

Dixie District Schools
Student Code of Conduct
Grades PK – 5

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

I. PURPOSE/INTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

The primary purpose of education in Dixie County is to maintain, perpetuate and improve our American way of life. The school is the social agency through which this purpose is to be achieved. In order to maintain a “school climate” in which the children and youth of our county can live, learn and flourish, it is vitally necessary for all students to assume responsibility for their behavior while enrolled in the public schools in Dixie County.

Therefore, in order to aid students in making appropriate decisions governing their behavior, a code of conduct identifying the rules and procedure has been established. While these rules are not intended to be “all-inclusive” of all possible behavior, they do implement the philosophy of our system, and are illustrative of the types of behaviors that are consistent with the proper maintenance and function of an effective program in our system.

This code of student conduct is to be applied and enforced in addition to other rules which may be in effect at any individual school with due respect for the constitutional rights of every student. It should be pointed out that although parents and students may have rights guaranteed by state and federal laws and court decisions, these rights end when and where they begin to interfere with the rights of others. It must be pointed out that this document does not outline all of the possibilities of misconduct, therefore students and parents need to realize that the school administration has the right to view other student behavior as unacceptable and deal with it accordingly.

Most importantly, students need to know that every right carries with it the responsibility to exercise that right wisely, and that failure to do so may result in the loss of privileges. Essentially then, the responsibility for conduct is in the hands of each individual student, and when an action by a student is not in line with an accepted standard, specified consequences shall be applied as outlined in this document.

The intent, then, of this document is to help provide an instrument, which shall sustain an atmosphere that will enable students to achieve the goal of basic education, thus allowing them to be competitive in the adult world.

II. GENERAL POLICIES

A. DUE PROCESS

Another name for fairness of process. Fairness of procedure is due process in the primary sense. Due process is the right guaranteed to all by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.

Policies and procedures for discipline of a disabled student will be provided to the parent or guardian during the initial staffing.

Individuals must have proper notice and an opportunity to be heard, and the hearing conducted fairly. Students must be informed either orally or in writing, of the rules, which have been violated. The basic ingredients of due process procedures are as follows:

1. Individuals must have prior opportunity to know that their actions would be in violation of established rules and regulations.
2. Individuals must have the opportunity to know the specific charges or complaints being made against them.
3. Individuals must have notice of the charge or complaints being made against them.
4. Individuals must be given a fair and impartial hearing.

B. STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A grievance is defined as an alleged violation of the School Board of Dixie County Policies on unlawful discrimination or harassment. A grievance process is available to all students and applicants for admission. Throughout the student grievance process the claimant, accused and all others involved in the investigation are guaranteed confidentiality and protection from retaliation. Such grievance may be filed in the following manner:

Step One – If an individual public school student believed that an action by the school or by the school representative has violated his/her rights, the student shall seek within sixty (60) school days of the alleged occurrence a resolution through informal discussion with a teacher, guidance counselor, or assistant principal of the school who shall in turn mediate on the student’s behalf with the individuals alleged to have committed the violation.

Step Two – If informal discussion does not resolve the issue, the aggrieved student will submit a written statement of the grievance to the school principal or the district Equity Coordinator within ten (10) school days after the informal discussion of the alleged occurrence. The statement shall include a description of the specific rule/regulation allegedly violated, the date of the violation, the resolution sought and the signature of the student and the parent/guardian

Step Three – Within ten (10) school days of receipt of the written grievance, the principal or the district Equity Coordinator shall render a written response to the aggrieved student and parent/guardian, which shall uphold, modify, or deny the resolution sought.

Step Four – If the student is not satisfied with the response issued to step three, the student may within ten (10) school days of the response submit in writing the alleged grievance to the District School Superintendent.

Step Five – Within ten (10) school days, the Superintendent shall issue a written response to the aggrieved student and parent/guardian. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

C. STUDENT RECORDS

Philosophical Basis:

A well-developed student record file contains information needed for making appropriate educational decisions for the student. Student records are to be treated confidentially and should contain information that is relevant, accurate, and appropriate.

Access to Student Records:

In general, a student's records are available to parents of minor students (under age 18) and to student who have reached age 18 or are attending a post secondary education institution (eligible student). In addition, Federal and State statutes allow student records to be made available to certain others who have a bona fide need of information.

Copies of the District's policies regarding student records are available at each school and at the School Board office. These policies will always be in compliance with State and Federal regulations concerning student records.

Eligible students and parents of minor students have the right to inspect and review permanent education records of the student. The parent or eligible student may request access to the records through the school principal. The principal will make records available for review within thirty (30) days of such request. Information regarding the cost is also available from the school.

A parent or eligible student may challenge information in the records. A parent may refuse to permit the designation of any or all categories of directory information with respect to his child by notifying the principal within ten (10) calendar days of the beginning of the school. Unless there is specific written request in the cumulative folder, directory information on the student may be released. Parents or eligible students will be provided a list of types of directory information included in student records, upon written request to the office of the Superintendent. Purging, transferring and copying the student records is done in accordance with Federal and State statutes and Federal, State and Local procedures.

Responsibilities of Student, Parents, and Guardians:

To inform the school of any information that may be useful in making appropriate educational decisions.

To authorize release of pertinent information to those individuals or agencies who are working actively and constructively for the benefit of the student.

Release of records of students 17 years of age or younger who attend elementary or secondary schools requires the signature of the parent or guardian.

Rights of Student, Parents, and Guardians:

To inspect, review, and challenge the information contained in records directly relating to the student.

To be protected by legal provisions which prohibit the release of personal identifiable information to other than legally authorized persons without the consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible student. (Eligible students are those 18 years of age or over and/or those attending a post-secondary institution.)

D. EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ACT

The School Board of Dixie County is committed to the principle and practice of equal opportunity and affirmative action. The School Board of Dixie County complies with the letter and spirit of federal, state, and local laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and/or harassment based on race, color, religion, political affiliation, national origin, sex, disability, age or marital status or social and family background. Employment and educational opportunities for students, employees and applicants are provided under the principles, equal opportunity and affirmative action. Dixie District Schools' designee to coordinate compliance with Educational Equity Act is:

Anne Stanley
P.O. Box 890
Cross City, Florida 32628
(352) 498-6149

E. LIMITED ENGLISH EDUCATION (LEP)

Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who meet program eligibility criteria shall have equal access to all programs. No national origin minority or limited English proficient student shall be subjected to any disciplinary action because of his or her use of a language other than English. Disciplinary actions for LEP students are common to non-LEP students.

F. EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE)

Disciplinary consequences for ESE students are common to non-ESE students.

G. TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS

Textbooks/Library books are the property of the School Board of Dixie County and are loaned to the students of Dixie County. The students must pay for lost and damaged textbooks and/or library books before other books will be issued. All books should be cared for with extreme care by the students. Periodic book checks will be made to examine the condition of books and check for lost books. Students are held personally responsible for their books, whether lost, stolen, or damaged.

H. STUDENT LOCKERS/STORAGE SPACE

The School Board of Dixie County provides lockers and/or storage spaces for student use. As such, these lockers and storage spaces are the property of the School Board. Any student, who accepts the use of a locker or storage space, accepts it with the understanding that it cannot conceal or hide any such item or material that is illegal or against school policy or regulations. Upon accepting the use of the locker/storage space the student does so knowing the locker/storage space is subject to be searched at any time and for any reason that school officials feel that they need to conduct such a search. School personnel are NOT responsible for stolen or misplaced property.

I. SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Dixie District Schools extend the supervisory responsibilities of school personnel over students on school property to 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the students' school day. School personnel will also be responsible for supervision 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after school sponsored activities (including the time during which the activity occurs). School personnel are not responsible for supervising students beyond that point.

III. GENERAL CONDUCT

A. SCHOOL BUS CONDUCT

Rights:

Students living two (2) miles or more from the school have the right to transportation by school bus or other school provided transportation. Students have the right to be informed of the transportation rules, regulations and laws regarding the transportation of the students by school bus.

Transportation Rules:

1. Students must obey the bus driver.

2. Students must have no foreign objects in their mouths.
3. Students must remain in their seat, face forward, keeping hands, feet, and other objects to them at all times.
4. No objects will be brought on the bus without the permission of the bus driver.
5. Students must be at the bus stop five (5) minutes before stop time. They should stand 10 feet off the road in an orderly manner. When crossing the street, they must cross 10 feet in front of the bus. School conduct rules apply while students are at the bus stop.
6. Students must be absolutely quiet when the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
7. Students must board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at their regular stop, except with the permission of parent and principal or his/her designee.
8. Profane language or gestures may not be used on the bus.

Offenses would be divided into two levels based on the severity of the incident. Level 1 offenses would be incidents such as not sitting in seat properly, spitting, loud talking, etc...Level 2 offenses would be incidents of a more serious severity such as fighting, gross insubordination, weapons, etc...

Level 1 Offenses

Each bus driver will keep a roster of kids that ride their bus. This form would contain blanks on it for drivers to make notes and mark checks by the students' names.

1 Indicates that a bus driver has student a verbal warning in private. Bus driver should pull student aside and discuss the inappropriate behavior. This conversation should be documented by posting the date the conference took place on the student roster.

2 Parent notification. The bus driver will attempt to contact the parent by phone to have a conference regarding the child's inappropriate behavior. If the driver is unable to verbally speak to the parent, written notification can be made. Parent notification should be documented by posting the date contact was made on the student roster.

3rd Offense = Office Referral. Driver must bring in referral along with documentation of steps one and two above. Administrator will have choice of punishment. Punishment may include warning, time spent in internal, etc...

4th Offense = Office Referral - Minimum of 2 days bus suspension (grades 6-12) Minimum of 2 days bus suspension or administrator's choice of punishment (grades PK-5)

5th Offense = Office Referral - Minimum of 5 days bus suspension

6th Offense = Office Referral - Minimum of 10 days bus suspension. A Certified/Return Receipt letter will be mailed to parent notifying them that on the next offense expulsion from the bus will be administered.

7th Offense = Office Referral - Expulsion from bus.

**ESE students who are unable to provide private transportation to school may be referred to the special needs bus at any time the administrator deems necessary after the 3rd offense for a Level 1 incident.

***When a student begins on the special needs bus the number of offenses will start over.

Level 2 Offenses

1st Offense = Office Referral – Minimum of 2 days bus suspension.

2nd Offense = Office Referral – Minimum of 5 days bus suspension.

3rd Offense = Office Referral – Minimum of 10 days bus suspension. A Certified/Return Receipt letter will be mailed to the parent notifying them that on the next offense expulsion from the bus will be administered.

4th Offense = Office Referral – Expulsion from the bus.

**ESE students who are unable to provide private transportation to school may be referred to the special needs bus at any time the administrator deems necessary after the 2nd offense for a Level 2 incident.

***Level 2 offenses for students in grades PK-2 punishment will be left to the administrative judgment.

****When a student begins on the special needs bus the number of offenses will start over.

B. ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SCHOOL RELATED VIOLENT CRIME

On September 13, 1994, the Florida State Board of Education adopted a new “Zero Tolerance for School Related Violent Crime.” The rule requires each school district to ensure that students or adults found to have committed the following offenses on school property, school sponsored transportation, or during a school sponsored activity shall receive the most severe consequences provided by law and School Board Policy:

1. Homicide
2. Sexual Battery
3. Armed Robbery
4. Aggravated Battery

5. Battery on School Personnel

6. Kidnapping

7. Arson

8. Possession, use, or sale of any firearm

HB702 adds to the required contents of the district adopted Code of Student Conduct to specify that simulating a firearm or weapon or express an opinion regarding a right guaranteed by the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution is not grounds for disciplinary action or referral to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system. Simulating a firearm or weapon while playing includes but not limited to:

- Brandishing a partially consumed pastry or other food item to simulate a firearm or weapon.
- Possessing a toy firearm or weapon that is 2 inches or less in overall length.
- Possessing a toy firearm or weapon made of plastic snap-together building blocks.
- Using a finger or hand to simulate a firearm or weapon.
- Vocalizing an imaginary firearm or weapon.
- Drawing a picture, or possessing an image, of a firearm or weapon.
- Using a pencil, pen, or other writing or drawing utensil to simulate a firearm or weapon.

C. TEACHER AUTHORITY TO REMOVE STUDENTS FROM CLASS

Pursuant to 232.271, F.S., which took effect on July 1, 1996, any teacher, has the authority to remove a student from his/her classroom for repeated disruptive or a violent behavior.

Teachers who invoke the provisions of this statute must document that a student’s behavior repeatedly interfered with the learning process in the classroom or the student’s behavior was so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it interfered with the effective conduct of the class.

Principals may not return a student to that class when the teacher removed the student under the provisions of this statute, without the permission of that teacher or the direction of the placement review committee, which may determine that returning the student to that class is the best and/or only available alternative for that student.

D. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Florida Statutes state the school attendance is mandatory between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) unless the student has his or her parent/guardian file a formal

intent to terminate school enrollment with the district School District. Rules and regulations pertaining to those laws as well as those regarding admissions of transfers, pupil transfers into and out of the county shall be available to all students and parents. Regular attendance and a cooperative attitude are necessary ingredients in an environment that promotes learning.

IV. REGULATIONS OF ATTENDANCE

Students in grades K-5 are expected to attend school on a regular basis in order to receive the necessary instruction to be promoted. If a student is absent from school, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school prior to the student's return to school.

Excused Absences: Medical, Religious holiday as verified by religious official, or Death in the immediate family. An official written verification by the medical provider, religious official, or printed funeral announcement must be presented to the school in order to excuse the child's absence(s).

Permissible Unexcused: Any contact of the parent by note or telephone to the school for reason of child's absence(s) that does not fall under the Excused Absences definition. Note: Permissible Unexcused absences count towards the student's 9 allowed days per semester.

Unexcused Absences: Any absence(s) that is not accompanied by a written note or telephone message in the case of a child's absence(s). Parental contact by telephone or home visit will be attempted after each unexcused absence.

Head Lice: Will be excused with a medical excuse for no more than 3 consecutive days. After the third day, absences will be considered unexcused. Students will only be excused for a total of 9 days per semester. After the 9th day, a meeting will be convened of the Child Study Team for Attendance.

After a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences in a semester, the school will contact the parent/guardian by letter.

When a student accumulates six (6) unexcused absences in a semester, the school will notify the student's parent/guardian. If the student received cash assistance from the Department of Children and Families, this notification will include a warning that the school, according to Florida Law, must contact the Department of Children and Families when the child is excessively absent from school. It is Dixie District School's policy to report a child as having excessive absenteeism, which is sufficient to jeopardize academic progress when they have accumulated nine (9) unexcused absences per semester.

When a student has accumulated nine (9) unexcused absences (including permissible unexcused) in a semester, the school will notify the Department of Children and Families (if applicable), as well as complete an Educational Evaluation of the

student. Also, a certified letter will be sent to the parents requesting a conference with the Child Study Team for Attendance to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan which will include educational counseling. After the Attendance Improvement Plan has been developed, the student may be referred to the Corner Drug Store Screening Committee for possible services.

The Child Study Team for Attendance will include appropriate school personnel and the parent/guardian. The parent will be notified in advance of this meeting. Nonparticipation by the parent/guardian may result in a referral to the Department of Juvenile Justice or prosecution of the parent in Circuit Court.

V. BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

A. DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCES INCLUDE

1. Counseling by Administration
2. Parent Notification/Parent Conference
3. Corporal Punishment

The Principal or designee shall give approval before corporal punishment is administered. Corporal punishment shall be administered only by the principal or by a member of the instructional staff and in the presence of another adult employee of the school. In no case shall punishment be unduly severe or degrading in nature. Any employee who has administered corporal punishment shall upon request provide the student's parent/guardian with a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the adult employee present.

4. In-School Suspension
5. Out-of-School Suspension
6. Recommendation for Expulsion
7. Other Administrative Action

B. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

1. **Skipping** – Absent from class without permission
2. **Unexcused Tardies** – Failure to enter class or school within the established schedule (students are informed of their schedule).
3. **Leaving Campus Without Permission** – Once a student arrives on campus for the school day, he/she must remain until the end of his/her school day.
4. **Leaving Class Without Permission** – Leaving class without permission and remaining on campus is skipping.
5. **Displaying any Unacceptable Contact of a Sexual Nature.**
6. **Fighting** – Students involved in fighting or other physical contact that could result in injury by not displaying a weapon.

7. Causing and, or Inciting Fighting, Physical Contact – Students involved in causing and, or inciting fighting or other physical contact that could result in injury.

8. Stealing, Extortion – Students involved in stealing or extortion.

9. Vandalism – Students involved in vandalism.

10. Fire Alarm – Students involved in initiating or executing a false fire alarm.

11. Insubordination – Students guilty of insubordination (verbal attack) toward any staff member.

12. Classroom Disruption – This area includes any classroom infractions that could not be handled by the classroom teacher.

13. Tape/Record/CD Players, Beepers, Phones & Video Games - Tape/Record/CD Players, Beepers, Phones & Video Games are not permitted (on campus) during the school day without permission from the administration.

14. Violation of the District Internet Use Policy

Consequences – Any of the above **Unacceptable Behaviors** (1-14) will be handled through administrative action by the principal or designee.

C. ADDITIONAL UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

1. Weapons & Ammunition – Possession of any ammunition and/or weapons (included but not limited to pellet, “BB” guns, razor blades, and box cutters).

2. Fighting, Threatening with a Weapon – Students involved in fighting, threatening someone with, or displaying any weapon.

3. Physical Attack on School Related Personnel – Students involved in a physical attack on any school related personnel or instructional personnel.

4. Alcoholic Beverages – Possession, use or sale of alcoholic beverages.

5. Drugs – Possession, use or sale of mood change drugs or substances.

6. Tobacco – Possession, use or sale of tobacco.

7. Bomb Threat – Students involved in initiating or executing a bomb threat.

8. Students Charged with a Felony – The principal has the authority to suspend a student who is formally charged with a felony for an incident which allegedly occurred on other than public school property, if the incident is shown to have an adverse impact on educational program, discipline, or welfare in the school in which the student is enrolled.

D. TRESPASSING

Any non-student or student under school suspension who is school campus during the school day or at a school function without permission from the office will be considered trespassing. The person will be told to leave campus immediately and not to return. If this fails or if the person returns, law enforcement officials will be called to remove the individual.

E. DRESS CODE

1. Rights – Students have the right to be able to learn without being offended and/or distracted by the clothing or appearances of others. Students have the right to wear clothes that are attractive, fashionable, modish, or “in fad” provided they are properly fitted, are not hazardous or harmful to themselves or others, and are within the guidelines of the school.

2. Responsibilities – Students have the responsibility to observe the basic standards of cleanliness, modesty, good grooming and dress. Students have the responsibility to wear clothing that contributes to their own health and safety as well as that of others.

3. Guidelines –

a. Students are not to wear inappropriate clothing (inappropriate, suggestive and/or distracting appearance and/or dress such as bare midriff).

b. Students are not to wear clothing with word phrases, symbols, patches, or insignia that are obscene or profane.

c. Students are not to have any form of headgear in their possession on campus before 3:45 PM.

d. Students are to wear shoes at all times. Being barefoot is not allowed.

4. Consequences of Unacceptable Dress Code – Any violation of the dress code and guidelines will result in the following:

Student/Administrative conference, parent notification, correcting the problem immediately, possible removal from class, and/or possible suspension from school.

