

STUDENT INFORMATION AND CODE OF CONDUCT



2023-2024

Butts County School System

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT 2023-2024



PURPOSE:

Butts County School System (“BCSS” or “District”) is committed to creating a safe, positive environment for all of our students, staff, parents, stakeholders, and community partners. The District will work to assure that all students and staff are fully aware of their potential and dedicated to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. BCSS believes that all children can thrive in a safe learning environment. As such, our schools utilize a range of activities to recognize, celebrate, and reward positive behavior.

BCSS has adopted this Code of Conduct (“Code”) to support the creation of a safe learning environment for all members of the school community. The purpose of this Code is to state clearly our standards for acceptable conduct for students. All student behavior shall be based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will contribute to the best interest of the school system. Expected behavior is such that promotes a safe, healthy environment for all members of the learning community.

The Code also sets forth the discipline procedures for the students who have committed violations of the Code. This Code is subject to amendment at any time. The most current version of this Code is available through the school and District websites- www.bcsc.k12.org

Everyone is entitled to a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The rules and regulations in this Code are designed toward that end and are in effect during the following times, places and with the following conditions:

- a. At school or on school property at any time of the day or week;
- b. Off school grounds at a bus stop, on a school bus, at a school activity, function, or event;
- c. On vehicles provided for student transportation by the District, and/or when either the alleged offender or the alleged victim is en route to and/or from school, or to or from a school activity, function or event;
- d. Off school grounds when the behavior of a student: (1) is subversive to the mission and order of the school or District; or (2) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; or (3) makes the student’s continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.5(c));
- e. Off school grounds while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities such as field trips, conferences or athletic events, or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities;
- f. Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a school student or employee and is related to the victim’s school affiliation, or when the off-campus conduct directly affects the safety and welfare of the school community or the orderly mission and function of the school;
- g. Off school grounds and when a student leaves without permission of a school official, or anytime Rule 12 would apply; and
- h. Students are responsible for items on their person and in their possession. Possession includes, but is not limited to, items found in: book bags, purses, lockers, vehicles, gym bags, wallets, instrument cases, etc.

STUDENTS SHALL:

Participate fully in the learning process. Students need to report to school and class on time, attend all regularly scheduled classes, remain in class until excused or dismissed, pay attention to instruction, complete assignments to the best of their ability, and ask for help when needed.

Avoid behavior that impairs his/her own or other students' educational achievement. Students shall know and avoid the behaviors prohibited by the Code of Conduct, take care of books and other instructional materials, and cooperate with others.

Show respect for the knowledge and authority of teachers, administrators, and other school employees. Students must obey reasonable directions, use acceptable and courteous language, and follow school rules and procedures.

Recognize and respect the rights of other students and adults. All students shall show concern for and encouragement of the educational achievements and activity participation of others.

Each school will be responsible for developing and distributing to students and parents a Student/Parent Handbook- this Student Code of Conduct being a supplement to the Student/Parent Handbook. Within each school, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, or any other adult in a role of supervising students have the responsibility to maintain order and enforce this Code. The Principal of the school has the ultimate responsibility and authority to oversee the application, interpretation, and enforcement of the Code according to policy and regulations. In doing so, principals and administrators shall use their professional discretion while considering multiple student factors that contribute to the application of the progressive discipline model.

Consequences which are age and developmentally appropriate for behavior infractions may be developed by each school (as a supplement to this Code) and placed in the school's student/parent handbook.

Major offenses in Butts County Schools including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.16.

The following code of conduct sets forth school rules prohibiting certain types of student conduct which constitute offenses in severity from minor, major, to severe. A student found to be in violation of any one of them may be subject to a range of consequences that may include suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary consequences provided for by state board rule or law. Disciplinary action for violations will include appropriate hearings and reviews in keeping with due process. In all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected. The District will make every reasonable effort to administer the discipline code of conduct consistently in all schools.

Parents and students shall carefully read and discuss 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.

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL: The principal is the leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. Principals, and or their designees, are granted authority to enforce this Code of Conduct; and in cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal is authorized to undertake corrective measures which he

or she believes to be in the best interest of the students and the school, provided such action does not violate law, or a school board policy or procedure.

TEACHER AUTHORITY: Each teacher is authorized by law to remove from his or her class a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of other students to learn, provided the student's behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct and the teacher has previously filed a report with the principal; or if the teacher determines that such behavior poses an immediate threat to the safety of that student or to some other person. The superintendent and principal fully support the authority of every teacher to remove a student from the classroom under the conditions and procedures outlined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-738)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents/guardians, teachers and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communication through personal contact is extremely valuable. Therefore, each school's administrative staff will provide information to parents and guardians about on-going opportunities to communicate with school personnel. Questions about the Code should be addressed with the principal or an assistant principal.

The Code of Conduct specifies within its standards of behavior various violations that may result in a school staff member's request for a parent or guardian to come to the school for a conference. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the schools regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes that are designed to promote positive choices and behavior.

Georgia law mandates that any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by mail to the student's parent/guardian of the disciplinary problem; invite the parent/guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation; and request at least one parent/guardian to attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

Georgia law also states that before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return to school following a suspension or expulsion, the school shall request by telephone call and by mail at least one parent/guardian to schedule and attend a conference for the purpose of devising a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

The law authorizes the board of education to petition the juvenile court to require a parent/ guardian to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent/guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by the principal pursuant to the laws cited above, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference; order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior; or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine not to exceed \$500.00 on a parent/guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

Please note, a parent does not have to be informed of a school investigation when interviewing a student. The State Board of Education has rejected the student's claim that parental notice was required before he/she gave any statement to administrators. *M.S. V. Clarke Co. Bd of Educ.* ("Although parents feel they should be notified so they can be involved in the investigation, or take disciplinary action themselves, or to provide counsel to their children, due process does not require such notice.")

DISCIPLINE CODE RULES:

Rule 1: Disruption and Interference with School – No student shall cause the disruption of any school mission, process, or function, or engage in any such conduct in any manner, whether that be by the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, bullying, any sexual harassment as define by Board Policy JCAC or sexual misconduct, or any other conduct that interferes with the safety or operations of the school system.

Additionally, no student shall:

- a. Bring personal items to school (or items inappropriate for the school setting) that have the potential to disrupt classroom instructional activities or normal school operations. Additionally, the school system assumes no responsibility or liability for lost, stolen or damaged personal items brought to school or on school transportation.
- b. Occupy, block, prevent or attempt to prevent the operation of any school class, activity or lawful meeting or assembly on the school campus or at school activities.
- c. Make noise or act in any manner so as to interfere with the teacher's ability to conduct class.
- d. Refuse to properly identify himself/herself upon request of any school or system teacher, administrator, school bus driver, or other school system personnel.
- e. Use profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or objectively offensive sexual language. Such use includes profane, vulgar, obscene words or gestures, indecent exposure, possession and/or distribution of profane, vulgar, or obscene material, or similar materials, items, or gestures. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate electronic communication.
- f. Loiter and/or enter onto any District property without authorization. A student is not allowed to enter the premises of a school or School District property other than his/her school, unless prior permission is received from an administrator of the school to be visited. A student may not enter any District buildings on weekends or after school without authorization.
- g. Be in an area that is not authorized by a staff member. Any unauthorized absence and/or leave from class, school, an activity, or event (AWOL). Unauthorized areas may include any location deemed to be inappropriate or unjustified for student business. This includes being present on school premises or property without a written pass by a teacher and/or administrator.
- h. Inappropriately make bodily contact with other students including, but not limited to, sexual contact or sexual misconduct. Students shall not engage in sexual misconduct between or among students on school property or away from school which may adversely affect the education process or endangers the morals, health, safety, or wellbeing of other students, teachers, or employees within the school system. Students engaging in sexual acts with any student under the age of 16 may be subject to criminal charges, which, depending on the age of the individuals, may include statutory rape or child molestation. Students who are 13 or older may be charged with a felony and tried as an adult for committing offenses of rape, aggravated sodomy, aggravated child molestation, and aggravated sexual battery. In addition, students who commit such offenses may be subject to criminal penalties if convicted, which may include probation and/or imprisonment.
- i. Display or wear gang articles, paraphernalia, or clothing. Students shall not display or wear clothing or articles relating to ethnic race or color in a derogatory or inflammatory manner, or logos relating to any sadistic cult, secret society, or gang, or that bears content that is obscene, libelous, or slanderous. Students shall not recruit or solicit membership in any gang, gang-related organization, or any secret society that poses a threat to the school mission or that is subversive to good order and discipline. Students shall not display, possess, transmit, distribute, or create writing, symbols, or gestures that reference gangs or gang-related activity. Students shall not claim membership or affiliation with a gang or with a secret society that would be subversive to good order and discipline.

- j. Trade, buy, or sell goods and services on campus that have not been approved by the school administration. Students shall not participate in any type of gambling activity.
- k. Inciting, urging, encouraging, or counseling other students to violate the student code of conduct, including when such conduct would endanger the operations of the school system or the health and safety of its stakeholders.
- l. Photographs, audio recordings, video recordings or filming are prohibited by students without expressed consent of school district staff for specified educational related purposes. Students shall not capture, receive, share, or post via the Internet any photographs or audio recordings or video recordings of any type which depict other students, school district staff, or materials that may be educational records related.

Rule 2: Disregard of Directions or Commands – A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable directions or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, administrators, school bus drivers, or other authorized school personnel.

Rule 3: Bullying – A student shall not make any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person when accompanied by an apparent ability to do so, or demonstrate any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm. This rule will always align with the definition of bullying set forth in Georgia state law. Per Georgia law, if any student in grades 6 through 12 is found guilty of committing the offense of bullying three times in a given school year, such student shall be assigned to the alternative school. This does not limit alternative school for one-time egregious bullying offenses. The term 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 network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not 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.

Rule 4: Tobacco/Paraphernalia Possession – A student shall not possess, distribute, or use any form of tobacco and/or tobacco paraphernalia, electronic cigarettes, vaping paraphernalia or substances, lighters, or matches at any time. Students are responsible for items on their person and in their possession. Possession includes, but is not limited to, items found in book bags, purses, lockers, vehicles, gym bags, wallets, instrument cases, etc.

Rule 5: Illicit Drugs and Alcohol – A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of or in any way be detected to be in the presence of any illicit drug, alcohol, or substance "represented" to be an alcohol, illicit drug, or chemical, or any chemical(s) intended to alter one's mood or behavior. This rule includes the possession and/or use of vaping devices that are represented by students or to students to contain illegal substances in them. Misuse of a prescription or nonprescription/over-the-counter drug shall be considered a violation of this rule. Students are responsible for items on their person and in their possession. Possession includes, but is not limited to,

items found in book bags, purses, lockers, vehicles, gym bags, wallets, instrument cases, etc. Further, students are responsible for any substance that they touch, hold, utilize or consume. Students are advised not to touch, hold, utilize or consume any substance offered to them by another student.

Rule 6: Destruction or Theft of School Property – A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to or disrupt school property or school resources or attempt to steal school property or school resources. A student shall not engage in, attempt to, or feign to participate in arson while on any BCSS property. A student shall not possess, sell, use or transmit stolen school property or resources.

Rule 7: Damage, Destruction or Theft of Private Property – A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property or steal or attempt to steal private property. A student shall not possess, sell, use or transmit stolen property on school grounds.

Rule 8: Assault, Battery, Threat or Harassment of a School District Employee – A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to a school employee. A student shall not harass or insult a school employee. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal, written, and electronic means of insult, disrespectful conduct, threat, use of profanity, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious slurs, verbal and written harassment, and Internet harassment/threats.

Rule 9: Physical Abuse, Threat, Harassment, Assault, or Battery By a Student To Another Student or To Any Person Not Employed By the School District (Includes Fighting) – A student shall not cause or attempt to cause bodily injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause bodily injury to any person. A student shall not make threatening, harassing or intimidating remarks, written or electronic statements, gestures or posturing toward any student which threatens the safety or well being of that person or has the likelihood of provoking a fight. This includes, but is not limited to, fighting, pushing, hitting, use of profanity, sexual harassment as define by Board Policy JCAC or sexual misconduct, Internet harassment/bullying/threats that disrupt the school environment, or ethnic, racial, or religious slurs.

Rule 10: Misbehavior on Bus – A student shall obey all reasonable rules and directives of the bus driver at all times. Bus drivers and bus monitors have the discretion to determine what behaviors interfere with the safe operations of the school bus.

No student shall:

- a. ride an unauthorized bus or disembark at an unauthorized stop
- b. behave in a manner that interferes with the driver's ability to safely transport students
- c. use electronic devices during the operation of a school bus in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus including but not limited to cell phones; pagers; audible radios; music players without headphones; or any other electronic device
- d. use mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus
- e. bring any item on the bus that obstructs the bus driver's view
- f. cause damage/destruction to a school bus or school bus property
- g. Bring or consume food, drinks, or gum without permission of school or bus staff.

Students shall:

- h. remain seated safely on the bus at all times
- i. keep hands, arms, and/or objects to themselves and inside the bus
- j. talk in a normal tone of voice that is conducive to safe bus transport
- k. follow all other conduct rules enumerated in policy JCDA and school-level student handbook rules

(Parents with concerns related to alleged school bus misconduct, or with student safety concerns on the school bus, shall contact the school principal, not the bus transportation office. The investigation of alleged school bus misconduct is the responsibility of the school, not the responsibility of the bus transportation office. Bus suspension and other consequences are decided by the principal or designee of the school. Discipline will be administered according to procedures in this handbook and principal discretion. School principals will coordinate with the bus transportation office when needed as part of an investigation.)

Rule 11: Weapons and Hazardous Objects – A student shall not supply, possess, handle, use, threaten to use, or transmit any weapon or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury as a weapon. Any student who has knowledge of a weapon on a school district campus shall immediately report such to a school district staff member. Any student with knowledge of a weapon on a school district campus who does not immediately report such to a school district staff member, may be found complicit. The terms "weapons," "tools," "instruments," or "hazardous objects" shall include by way of illustration, but is not limited to, the following enumerated items: any loaded or unloaded firearm (e.g., pistol, blank pistol, signal pistol, starter pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, stun-gun or Taser (or similar) device, pellet or BB gun, look-alike firearms, etc.); any knife (e.g., Bowie, Dirk, lock-blade hunting, pen, pocket, switchblade, utility knives of any size); any razor (e.g., straight, regular, retractable, etc.); any defensive device (e.g., gas repellent, mace, stun-gun, chemical sprays such as bear or pepper spray, etc.); or any "martial arts" device (e.g., Chinese star, nunchaku, dart, etc.); or any tool or instrument which school staff could reasonably conclude as being a violation of the intent of this offense section, which, by way of illustration, shall include, but is not limited to, blackjack, chain, club, metal/brass or any artificial knuckles, nightstick, rings, pipe, studded or pointed bracelets, ax handles, etc. A student shall not supply, possess, handle, use, threaten to use, or transmit any explosive device or item that ejects or releases a spray, foam, gas, spark, fire, smoke, odor, etc. By way of illustration, such devices or items shall include, but are not limited to bullets, ammunition or any type, fireworks of any type and size, smoke bomb, paint bomb, stink bomb, any type of homemade bomb, or item which by virtue of its shape or design gives the appearance of any of the aforementioned (e.g., fake bombs, fireworks, fuses, etc.).

Rule 12: Unexcused Absences/Tardies/Truancy – Truancy is defined as unexcused absences that violate system and school policy, as well as state law. A student shall not be absent from or tardy to school or any class or other required school function during required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, except with the written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official, nor shall a student encourage, urge, or counsel other students to violate this rule. A student may not leave school grounds prior to the end of the day, after his/her initial arrival on campus, without the permission of a duly authorized school official.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

The goal of the Butts County School System is to have all children in school each and every day and on time unless there is a valid reason for the student to miss school. The following are possible consequences for truancy per the Butts County Schools student attendance guidelines:

1. Excused Absences with a Doctor's Note:

- Personal illness
- A physician's excuse/note explaining the reasons for absences must be presented to the school on the date of return to school. Failure to submit a note will result in the absence being marked as unexcused.
- The school system reserves the right to verify the accuracy of the physician's excuse.
- If a child is sent home with head lice, the student is excused for 1 day only. The parent is expected to rid the student of head lice, get clearance letter from the Health Department and return the child to school.

2. Excused Absences with a Parent's Note:

- Some examples of excused absences with a parent's note:
(see Butts County Board of Education policy JB for full list)
 - Personal illness
 - Serious illness or death in student's immediate family
 - Court order by governmental agency
 - Celebrating religious holidays
 - Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student's health/safety
- A letter written by a parent/guardian, detailing the reasons for the absence, will be accepted by the school on the date of return as an excused absence. **If the child is out for 3 consecutive days, the parent/guardian must present a doctor's excuse for those 3 days to be excused.**
- **A maximum of 5 parent notes will be accepted for excused days**, provided the reason given for the absence qualifies as an excused absence.

3. Unexcused Absences:

- Some examples of unexcused absences:
 - Missing the bus, oversleeping, vacations/trips, car trouble, babysitting, running errands, skipping school
- Daily automated phone/computer system will be used to notify parents when students are absent.

After 3 Unexcused Days

- Personal contact will be made and documented by a school official.

After 5 Unexcused Days

- Attendance conference will take place with student, parent, and school official.
- All attendance conferences will be documented in our Student Information System.
- Letter detailing conference will be mailed home.

After 7 Unexcused Days

- Letter mailed to parents.
- Notification will be made to the System School Social Worker.
- Legal action may involve charges being filed on the parent/guardian/student for violating the compulsory attendance law 20-2-690.1, for violating code section 15-11-2 (12) which includes truancy (habitually absent from school without cause) and/or deprivation (education). Parents may be subpoenaed to appear before the Butts County Truancy Intervention Panel to address attendance concerns.

After 10 Unexcused Days

- Letter mailed to parents.
- Legal action may be initiated.

Tardies/Early Checkouts

- Documentation will be required to excuse an early dismissal or tardy arrival.
- If a student is tardy or checked out an excessive number of times, a referral may be made to the System School Social Worker.

Rule 13: Dress and Grooming – A student shall not dress, groom, or wear or use garments, jewelry, emblems, hairstyles, insignias, badges, or other symbols where the effect thereof is to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise to cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school. The administration of each school will annually publish rules and standards for student dress and grooming in the student handbook that are consistent with this policy, and the school administration has reasonable discretion to determine appropriate and inappropriate dress and to administer consequences.

Rule 14: Academic Misconduct – A student shall not cheat in any form, whether using the ideas, knowledge, words, or visual images of another individual.

Rule 15: Internet/Computer/Electronics Misuse – Use at school of a computer, electronic device, and/or the Internet or school computer network for anything other than instructional purposes; includes, but not limited to, the unauthorized use of a computer, electronic device (includes cellular phones, computer watches, iPods, tablets, etc.), and/or the Internet or school computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data, and any violation of the school computer use policy. The school system assumes no responsibility or liability for loss or damage to personal devices that are brought to school.

Rule 16: False or Misleading Reports about School District Staff – Students may not falsify, misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who believes a student has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

Rule 17: Repeated Violations/ Willful Misbehavior – Students may not willfully and repeatedly violate school system rules and state/federal laws. Students who chronically disrupt the school environment or repeatedly violate school rules may be charged with repeated violations of school rules or behavior. This rule applies after remediation attempts such as: Behavior Support Processes or Student Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) processes have been utilized. Such processes may include but are not limited to response to intervention (RTI), functional behavior assessments (FBA), behavior intervention plans (BIP), guidance counseling interventions, behavior contracts, no-contact contracts, etc.

Rule 18: Conduct Which is Subversive to Good Order – A student shall not perform any other act, on or off campus, which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools. This includes, but is not limited to violations of the code of conduct, local school rules, state and federal laws, involvement in criminal gang-related behavior and/or criminal gang conduct as defined and prohibited by O.C.G.A 16-15-3 and 16-15-4, providing false information to school personnel, providing false information about school personnel, loitering or trespassing, or community misconduct that would be so serious as to pose a threat to the school community. The prohibited behaviors under this (Rule 18) include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Community misconduct that would pose a threat to the school community, including but not limited to, conduct which may adversely affect the educational process or endanger the health,

safety, morals, reputation, property or well-being of other students, teachers, or other employees of the District.

- b. Associating oneself as an affiliate or member of a criminal street gang identified by the school and/or law authorities through one or more of the following: one's mode of dress, means and method of communication including the use of hand signs, the possession of a publication of gang writings/symbols, or admission of membership
- c. Providing false information to or about school system personnel and/or spreading false information in the community and/or community misconduct that would be so serious as to pose a threat to the school community, mission, or environment. Includes but not limited to: falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or school employee toward a student.
- d. Conduct or actions that are ethnically and racially inflammatory that would be so serious as to pose a threat to the school community, mission, or environment.
- e. Behavior of a student which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.
- f. Terroristic threats (includes threats shared via social media/cyber threats)

Rule 19: Criminal Law Violations On or Off Campus – A student whose conduct on or off campus could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process may be subject to disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, short-term suspension, referral to a disciplinary tribunal, waiver and/or placement.

- a. Students enrolled in the Butts County School System who are alleged to have committed serious criminal offenses, whether on or off campus, and that may include criminal charges, are subject to immediate suspension pending a school investigation and a possible disciplinary tribunal hearing.
- b. Butts County School System is authorized to refuse to readmit or enroll any student who has been suspended or expelled for being convicted of, being adjudicated to have committed, being indicted for, or having information filed for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act under Code Section 15-11-28 which would be a felony if committed by an adult. If refused readmission or enrollment, the student or the student's parent or legal guardian has the right to request a hearing pursuant to the procedures provided for in Code Section 20-2-754.
- c. A student may be subject to suspension (for a period up to 10 days) and placement at alternative school if the student has been charged with a criminal law violation and if the student's continued presence at the home school potentially endangers the safety of others or which disrupts the educational process. (See student placement protocol)

Student Placement Protocol

Students who have been out of school due to incarceration or detention, or who have pending criminal law charges, often need a period of transition before returning to their home school. To protect the safety of all students and staff, Butts County School System must evaluate re-enrollment requests (and proper placement) of students returning from a period of incarceration or detention due to alleged or adjudicated criminal or delinquent conduct. Any student who has been arrested for a criminal law violation and who is seeking to re-enroll in BCSS may be subject to a period of suspension and placement at the alternative school. The primary considerations for making the placement determination are the educational needs and well-being of the returning student as well as the safety of other students and staff.

DISCIPLINARY OFFENSE LEVELS:

Level I Behaviors (Minor Offenses - include but are not limited to):

- Unprepared. Repeatedly comes to class w/out materials (teacher determines material and amount of times)
- Tardiness
- Minor dress code
- Talking/ off task
- Dishonesty
- Failure to follow directions
- Running, pushing, shoving
- Horseplay
- Disrespectful/Unkind to other students
- No pass
- Indirect profane language (verbal or written)
- Uncooperative behavior (nonverbal)
- Unauthorized usage of electronic devices
- Bus referral for 1st minor offense (may result in administrative warning, parent contact, seat assignment, and/or short-term bus suspension)

Teachers may add reasonable specific behaviors to this list for their individual classrooms. If students fail to follow those additional rules, teachers can cite “failure to follow directions”.

[\(See below for disciplinary actions/consequences for Level I\)](#)

Level II Behaviors (Major Offenses - include but are not limited to):

- Chronic Level I behaviors
- Defiance of authority
- Disrespect for authority (verbal disrespect)
- Chronic dress code infractions
- Inappropriate computer use
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Direct profane language (verbal or written)
- Racial, ethnic, or sexual orientation slurs
- Skipping class
- Stealing
- Being in unauthorized area (restroom, hallway, off-team, bus landing, etc. without a pass)
- Physical aggression towards students
- Bus conduct violations
- Cheating (major assignments)
- Misbehavior/disrespect for substitute (documented on notes from the substitute)
- Rules 6 or 7: Damage, destruction, or theft of school or private property (minor offense)
- Rule 16: False or misleading reports about school district staff (1st Offense and/or minor infraction)

[\(See below for disciplinary actions/consequences for Level II\)](#)

Level III Behaviors (Severe Offenses - include but are not limited to):

- Rule 1: Disruption and interference with school (A through K)
- Rule 3: Bullying (multiple offenses and/or serious infractions)
- Rule 5: Illicit drugs and alcohol
- Rule 6: Damage, destruction or theft of school property
- Rule 7: Damage, destruction or theft of private property
- Rule 8: Assault, battery or harassment of a school employee
- Rule 9: Physical abuse, harassment, assault, or battery by a student to another student or to any person not employed by the district
- Rule 10: Misbehavior on bus (major infractions)
- Rule 11: Weapons and hazardous objects
- Rule 15: Internet/computer/electronics misuse
- Rule 16: False or misleading reports about school district staff
- Rule 17: Repeated violations/willful misbehavior
- Rule 18: Conduct which is subversive to good order
- Rule 19: Criminal law violations on or off campus

(See below for disciplinary actions/consequences for Level III)

Disciplinary Actions and Consequences (Levels I-III)

Some of the disciplinary actions that may be used for Level I, Level II, and/or Level III student violations of the Code of Conduct include but are not limited to the following:

- Verbal or Written Warning
- Removal from Activity/Time Out
- Removal from Bus
- Referral to Principal's Office
- Parent Conference
- Student Behavior Contract
- No Contact Contract
- Bullying Contract
- Detention
- Recovery
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Bus Suspension
- Suspension or Removal from Extracurricular Team/Activity
- Restitution
- Work Detail
- Long-Term Suspension
- Referral to Discipline Tribunal
- Referral to Law Enforcement
- Alternative Placement
- Expulsion

*Any combination of these or other consequences may be used

IMPORTANT AND STATUTORY INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS

Additional Behavior Requirements

The District may impose campus, classroom, or club/group/extracurricular rules in addition to those found in the code of conduct. These rules may be listed in the student handbooks, be posted or distributed in classrooms, or be published in extracurricular handbooks, state 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.

Behavior Plans

School administrators possess the authority to enact assessments, intervention plans, contracts, and other behavioral plans with students at any time deemed necessary for enhancing desired behavior. Additionally, administrators may initiate RTI/SST (Response to Intervention/Student Support Team), peer mediation, counseling or other resource needs.

Bullying

The Butts County Board of Education believes that all children deserve a safe school environment in which to learn and grow. Behavior that infringes on the safety and wellbeing of students will not be tolerated. Bullying is strictly prohibited.

Bullying is defined as:

1. any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that:
 - a. causes substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm;
 - b. substantially interferes with a student's education;
 - c. is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating/threatening educational environment; or
 - d. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of school.

The prohibition against bullying includes off-campus cyberbullying that is (1) 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.

Retaliation for reports of bullying is not tolerated and may be subject to independent disciplinary action.

(See BCSS Board Policy JCDAG)

Clubs and Organizations

Clubs and organizations are groups composed of students who wish to organize and meet for common goals, objectives, or purposes and which are directly under the sponsorship, direction, and control of the school. This term shall include any activities reasonably related to such clubs and organizations, but shall not include competitive interscholastic activities or events. "Competitive interscholastic activity" means functions held under the auspices or sponsorship of a school that involves its students in

competition between individuals or groups representing two or more schools. This term shall include cheerleading, one act play, band, and chorus.

The name of each club or organization, mission or purpose of the club or organization, name of the club's or organization's faculty advisor/custodian, and a description of past or planned activities is available from the individual school through the school's website, student/parent handbook or front office. Parents and guardians shall review this information and inform the school if he or she declines permission for his or her student to participate in a club or organization, using the form available in the student/parent handbook.

Discipline of Special Education Students

Disciplinary action involving students with disabilities will be handled in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and implementing regulations of the same. Special education students who commit serious offenses which could otherwise result in suspension or expulsion shall be brought before the Student Discipline Tribunal for a determination as to whether the student is found to have committed the offense for which charged. Students with disabilities who are found to have committed any misconduct shall be subject to a recommendation by the Tribunal for disciplinary action/placement, and the IEP committee will make the final determination on placement of these students.

Due Process

Due process will include appropriate hearings and reviews and, in all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected. A hearing for a long-term suspension or expulsion will be formally conducted following the policy and procedures mandated by the Butts County Board of Education. Disabled students will be disciplined by local policies and in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504.

Identification and Reasonable Instructions

Students shall be aware that any adult employee of the Butts County School System has the authority to ask for a student's identity or to see other appropriate information. Board of Education employees have the authority to give a student reasonable instructions and to expect that those instructions be carried out. Refusal to identify oneself or to carry out reasonable instructions may result in serious disciplinary action.

Illegal Items

Students are to notify an administrator or staff member when illegal items are found in the school building or on the school campus. Students are advised not to pick up items or to handle the illegal items.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individualized Education Program, is a written document that's developed for each public school child who is eligible for special education. The IEP is created through a team effort and reviewed at least once a year.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from birth to age 18 or 21 in cases that involve 13 specified categories of disability.

Interrogations

The principal of each school in Butts County School System, or his/her authorized representative, possesses the authority to conduct reasonable interrogations of students in order to investigate properly and impose appropriate administrative action for student misconduct. Parent consent is not required prior to the interrogation of students.

Parents and Guardians - Please discuss with your children

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-735(e), the District encourages parents and guardians to inform their children regarding the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is an approach that schools can use to improve school safety and promote positive behavior.

Possession

Possession means having, owning, or controlling something. Students are responsible for items on their person and in their possession. For the purposes of the Butts County School System Student Code of Conduct, possession includes, but is not limited to, items found in book bags, purses, lockers, vehicles, gym bags, wallets, instrument cases, etc.

Posturing/Conflict Posturing

Adversarial or combative behavior demonstrated through body language, mannerisms, or words. Behavior that undermines the orderly school environment by provoking or attempting to provoke misbehavior.

Principal's Discretion

When a disposition notes that schools may have "principal's discretion" in dealing with an infraction, that distinction shall also be interpreted as a "principal's/assistant principal's discretion."

Progressive Discipline

Progressive discipline processes are designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline, that the previous discipline history of the student being disciplined and other relevant factors will be taken into account, and that all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed.

Prosecution

Students and parents shall understand that when misconduct constitutes a violation of local, state, or federal law, law enforcement agencies will be contacted and prosecution may be sought.

Safe Tip Line

The Safe Tip Line is a reporting/prevention tool that can be used anonymously by text and/or phone call. If students, parents or community members know of an unsafe situation in our school (bullying, weapons, drugs or alcohol, etc.), they can anonymously pass on that information to school personnel by using this format. Safe Tip Line phone numbers are specific to each school and can be found in your child's student/parent handbook.

Search

School administrators and/or their authorized representatives possess the authority to conduct reasonable search of students, their possessions, their lockers, or their vehicles when on school property. The administrator is required to have only reasonable suspicion to conduct such searches. Parent consent is not required prior to search.

Section 504

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

Student Supports/Response to Intervention (SST/RTI)

The Student Support Team is a committee of experienced teachers, counselors, and administrators who provide suggestions for teachers and parents to implement with students who are exhibiting academic and/or behavior difficulties. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-leveled approach for aiding students that is adjusted and modified as needed if they are not meeting academic and/or behavioral expectations.

Suspensions

Suspensions constitute the removal of a student from class, school, or school-sponsored events for a specified period of time. Suspensions may also include the removal of privileges such as bus transportation:

1. In-School Suspension (ISS): A disciplinary measure that permits the student to attend school, but prohibits him or her from attending his or her regular classes. Students will continue to do classroom work and receive credit.
2. Out-of-School Suspension (OSS): A disciplinary measure that prohibits the student from attending school for a short-term (usually 1-10 days). Absences are registered as excused absences. Students under out-of-school suspension are not permitted on any Butts County School System property or at any school function while under suspension. This includes students attending New Beginnings Academy. Students under OSS who return to school or attend a school function while under suspension may be considered to have criminally trespassed and may be prosecuted accordingly if they have not obtained and carry written permission from their principal.

3. Suspension of Bus Privileges (Bus Suspension): A disciplinary measure that prohibits the student from riding school District transportation. The investigation of school bus misconduct is the responsibility of the school, not the responsibility of the bus transportation office. Bus suspension and other consequences are decided by the principal or designee of the school. Discipline will be administered according to procedures in this handbook and principal discretion.

Trespassing

Students under suspension or expulsion are not allowed on any Butts County School System property or at any Butts County School System function unless express written consent has been granted by the principal of the school the student attends (or last attended if under expulsion).

Other

The District reserves the right to punish behavior which is subversive to good order and discipline in the school, even though such behavior is not specified in the Student Code of Conduct.



2023-2024
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please complete and return within five (5) days of receipt of the Student Code of Conduct.

The Student Code of Conduct contains important information pertaining to the policies, procedures, and programs of the Butts County School System. Students and parents shall read the code of conduct at the start of the school year and keep it for future reference. An electronic copy of the Student Code of Conduct can be found by visiting the school website.

Each of the undersigned hereby acknowledges having received and read the Butts County School System Student Code of Conduct (“Code”) for the 2023-2024 school year. Each parent/guardian named below has also received, read, and discussed the requirements of the Code with his/her child, and each parent/guardian and student named below agree to fully abide by the same.

Print Student’s Name

Signature of Student

Date

Print Parent/Guardian’s Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Print Parent/Guardian’s Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

School

Grade

TEACHER