committee meeting.
 - (iii) Include the requirement that the decision to promote the student must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), and principal or designee.
- 6) If the parent or guardian or teacher(s) appeals the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee shall establish a Retention Review Committee to consider the appeal.

- (i) The committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) of the subject(s) of the Georgia Milestones End of Grade
 - (ii) Assessment or the alternative assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level.
 - (iii) The principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian and teacher(s) of the time and place for convening the Retention Review Committee.
 - (iv) The committee shall review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the performance on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment or the alternative assessment instrument and promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends, and make a determination to promote or retain.
 - (v) The decision to promote must be unanimous, and the committee must determine that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the school year.
 - (vi) The committee shall prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year.
 - (vii) The committee shall provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- 7) A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment in reading and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment in reading and/or mathematics on the second administration day(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and local board of education. Placement or promotion of these students shall follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
- 8) A student's failure to take the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment in grades 3, 5, or 8 in reading and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and local board of education shall result in the student being retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth in this rule.
- 9) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the Retention Review Committee.
- 10) A student who meets 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:
- a) Kindergarten: First grade promotion or placement decisions are made on an individual basis, using the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) results and minimum promotion requirements in concert with teacher recommendations and other relevant information.
 - b) Grades 1-5: An elementary student shall be promoted to the next grade if he/she passes reading and math and at least two (2) of the following three (3) subjects: language arts (English and spelling), social studies, science/health. 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.

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 GaMTSS

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.



What would you see in a GaMTSS district or school?

- A teaming approach that maximizes time, resources, and expertise
- A problem-solving process that uses data to make decisions and meet improvement goals
- A focus on prevention and learning supports to address student needs early
- Ongoing and effective partnerships with parents, families, and caretakers

By including these elements, GaMTSS creates a supportive school climate that can address a child's unique needs, helping each to achieve full potential in school. This handbook describes some of the GaMTSS resources available at your child's school.

Community Service Providers

Community Service Providers are skilled in communicating with school staff, students, parents, and community members. They serve as liaisons between the school and home. Communicating with students and parents is vital to their role, as they work to remove family barriers to regular school attendance. Community Service Providers call parents, mail attendance letters, and make home visits. They link families with community resources and monitor daily attendance, assisting school counselors and school social workers in scheduling parent conferences when needed.

Early Intervention Program

The Early Intervention Program serves students in Kindergarten through fifth (5th) grade who are performing below grade level. This program is designed to help identified students obtain the academic skills necessary to reach grade-level expectations in the shortest possible time. For more information, contact the principal or the Student Achievement Department.

Gifted Education Program

The gifted education program, (WINGS), is offered in all schools for students who qualify for the program according to regulations established by the Georgia Department of Education. Students may be referred for eligibility testing by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, or by the students themselves. Elementary WINGS students receive instruction from the gifted education resource teacher weekly. For more information, parents should contact the school's WINGS teacher, the principal, or the Student Achievement Department.

Community Service Providers

Community Service Providers are skilled in communicating with school staff, students, parents, and community members. They serve as liaisons between the school and home. Communicating with students and parents is vital to their role, as they work to remove family barriers to regular school attendance. Community Service Providers call parents, mail attendance letters, and make home visits. They link families with community resources and monitor daily attendance, assisting school counselors and school social workers in scheduling parent conferences when needed.

School Counselors

School counselors provide a range of services to give students the knowledge and skills they need to be effective learners and achieve their academic, career, and personal goals. School counselors work in collaboration with the entire school community and are committed to the education and emotional development of all students. Services provided by counselors address academic, personal/social, and career and post-secondary development.

Parental permission is not required for students to see the counselor or to participate in classroom guidance activities. Often times the focus of the counseling activity centers on problem solving, decision-making, and goal setting as the student and counselor work together towards college and career readiness.

School counselors do not take the place of private therapists and cannot provide long-term therapy for students. Parents, teachers, and students can initiate a referral to the school counselor. For additional information, contact the Student Services Department.

School Mental Health Specialists

Mental Health Specialists are Licensed Professional Counselors who are trained to recognize the early warning signs of various mental health disorders and to provide assessment, counseling, education, and therapy when necessary. Mental Health Specialists provide individual interventions when students are experiencing significant distress and meaningfully involve students, families, and community partners in the provision of mental health care. All prevention and intervention strategies are research-supported and consistent with best practices. Mental Health Specialists use data to plan, monitor, and document the impact of mental health supports and services.

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 Student Services Department.

School Psychologists

School Psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally and emotionally. They consult on academic and behavioral interventions with teachers, parents and Student Support Teams (SST). They can advise on every level of the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) from the most basic approaches up to the level of highly specialized program interventions.

School Psychologists can work with students by providing counseling. They promote wellness and resilience by reinforcing communication and social skills and enhancing understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds. School psychologists are highly trained in data gathering and analysis. They use these skills in data-based decision-making and in the evaluation of students and programs.

School Psychologists are increasingly being utilized on the prevention side of problems rather than waiting until academic failure or serious maladaptive behaviors occur.

School Social Worker Services

School social workers build effective relations among students, parents, school personnel, and community agencies. The social worker establishes communication between the school and the home when chronic problems such as excessive absenteeism or personal and behavioral problems interfere with a student's education. Referrals are made to a social worker when a problem cannot be resolved within the school. For additional information, 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 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic or nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs 34 CFR 104.34.
 - a. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
5. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35 Ware County School System March 2012 Section 504: Parent and Student Rights 504-3 WARE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
8. Section 504: Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 Ware County School System March 2012 Section 504: Parent and Student Rights 504-3

9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for the least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedures. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. The address of the regional office is Office for Civil Rights; Region IV; 61 Forsyth Street, Suite 1970; Atlanta, GA 30303.

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 Ware County School System's 504 coordinators at the following address:

Ware County Schools
1301 Bailey Street
Waycross, GA 31501

Special Education Services

Special Education services are provided to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Programs are provided for students in all disability areas recognized by the State of Georgia. Programs are provided based on the identified needs of each student. If your child has a learning or behavior problem, or if you suspect that your child has a disability, you should contact the principal or chairperson of the Student Support Team (SST) at your child's school, or contact the Special Education Department.

Under provisions of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, parents of students who receive Special Education services may choose to transfer their children to other public or private schools in Georgia. For additional information, please visit the Georgia Department of Education website at <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us>, or contact the schools Special Education Department.

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

Monthly menus are available on the Ware County Schools homepage at www.ware.k12.ga.us.

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.

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.

Expectations

Each student is expected to:

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

Per GADOE Discipline Discrepancy Requirement - Relevant disciplinary procedures apply to the child with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to a child without a disability unless the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) states otherwise or the disciplinary action is found to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

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

The Ware County Board of Education believes that all students learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students, staff, or volunteers will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4), is strictly prohibited. The Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system expressly prohibits bullying. If you or your student believes that a student is being bullied, please report it to a school staff member or administrator immediately.

Bullying is defined by the Ware County School System as an act that is found to be:

- (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: causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm; has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or,
- (4) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school?

The term "bullying" applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer networks, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term "bullying" also applies to acts of cyberbullying or any social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment if the electronic communication:

- (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel;
- (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and

- (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

Electronic communication includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system.

Professional development and training opportunities for school staff on how to respond appropriately to acts of bullying, victims of bullying, and bystanders, who report bullying, shall be in place. Procedures may be developed at each school encouraging a teacher or other school employee, student, parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in the person's name, at the person's option, to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity. Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal. Any report will be appropriately investigated by the administration based on the nature of the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented and what other steps should be taken. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will also be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with school procedures.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. Such consequences shall include, at the minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling, as appropriate under the circumstances.

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

Students and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the student/parent handbooks.

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.

Detention: Detention may be used to address tardiness, behavior detrimental to learning, and physical contact between students that is deemed inappropriate. For each day assigned to detention, students will be required to spend a period of time completing assigned class work. No other activity will be allowed during detention.

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.

A suspension or expulsion is for a specific term and includes suspension or expulsion from all regular school activities, extracurricular activities, athletic participation, and other school events.

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.

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. See cellphone procedures.
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.

1. **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).
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **Failure to Report:** Failure to report to a teacher or administrator to the knowledge of an event, device, object, or substance that could cause harm to self or others.
5. **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.
6. **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*.
7. **Gang Affiliation:** Exhibiting gang affiliation, as evidenced by a common identifying sign symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **Possessing Obscene Materials:** Possessing obscene or vulgar materials when such conduct does not involve another student.
12. **Possession of Prescription Drugs:** Possession of prescription medication prescribed to you by a doctor, but has not been reported to appropriate school officials in accordance with Medical Policy.
13. **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.
14. **Theft:** Theft including, but not limited to, attempted theft, extortion, bribery, theft by deception, and/or possession of stolen property.
15. **Unintentional Physical Contact with School Personnel:** Unintentional but inappropriate physical contact or action with school personnel.
16. **Vandalism:** Damaging or vandalizing school or personnel property, regardless of whether there is a monetary loss of value.
17. **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.
18. **Viewing Obscene Materials:** Accessing or viewing obscene or vulgar materials when such conduct does not involve another person.
19. **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.
20. **See Cellphone Procedures**

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.

1. **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.
2. **Counterfeit Money:** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, receiving, or exchanging any counterfeit money.

3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **Gang Related Activity:** Engaging in gang-related activity that encourages, solicits, promotes, condones, causes, assists or abets any illegal or disruptive act.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **See Cellphone Procedures**

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.

1. **Attempting to make inappropriate physical contact or action with school personnel.**
2. **Intentional physical contact or action of an insulting or provoking nature with school personnel.**
3. **See Cellphone Procedures**

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.

5. **See Cellphone Procedures**

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 attempting 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.

Elementary Alternative Placement Program

The purpose of the Elementary Alternative Placement Program is to accommodate the behavioral and academic needs of students who have committed excessive or severe infractions in their home school. It is the preferred policy of the board that disruptive students are placed in an alternative education setting in lieu of being suspended or expelled. The program is very structured and teacher-directed. Students are required to adhere to strict rules and guidelines. There is limited interaction with other students in school during the time that a student serves in the program.

The alternative program will maintain a quality educational program for child with the emphasis on the Georgia Standards of Excellence for his or her grade level. Social skills lessons will be taught, in order to help him/her meet goals that will improve the student's understanding of the relationship between actions and consequences before returning to the home school.

The overall goal is to help the student learn appropriate social skills and become more productive in the regular classroom.

Students are expected to attend the alternative school each day. The student must make up any absence regardless of whether excused or unexcused. Student absences will be reported to the home school.

Third-grade through fifth-grade students who have excessive or chronic behavior issues at their home school will be assigned for no more than one calendar year.

Ware County Board of Education has a no-tolerance policy regarding weapons on school campuses. Students in possession of a weapon at school or other dangerous objects as determined by the principal may be referred to the online alternative school program. The extent of the disciplinary action is dependent on the child's grade level, their actions, the intent to harm or if threats were made and prior discipline history.

Students Seeking Enrollment

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 to Take Disciplinary Action

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

- 1. On school grounds;
- 2. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event;
- 3. Off the school grounds at a non-school activity, function or event, but where the misconduct leads to disruption

- of school or any other violation of the Student Code of Conduct; and,
4. In route to and from school or any school-related activity, on the bus, and at the bus stops. Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school-related actions by students, *at any time of the year*, which have a direct or immediate impact on school discipline, the educational operation or function of the school, or the welfare of students or staff. Such act could include, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act which would be considered to be a felony if committed by an adult, an assault upon another student, a violation of the laws prohibiting controlled substances, or sexual misconduct. A student whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare or safety of other students or staff, or whose presence may cause substantial disruption at school, may also be subject to discipline.

Notification of Charge or Commission of a Felony

If a student is charged with a felony or for an act that would constitute a felony under the law, the student and the student's parents shall immediately notify the Director of Student Services and the Superintendent of said charges and shall provide to the Director of Student Services and Superintendent a copy of all documents received by the student concerning said charges.

- a. If a student is convicted of a felony, the student and student's parents shall immediately notify the Director of Student Services and Superintendent of the conviction.
- b. If a student is adjudicated by a Juvenile Court to have committed an act that would constitute a felony under the law, the student and student's parents shall immediately notify the Director of Student Services and Superintendent of said adjudication.
- c. If a student has been adjudicated delinquent by a Juvenile Court and incarcerated at a Department of Juvenile Justice Facility for any period of time, the student and student's parents shall immediately notify the Director of Student Services and Superintendent and provide to them copies of all documentation related thereto.
- d. If the student is incarcerated for any period of time at any criminal detention facility maintained by a local government or any state Department of Corrections, the student and the student's parents shall notify the Director of Student Services and Superintendent and provide them copies of all documents related there to.

Prior to any student falling within any of the criteria set forth above being allowed to reenter the Ware County School District, the Director of Student Services shall decide of proper placement of the child. If the child or the parents of the child are dissatisfied with the placement of the child made by the Director of Student Services, they shall have the right to appeal the Director of Student Services' decision by filing written notice with the Superintendent within five (5) days thereof, at which time the Superintendent, at his earliest convenience, will decide as to the proper placement of the child.

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.

Disciplinary Hearings

The Disciplinary Hearing Officer as appointed by the Ware County Board of Education is authorized to hear disciplinary matters. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary here within, the Disciplinary Hearing Officer has the authority to select an appropriate panel for tribunals. The decision of the tribunals can be a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion of any student found to have violated the Code of Conduct. If a hearing is called, the student will be suspended from school until the tribunal can be held. The tribunal will be scheduled within ten (10/15) school days after the beginning of the suspension unless the parent and school mutually agree to an extension or the conduct of the student or parent causes a delay beyond said ten (10) day period.

Prior to the tribunal, students and parents will receive a notice to include the following:

1. The rules which the student has allegedly violated.
2. A description of the student's acts.
3. The names of the witnesses who may testify against the student (witnesses may be added prior to and during the tribunal).
4. The maximum punishment that the student could receive.
5. The time and place for the tribunal.
6. That the student is entitled to require witnesses to be present at the tribunal and the student will have the right to present evidence, examine any and all witnesses presented and have an attorney, at the student's expense, to represent the student. School administrators should be notified prior to the tribunal if a subpoena is to be issued by the Superintendent.

Parents/guardians should contact the school if they would like the notice and other documents related to the tribunal in a language other than English. Language interpreter services are also available upon request for a student disciplinary tribunal hearing.

At the hearing, students and parents will have the right to present witnesses and evidence, to examine any and all witnesses presented, and to have an attorney, at the parent's expense, to represent the student. The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer may be appealed by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Superintendent within twenty (20) calendar days from the date the decision is made.

A student disciplinary hearing is formal, although the strict rules of evidence as applied in a court do not apply in a disciplinary tribunal hearing. The panel selected by the Disciplinary Hearing Officer will determine the innocence or

guilt of a student accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct. The local board of education shall ensure initially trained student discipline hearing officers and disciplinary tribunal or panel members undergo continuing education so as to continue to serve in such capacity. Although the school has the burden of establishing guilt, the student should be prepared to present evidence and witnesses to support their innocence.

The Disciplinary Hearing Officer shall make a verbatim or written record of any information orally presented at the tribunal. A transcript of the tribunal will not be prepared unless there is an appeal to the Board of Education. The record and documentary evidence shall be kept on file by the Superintendent or designee for a period of twenty (20) days after the date of the decision. If no appeal is filed within twenty (20) days of the date of the decision, the record and documentary evidence may be destroyed. If an appeal is filed, the record and documentary evidence will be kept until thirty- one (31) days after the appeal(s) become final at which time the record and documentary evidence may be destroyed.

All parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross- examine witnesses about any matters logically relevant to the charge against the student. The Disciplinary Hearing Officer may limit unproductively long or irrelevant questioning.

The parents or legal guardian of the student and any victims may give testimony at the hearing and make a statement to the Disciplinary Hearing Officer concerning their feelings about the proper disposition of the case and to answer any questions. The student may be represented by counsel, at the student's expense, at the hearing. If parents intend to be represented by counsel at the disciplinary hearing, the parents must notify the school twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the hearing so that the school district may elect to retain legal counsel to represent its interest.

All parties shall be entitled to subpoena witnesses for the tribunal. A student or parent/guardian shall submit all requests for subpoenas to the student's principal at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time of the disciplinary tribunal hearing. All student disciplinary proceedings and hearings conducted by either the Disciplinary Hearing Officer or the Board of Education are confidential and are not subject to the open meetings law. Only the following persons are permitted to attend a school disciplinary tribunal hearing conducted by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer: the accused student, parents or legal guardians of the accused student, legal counsel, a provider of interpretative services, school staff, and witnesses. Any written records, transcripts, exhibits or other documents assembled or used in any manner with regard to the conduct of any student disciplinary tribunal hearing are not public records and are not subject to public inspection.

When a tribunal hearing is appealed, the Ware County Board of Education will review the transcript of the hearing, make a decision based solely on the record, and notify students and parents in writing of the Board's decision. For the hearing before the Board, students have the right to be represented, at the students' and parents' expense, by an attorney. The attorney will not, however, be allowed to speak at the disciplinary hearing appeal. Students and parents may appeal the Board's decision to the State Board of Education by giving the Superintendent written notice within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Ware County Board of Education.

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 and Drugs

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. No bedroom shoes of any kind will be prohibited.
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 that, in the opinion of the principal or the principal's designee, would cause a disruption of the educational environment, would be a health hazard, or would interfere with the learning of other students.
5. Shorts, skirts, culottes, split skirts, or dresses must be fingertip or longer in length 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 facsimile, 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" are not appropriate. Flip-flops 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 the facsimile of) 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 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 finish 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 using them for school work, just as if they 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.

Office 365 Education

The Ware County School System provides an Office 365 Education account to all students. The account allows students to install the latest version of the Microsoft suite of products (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) on up to five personal-use devices.

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 01-120 http://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 quantity 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 the 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 Harassment

It is the policy of the Ware County Board of Education (the "Board") to maintain a learning environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student, employee, or third party of the District to harass another person through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below:

Any individual who believes that he or she has been exposed to unwelcome sexual misconduct or has knowledge of an act should immediately report the act to any of the appropriate employees designated in this policy below:

Ware County Schools will investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of alleged sexual harassment. District personnel shall cooperate with an investigation and respond truthfully, promptly, and fully. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by District employee (or third party) to a student or when made by any student to another student or employee (or third party). This misconduct constitutes sexual harassment when:

- a.*** Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's education;
- b.*** Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual; or,
- c.*** Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creates an, intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- 1.*** Verbal harassment or abuse;
- 2.*** Pressure for sexual activity;
- 3.*** Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
- 4.*** Unwelcome touching;
- 5.*** Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied, overt threats, or explicit threats concerning an individual's educational status;
- 6.*** Offensive or unwelcome sexual advances or propositions;
- 7.*** Graphic or degrading verbal comments about an individual or his/her physical attributes;
- 8.*** Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cards, or letters;
- 9.*** Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures;
- 10.*** Employees dating students and/or otherwise being romantically involved with a student; or,
- 11.*** Sexual violence, a physical act of aggression that includes a sexual act or purpose.

Sexual harassment involving students can occur in many settings and may involve variety of individuals. The circumstances may involve those items listed above and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1.*** Student-on-student harassment;
- 2.*** Harassment of a student by an employee, representative, volunteer, or third party for Ware County Schools; or,
- 3.*** Harassment of an employee or third party for Ware County Schools by a student.

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other conduct of a sexual nature by employees or volunteers toward students is ***unwelcome*** by definition, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any student who believes he or she is a victim of sexual harassment by a student, teacher, administrator, other school system employee, or third party is encouraged to report the harassment directly to your school's principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, or school Title IX coordinator. All allegations of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be taken as appropriate. Please refer to Ware County Board of Education Policy JCAC, Harassment for further information regarding how sexual harassment complaints are processed.

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 Student Services.

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 that 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, taunting, 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 device, 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.

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. Also, a luggage-type bag that is too bulky for students to safely hold in their lap is 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 on Buses-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 only ride their assigned bus. 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 will 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.
- Bus windows will be lowered during the route to provide ventilation, weather permitting.
- Busses will be sanitized after each morning and afternoon route.
- There will no longer be the transfer of students on any routes. Students must stay on the same bus from the beginning to the end of the route.
- Riding a bus is a privilege, please be considerate of these recommendations.

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 our 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.

ELEMENTARY CELL PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

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.

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.
5th Offense:	Phone/device will be turned into the office, Parent/guardian may pick up the phone/device at the end of the school day. Student will be assigned to reflection room. Office staff will contact parent/guardian.

*Phones/devices may be picked up prior to 3:30 p.m. on scheduled school days.

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.

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 suspensions 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 to 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 child 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 youth 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- children and youths 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 would 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.

Illness

If a child becomes too ill to remain in class, his/her parent will be contacted so the child may be cared for at home. Children should not return to school until vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fever have been resolved for 24 hours. Regarding fever, a child 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.

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.

Here are a list of Contagious Illnesses and guidelines from CHOA & 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

A consent form must be completed before the student can receive these services.

This form must be completed only once for the school year. To receive information about these services, you can check with your school nurse or 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 that 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-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of the student self-administering 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-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of the student self-administering 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.

Illnesses or Accidents

Students who are ill or injured will be checked out of school under regular check-out procedures. The school will take steps to care properly for the student in either case. If a student is ill, he/she must report to the clinic. 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. The school officials should be made aware of any unusual health problems that your child may have which might affect his/her learning. 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.

Insurance

Parents are responsible for providing accident or medical insurance coverage for their child. Ware County Schools does not maintain insurance coverage of 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 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:

<p>Ms. Mandy Harper Director of Student Services and Special Education, Section 504, Americans with Disabilities (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)Coordinator Ware County Schools 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 mandy.harper@ware.k12.ga.us</p>	<p>Mr. Dean Moody Title I, Title IV, and Title II Ware County Schools 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 dean.moody@ware.k12.ga.us</p>
---	--

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 educational coordinator at your child’s school, or the PK-12 Curriculum Specialist.

Dr. Shelli Tyre
Director of Student Achievement
(PK-12)
Ware County Schools
1301 Bailey Street
Waycross, GA 31501
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 f or 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 request 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
- d. 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 is 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 changes in the way they usually go home unless they have a note signed by their parent. Parents should give specific dates and instructions to explain any 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 an 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 a minimal 24 hours’ notice. School administration may vary in minimal timeframe requests.

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 productive and focused learning environment for all students.

Certain Federal Laws and Guidelines

Ware County School District is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Hatch Amendment, the Vocational Education Guidelines, and the Gender Equity in Sports Act.

Please review the following selection of federal laws and regulations 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 them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The following is a limited, non-exhaustive list of some of the disclosures permitted by FERPA without consent.

1. FERPA permits disclosure without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task, (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or, parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
2. FERPA also permits disclosure of personally identifiable information without consent to appropriate officials in health or safety emergencies so long as the disclosure of the information is necessary for the receiving party to respond to the emergency nature of the situation and made to protect the health or safety of the student or others.
3. FERPA permits disclosure in response to a lawfully issued judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
4. FERPA permits disclosure of education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
5. FERPA permits the disclosure of educational records without consent to an agency caseworker or other representative of a state or local child welfare agency who has the right to access a student's case plan. D. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

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

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

- (a) Student's name, address and telephone number;
- (b) Student's date and place of birth
- (c) Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
- (d) Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
- (e) Dates of attendance at the Ware County School System; and
- (f) Awards received during the time enrolled in the Ware County School System;
- (g) Video, audio or film images or recordings;
- (h) Photograph;
- (i) Grade level;
- (j) Major field of study; and
- (k) 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.

C. Research and Student Surveys

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding the school's conduct of surveys, collections and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law. These include the right to:

- A. Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected

areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education:

- a Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
 - b Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 - c Sex behavior or attitudes;
 - d Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 - e Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 - f Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student, the student's parents; or, g. Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility.
- B. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
- a Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 - b Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and,
 - c Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- b Inspect, upon request, and before administration or use:
 - 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 - 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above-mentioned marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and,
 - 3. Instructional material used as a part of the educational curriculum.

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

- 1. Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- 2. Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education.
- 3. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above. Students or parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

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

Students and parents are hereby notified that the Directors for the Ware County School District are:

Dr. Lynn Barber, Superintendent of Ware County Schools
Dr. Shelli Tyre, Director of Student Achievement (PK-12)
Mrs. Paige Coker, Director of Special Projects and Public Relations
Ms. Mandy Harper, Director of Student Services and Special Education
Mr. Dean Moody, Director of Federal Programs
Mr. Dennis Wainwright, Technology Coordinator
Mrs. Mary Ann Chaney, Director of Finance
Mrs. Laura Deen, Director of Food Services
Mrs. Janice Cribbs, Director of Human Resources

Sexual Harassment Complaint Resolution Process (JCAC Policy)

Any person who believes they are a victim of sexual harassment or have knowledge of someone else being a victim of sexual harassment by a staff member, third party, or student at the District are encouraged to complain directly to the site administrator, school principal, school assistant principal(s), school counselor(s), or Title IX Coordinator at their school or worksite. Any District employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment should likewise report the alleged harassment to the site administrator, school principal, school assistant principal(s), school counselor(s), or Title IX Coordinator for further processing and investigation. If the complaint involves a site administrator or school-level administrator, the complaint should be filed with the administrator's direct supervisor. The direct supervisor will conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation.

For assistance with filing a complaint, including information regarding with whom a complaint should be filed, a person may contact the Title IX Coordinator at the District. The Director of Student Services has been designated by the Board as the Title IX Coordinator to handle such inquiries and may be reached at the following address:

Ware County Schools, 1301 Bailey Street, Waycross, GA 31501

If interim measures are warranted during the investigation, the school/district will determine an appropriate interim measure to ensure the safety of the alleged victim and/or complainant. The determination of interim measures will be made on a case-by-case basis, will be based on available facts, and will not disproportionately impact the alleged victim and/or complainant.

Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment, grades or job assignments. Retaliation against persons who make complaints of sexual harassment is strictly prohibited.

The levels of investigation and resolution for a Sexual Harassment Complaint under this policy are as follows:

Level 1 – Administrative Review (School Principal / Supervisor)

Level 2 – Sexual Harassment Formal Complaint (Director of Student Services)

Level 3 – Superintendent (or Designee) Review

The procedures for handling a Sexual Harassment Complaint are as follows:

Level 1 – Administrative Review

The site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor if the complaint is against a site administrator/school principal) shall conduct an internal investigation within thirty (30) school days regarding the alleged sexual harassment. For the purposes of this policy, a "school day" is defined as any day that students are in school taking classes. The alleged victim (and/or complainant) and the accused, as well as their representatives, should submit the following when filing a complaint:

1. The names of the District employee(s), third party, and/or student(s) allegedly involved in the wrongful act;
2. A written statement of the specific allegation(s);
3. The dates of the alleged wrongful action(s);
4. The name(s) and contact information (if known) of any witness(es) to alleged wrongful act(s);
5. Any evidence to be considered;
6. A clear statement of the relief sought by the complainant and/or alleged victim.

As part of their investigation, the site administrator/school principal will, to the extent possible, interview the alleged victim/complainant and the accused. These interviews will be conducted separately in observance of the sensitivity of the subject matter. The site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor if the complaint is against a site administrator/school principal) will share the outcome of the investigation with the alleged victim/complainant and/or their parent/guardian if the complainant is a student. If the site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor if the complaint is against a site administrator/school principal) finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that sexual harassment has occurred, the site administrator/school principal (or their supervisor) will take steps in an effort to prevent

the recurrence of any harassment and to correct its discriminatory effects on the victim or others, if appropriate. The complainant/victim or the accused may request, in writing, an appeal of the Level 1 decision of the Level 1. If the complaint is resolved at the Administrative Review level, the complaint will be considered closed.

Level 2 – Sexual Harassment Formal Complaint

The complainant must submit a written appeal of the Level 1 review which shall include, but is not be limited to, the following:

1. The reason for the appeal; and,
2. A clear statement of the relief sought by the complainant.

The written complaint and any additional supporting documentation must be submitted to the Personnel Department, 1301 Bailey Street, Waycross, GA 31501, within thirty (30) days of receiving the written decision of the **Level 1** review.

The Personnel Department will designate a person to investigate and provide a written decision to the complainant within thirty (30) work days of the date of receipt of the complaint. For the purposes of this policy, a “work day” shall be defined as any day the administrative offices of the District are open for business.

If the complainant wishes to appeal the Level 2 decision, the complainant must submit their appeal in writing to the Office of the Superintendent, and it shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a. The reason for the appeal; and,
- b. A clear statement of the relief sought by the complainant.

The appeal must be filed with the Office of the Superintendent within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date on the written decision letter.

Level 3 – Superintendent (or designee) Review

The Superintendent (or designee) shall review the Sexual Harassment Complaint, investigation findings and provide a written decision to the grievant within thirty (30) work days of the date of receipt of the appeal. If needed, the Superintendent (or designee) may request additional information from the complainant and/or other persons involved with the complaint.

The Superintendent’s decision will be final.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board’s legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated. Appropriate documentation shall be maintained on all allegations of sexual harassment. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge.

A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.

Title IX Parent/Student Grievance Procedure

The Ware County Board of Education desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the Board prohibits unlawful discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If a student or a student’s parents/guardians has a complaint/grievance alleging any action prohibited by Title IX i.e., discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment carried out by employees, other students, or third parties, he/she should discuss the matter with the principal of the school which the student attends in an attempt to resolve the grievance. If the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, he/she should discuss the matter with the Title IX Coordinator. See below for contact information.

The principal may try to resolve the grievance informally if the complainant expresses a willingness to participate in this informal process. At his/her discretion, the principal may confer with persons having knowledge of the incident that

precipitated the grievance. The school and the School System will take all necessary steps to prevent any recurrence of sexual harassment and will do what is necessary to correct its discriminatory effects on those affected by it. If the complainant does not want to participate in the informal process or the informal process does not result in a satisfactory solution, the student or parent/guardian bringing the complaint may seek relief using the formal procedures outlined below. The student alleged to have carried out the harassment may also seek relief by following the procedures outlined below. These procedures apply to complaints of discrimination/harassment prohibited by Title IX. The steps below are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level for any form of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, on the basis of sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual violence is defined as infliction of physical force by a student, employee or third party, with the intent to cause injury or harm to the student.

Step I

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal or the Title IX Coordinator within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. If the harassment is so severe that the complainant is unable to make a complaint within the ten (10) calendar day time frame, the number of days within which to make the complaint may be waived to provide the student/parent making the complaint sufficient time to notify the principal or Title IX Coordinator of the complaint. Any witness or evidence should be provided at the time of the complaint. All parties involved shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The principal or designee will conduct an investigation. The parties involved will be informed of the outcome and the principal will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint. If the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, then the process outlined above will be carried out by the building level coordinator or the district coordinator or designee.

Parties have the right to end the informal process and begin a formal process at any time.

Retaliation against an individual who reports alleged harassment or who assists in the investigation of harassment is prohibited. The District will take appropriate action against individuals who are in violation of this part of the policy.

Step II

If the step/investigation was conducted by the Title IX Coordinator, skip Step II and proceed to Step III. A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint should be mailed to:

<p>Ms. Mandy Harper Director of Student Services and Special Education Ware County Board of Education 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 Phone: (912) 283-8656 Mandy.harper@ware.k12.ga.us</p>	<p>Mrs. Janice Cribbs Title IX Coordinator for Employee Matters, Director of Human Resources Ware County Board of Education 1301 Bailey Street Waycross, GA 31501 Phone: (912) 283-8656 Jcribbs@ware.k12.ga.us</p>
--	---

This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the parties, complainant and alleged harasser, receives the decision from the school principal. The appeal shall include all reports and comments from Step I and a letter of appeal. The System Title IX Coordinator will initiate an investigation of the grievance and schedule a meeting with the complainant or alleged harasser to attempt resolution of the concerns. The Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting. The case is closed if the complainant is satisfied with the decision or does not wish to take further steps.

Step III

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator may appeal to the Ware County Board of Education by filing a written request for a hearing to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Office of the Superintendent
Ware County Board of Education
1301 Bailey Street,
Waycross, GA 31501
Phone: (912) 283-8656
Fax: (912) 283-8698
lbarber@ware.k12.ga.us

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Ware County School System's Title IX Coordinator. The request for a hearing shall state specifically the nature of the grievance, the relief sought, and the reasons why the Board should grant a hearing. If a hearing is granted, the Board of Education will hear the grievance at the next scheduled BOE meeting and render a final decision within ten (10) days of the hearing. If a hearing is not granted, the parties will be notified that the decision of the Title IX Coordinator is affirmed.

New Visitor Safety Procedures

Clear Bag Procedure for School Events

During the school day, this clear bag rule does NOT apply to students. You can still use your 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 type of bags is allowed. This means you can only bring certain types of bags:
- 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 or not.
- No Bag Check: If your bag doesn't meet these rules, we will not have a place to store it for you. Please leave it at home or in your car.

Security Note: All bags are subject to search by school staff.

Thank you for helping keep our events safe!