

## Conduct of Parents and Other Visitors

The school system's civility policy is intended to maintain a safe, harassment-free environment for students, teachers, administrators, staff members, parents and other members of the community. In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, the school board encourages positive communication and discourages volatile, hostile, threatening, profane or aggressive communication or actions, as well as disorderly conduct.

School and district personnel are expected to treat each other, students, volunteers, parents and other members of the public with courtesy and respect. Any parent who believes he or she was subject to behavior at a school that is in violation of this policy should tell the principal, the staff member's immediate supervisor, or the appropriate assistant superintendent.

In the same regard, parents and visitors are expected to treat teachers, students, volunteers, administrators and other district employees with courtesy and respect. School employees who are faced with disorderly conduct or disruptive behavior have the right to end a meeting or telephone conversation, remove the person from school grounds, or limit school access to telephone calls, e-mail, or written communications with staff members.

The need for civility extends to events outside the regular school day. Any person who attends a school-sponsored, extra-class activity and behaves in a disorderly or unsportsmanlike manner may be ejected. The superintendent may exclude anyone found to be disorderly or unsportsmanlike from extracurricular or athletic events for up to one year.

– Policy 1170

## Student Conduct and Discipline

*(This is a summary of Policy 5131, Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct and Administrative Regulation 5131, Guidelines for Student Discipline.)*

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide an atmosphere in its schools that is conducive to learning and protective of student freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. In order to meet these responsibilities, the Board of Education adopted Policy 5131 describing students' rights and responsibilities and the rules of conduct.

School employees are expected to treat students with respect and dignity. The authority of the teacher to control student behavior must be recognized and respected by students and parents.

Every student has the right to be free from fear, harm, and violence at school, on the school bus and at school-related activities. Every student is responsible for observing the rules at school, on the school bus and at school-related activities.

For a complete list of school rules, please see Policy 5131 on page 42 of this handbook.

### Alcohol and drug abuse

*(The following is a summary of Policy 5131.6)*

Substances prohibited on school grounds or at school activities include:

- Wine, wine cooler, beer, and any other malt beverage, including "non-alcoholic" beer.
- Alcohol, liquor, liqueurs, and mixed alcoholic beverages.
- Any drugs listed in the North Carolina Controlled Substances Act.
- Any hallucinogenic herbs, such as salvia divinorum (commonly referred to as "Magic Mint" or "Sally D").
- Any counterfeit controlled substance.
- Any substance used with the intention of mimicking the hallucinatory, intoxicating, euphoric, or depressive effects of illegal substances.
- Any chemical compound which will induce a condition of intoxication when inhaled for that purpose.
- Any drug paraphernalia.

School-system policy prohibits students from having these substances in their automobiles, lockers, book bags or desks, or on their bodies at school or at any school-related activity. Policy also prohibits students from using these substances during normal school hours, including extracurricular activities, or at any time before school or a school activity when the prohibited substance remains in their bodies or influences their behavior.

Selling or distributing prohibited substances at school or during school events is not allowed.

### Dress and appearance

Students are expected to follow standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment when attending school. If a student's dress or lack of cleanliness is detrimental to his or her health or safety, the principal may require the student and the student's parents or guardians to take appropriate action to remedy the

situation. In addition, if a student's dress or appearance is so unusual, inappropriate or lacking in cleanliness that it clearly and substantially disrupts class or learning activities, the student may be required to change his or her dress or appearance. Examples of prohibited dress or appearance include:

- Clothing that contains advertisements for tobacco, alcohol or drugs; pictures or graphics of nudity; and words that are profane, lewd, vulgar, or indecent.
- Halter or bare midriff tops, or bare midriffs.
- Spaghetti straps or tank tops.
- Strapless shirts or tube tops.
- Bare feet.
- Short shorts or skirts.
- Pants, slacks or jeans that sag below waist.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, or garments that cover the student's face or conceal the student's identity, unless the headwear is worn based on a sincerely held religious belief or practice.
- Underpants or bras showing or worn as outerwear.
- Provocative, revealing attire that exposes cleavage.
- Any symbols, styles or attire associated with gangs, intimidation, violence or violent groups about which students at a particular school have been notified.

Teachers and principals are expected to use discretion and common sense in implementing this dress code, including making reasonable accommodations on the basis of students' religious beliefs or medical conditions. Individual schools may have additional guidelines, copies of which shall be made available to parents and students. Students and parents should be involved in creating local school guidelines. Individual schools can adopt policies requiring the wearing of school uniforms as long as the parents have the choice to enroll their child in a school within their zone that does not require uniforms. Individual schools' uniform requirements may be more restrictive than what the district requires.

## Authority of School Employees

### Use of reasonable force

School personnel have the right to use reasonable force to maintain order at school or at school-related activities, including to control behavior, to quell a disturbance that threatens injury to others, to take weapons or other dangerous objects from a student, to protect people and property, and to defend themselves.

However, corporal punishment (spanking) is not permitted in our district.

# Student-Parent Handbook

## Searching students

School officials have the right to search students, including their cars, pockets and book bags if they have reason to suspect that a student is concealing evidence of misconduct.

School officials also may search a student's locker or desk at any time, because they are school property. Students may use them to store only things that may lawfully be brought to school.

Under certain circumstances, police dogs may be used to inspect lockers for drugs, and metal detectors may be used to screen students for weapons.

– *Policies 5131.01, 5131 and 5131.6*

## Interrogating Students

School personnel have the authority to question students who may have witnessed an act of misconduct or are suspected of violating school rules. School personnel do not need the permission of parents to question students. An admission or confession made to a school official may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. It may not be admissible in juvenile or criminal court, where different rules apply.

## Guidelines for Discipline

Consequences for violating the code of conduct include time-out, detentions, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, alternative school assignments and expulsions. The severity of the consequence depends on the severity of the violation. State law and school policy determines the consequences.

State law passed in the summer of 2011 dramatically changed the way discipline is applied. The school board will approve new guidelines for discipline in August 2011, which is after this book is printed. Copies of the new guidelines will be printed and given to all students once they are approved. In the meantime, please ask your principal or the school attorney if you have questions about specific consequences.

## Students with handicaps and disabilities

Federal law and local policy provide special protections for students with handicaps and disabilities. While these students may be suspended for up to 10 school days in a school year in the same manner as non-disabled students, handicapped/disabled students may not be suspended for the remainder of the school year, or for 365 days, or expelled for misconduct that is a manifestation of their

handicap/disability. If the misconduct is not a manifestation of the disability, the student may be suspended or expelled, but the district must continue to provide special education services to the student.

– *AR 5131.25*

## How to Resolve a Problem

If a problem arises, please discuss it with the person involved, usually the teacher, principal or other staff. Please do so as soon as possible, but in any case no more than 30 days after the incident or decision that concerns you.

If the problem cannot be resolved with the teacher or staff member, the parent should go to the principal. If the principal cannot solve the problem, talk to the appropriate assistant superintendent.

Most situations can be handled through this informal process. In some cases, however, a parent or guardian may choose to follow the formal grievance procedure. The grievance procedure may be used if a principal, teacher or other school employee misinterpreted, violated or failed to enforce a law, a school-system policy or regulation, or a school rule.

Copies of state education laws are published in Chapter 115C of the N.C. General Statutes and are available at the main branch of the Forsyth County Public Library and on the N.C. General Assembly's website, [www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net). Parents or guardians also may ask the school system's attorney for assistance.

The school system's grievance policy is included in the back of this handbook on page 33.

The school board's policies and regulations are available on the school system's website. The website also has links to state education laws.

Local school rules are published in student handbooks, listed in handouts from teachers and explained orally to students by their teachers.

School officials have authority to make decisions that involve professional judgment, such as grading. Such decisions normally are not reversed unless the official acted arbitrarily or with malice.

– *Policy 5145*

## Grievance procedure

If a dispute cannot be settled after meeting with the person involved, parents or guardians may ask for a formal conference with the principal.

## Meeting with the principal

When requesting a conference, tell the principal or secretary the purpose of the meeting. The principal must meet with you at a mutually convenient time within five days. Other school employees involved may attend. You also may ask other people who observed what happened or who could help resolve the problem to attend.

The purposes of the conference are:

- To determine what caused the problem.
- To determine if a rule has been misinterpreted, violated or not enforced.
- To resolve the problem to the satisfaction of all concerned, if possible.

To prepare for the conference, please make some notes summarizing what happened and describing your complaint.

The principal will consider information provided by the staff and may talk with other people who know about the problem before or after the conference.

If the problem is not resolved, the principal must give the parents or guardians a written statement summarizing the conference and explaining the decision.

## Appealing to an assistant superintendent

Parents or guardians may appeal the principal's decision to the assistant superintendent for elementary, middle or high schools within 10 days. An appeal may be more effective if it is in writing.

The assistant superintendent will try to mediate the situation.

If the grievance is not resolved within 10 days, the assistant superintendent must report his or her findings and recommendations to the person appealing and to the superintendent.

## Appealing to the board of education

If parents or guardians are not satisfied with the assistant superintendent's decision, they may request a hearing before the Board of Education by notifying the school system attorney within 10 days. In-school suspensions or out-of-school suspensions of 10 days or less may not be appealed.

A three-member hearing panel of the Board will hear the grievance within 30 days. The panel will have copies of records from all levels in the process.

## What issues can be appealed?

Federal and state laws grant parents and students the right to appeal the following decisions:

- The discipline of students that results in an assignment to an alternative school or program, a suspension of more than 10 school days, or an expulsion.

IF YOU OBJECT TO THE  
FAMILY LIFE  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM  
OR OTHER BOOKS  
OR MATERIALS

*You have a right to review any materials that your child uses.*

*Before certain topics in the area of family life education are covered, you will be notified that you have the right to preview the curriculum and materials and may remove your child from the class. Your child will not be penalized, and you may borrow other materials from the school system to teach your child outside the classroom if you wish.*

*Requests to remove a child from health or life management skills classes should be submitted to the principal (Policy 6140).*

*If you object to a book or other materials used in the school in any subject area, discuss your objection with the principal.*

*If he or she cannot resolve your concern without removing the materials, you may file a formal, written challenge on the "Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material" form, available from any school or the school system attorney's office.*

*The materials and your challenge will be examined by a local committee. Procedures and appeals are outlined in Administrative Regulation 6144.*

- An alleged violation of a specified federal law, state law, state Board of Education policy, state rule or local board policies.
- Challenges to the selection of supplementary materials (GS 115C-98 and Policy 6144).
- Student retention (Policy and AR 5123).
- Handicapped-student appeals (under Sec. 504).
- Academically gifted student appeals (GS 115C-150.7).
- Disputes over the use of school facilities (GS 115C-207 and Policy 1330).
- School bus routes and stops (GS 115C-244, and Policy 3541).
- School assignment decisions (GS 115C-369 and Policy 5117).
- Claims of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, or handicap.
- Contents of a student's education records (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

**The following decisions are not subject to appeals:**

- A student's grade in a course or on a test.
- A decision regarding participation in extracurricular activities.
- A student's schedule or the teacher assigned to teach his or her class or classes.
- The classification of a student's absence as excused or unexcused.
- An in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension for 10 days or less.
- The ejection or sportsmanship appeal of a student athlete.

Parents or guardians may submit a written statement to the panel in advance of the hearing. The hearing before the panel is informal and generally not open to the public. Each side is allowed to make a statement. Unlike in a trial, cross-examination is not permitted, and the rules of evidence used in courts do not apply.

The hearing panel will give its decision in writing within 10 days and send you a copy.

## The procedure works

The grievance procedure works because it requires everyone involved to examine the facts and to discuss the problem. A school official might see that he or she made a mistake; at other times, parents might realize that their child was not telling the whole story.

—Policy 5145

## Confidentiality and Access to Records

### What information is confidential?

Most education records are considered confidential. This includes personally identifiable education records, such as grades, test scores, medical records, discipline records, special education records and other personally identifiable records. For a description of the records maintained by the school system, request a copy of Policy 5125 from your principal or the school system attorney (727-2509).

All school system employees and volunteers have a responsibility to keep students' personally identifiable education records confidential.

### What information is not confidential?

**Directory Information.** The following information may be included in annuals, sports programs, school newsletters, schools' and students' websites, and other publications: a student's name, age, place of birth, height, weight, grade, honors, awards, activities, photograph, field of study, school and graduation status.

**Mailing lists.** The Board of Education does not allow lists of student names and addresses to be given to anyone besides these exceptions:

**Class lists.** Teachers may produce a list of students in the class with addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses so that students may contact each other for homework, to discuss class projects or arrange other activities. The lists are given only to the members of the class.

**Transportation lists.** Schools or programs that do not provide transportation for all students may produce a list of student names, addresses and telephone numbers to help parents and students arrange car pools. The list may be given only to students enrolled in the school or program.

**Charter schools.** Charter schools may request lists from the school system containing students' names, addresses and grades in school to tell students and parents about their programs.

**Post-secondary education and employment opportunities.** Seniors' names, addresses and telephone numbers may be provided for a fee to any post-secondary educational institution that is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency.

**Military.** Juniors' and seniors' names, addresses and telephone numbers will be provided to various branches of the armed services under the terms of No Child Left Behind. The information is released on or about July 1 after the end of the sophomore year when the students have been promoted to their junior year. **If you object to the release of this information,** please notify your child's principal before the end of his or her sophomore year or by no later than June 30 of that year.

**Alumni Organizations.** A list of names and last known addresses of the members of each high school's graduating class may be provided to a school's alumni organization.

**PTA/PTSA.** A list of student names, parents' and guardians' names, home addresses, and home telephone numbers may be provided to each school's PTA or PTSA.

**Delivery Service.** The school system may provide a list of student and parent addresses to delivery services for the purpose of delivering school publications to each student's home. The list does not include student or parent names or telephone numbers. The delivery service may not share the address list with anyone else.

### Objecting to the release of directory information

*Parents or guardians who do not want any directory information to be released should notify their child's principal in writing within 10 days of receiving this handbook. Parents may object to the release of information to all organizations listed or to specific organizations.*