

2016-2017

MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents,

Mecklenburg County Public Schools recognizes that a safe school environment is critical to the learning process. Discipline begins at home, and schools support families by reinforcing positive and respectful behavior. Mecklenburg County Public Schools is committed to strategies that are consistent with the core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability. This code specifies clear consequences, which will be consistently administered.

School attendance is critical to academic achievement and preparing students for the world of work and personal success. The policy sets high expectations for student attendance and establishes consequences for excessive and unexcused absences.

Please review with your child this information on expectations for student conduct and attendance. Together we can provide an excellent learning opportunity for every student in our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul C. Nichols", is written over a white rectangular background.

Paul C. Nichols

Division Superintendent

DISCLOSURE: The Mecklenburg County School Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities or employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following people have been designated to handle questions regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Supervisor of Personnel will be the Title IX Coordinator, who will handle complaints for sexual discrimination and the Director of Exceptional Programs will be designated as the Section 504 Coordinator, who will handle complaints concerning disability discrimination. Please contact the Title IX or the Section 504 Coordinator at 175 Mayfield Drive, Boydton, VA 23917 or by calling 434-738-6111.

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <http://wdcrobcop01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Codes referenced in this document as of July 1, 2016.

Standards for Student Conduct and Attendance

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STANDARDS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT

Responsibilities

The Mecklenburg County School Board expects a high standard of student conduct in an effort to ensure an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, free of disruption and threat to person or property, and supportive of individual rights. Students and staff have a primary responsibility for creating a climate of mutual respect, honesty, and trust in each school in order that the dignity of the individual is protected and the potential of each student may be realized. These standards will apply to students while on school property, when at school-sponsored activities, and when going to and returning from school. Students may also be disciplined for acts committed away from school property and outside school hours if the conduct is detrimental to the safety of the school or the well-being of students or staff or adversely affects school climate or discipline.

The principal of the school and those to whom he or she delegates the authority for the discipline of students, including teachers, are responsible for the consistent and uniform application of all School Board policies and regulations, and the rules of the individual school, which together set forth the standards for student conduct.

The principal or designee shall determine the appropriate disciplinary measures for each case of misconduct by a student, except where consequences are predetermined by specific School Board policy or by law. Determinations of disciplinary measures shall include, but not be limited to:

- consideration of the nature and seriousness of the offense;
- degree of danger to the school community;
- the student's age and grade level;
- results of any mental health, substance abuse, or special education assessments;
- student's attendance and academic records;
- relative impact of a violation on the entire student body as well as on the individual;
- school and county-wide regulations and rules;
- appropriateness and availability of an alternative education placement or program;
- student's cumulative discipline record to include the seriousness and number of previous infractions; and
- such other matters as the principal or designee deems appropriate.

Principals shall inform, consult with, or refer to their supervisor any discipline matters that involve situations of extreme danger, acts of violence, threats to the school, and any discipline matters that involve unusual circumstances or need special handling. The principal shall notify the parent or legal guardian of each suspension and may require a conference with the parent or legal guardian prior to readmission. All disciplinary actions shall be taken in

accordance with due process requirements.

Definitions

When used in this Regulation, unless otherwise specifically defined where used, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Alcohol: Testing for being under the influence of - A student who is referred to an administrator for exhibiting symptoms and behaviors associated with alcohol use may be administered an approved test by the school resource officer.

Drugs: Testing for being under the influence of- For referrals associated with physical symptoms or behaviors that indicate the student may be under the influence of drugs at school, the administrator will contact the parent or legal guardian and inform them of the symptoms and the suspicion that the student may be under the influence of drugs. To rule out drug use, the student may be referred to a designated laboratory, within 24 hours, for non- intrusive urine screening before returning to school. When tests are positive, the student will be disciplined and cost of urine screening will at the parent's expense. Should the test yield negative results, the school will incur the cost of the urine screening.

Battery/Assault - Intentional touching or striking of another person against his or her will, or intentionally causing bodily harm to an individual. This occurs when one individual physically attacks another individual. This includes an attack with a weapon or one that causes serious bodily harm to the victim.

Bullying - Repeated or single incidents of negative behaviors targeting a specific victim. Bullying behaviors include, but are not limited to, threats, verbal or written abuse, physical abuse, harassment, ethnic or gender slurs, exclusion, and threatening body posture.

Bullying via social media will be enforced by administration and may involve school resource officer.

Controlled Substance - As defined in the Drug Control Act of Chapter 15.1 of Title 54 of the Code of Virginia and as defined in schedules I through V of 21 U.S.C. 81.

Cursing or Verbal Abuse - Profane, obscene or abusive language, whether or not directed at any person in a threatening or intimidating manner. Cursing or verbal abuse directed at any person may result in referral to law enforcement officials. The school may suspend students for this language.

Drug Paraphernalia - Those items described in Section 18.2-265.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Exclusion from Class or Classes - A student may be removed from a single class or several classes for a set period of time.

Expulsion - A student's privilege to attend school may be terminated by the School Board in accordance with the Code of Virginia Sections 22.1-277, 22.1-277.06, and School Board Regulation: JGD/JGE.

Hazing – To recklessly and intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily harm on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of intimidation, admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for, continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body, regardless of whether the student or students so engaged or injured participated voluntarily in this activity.

Imitation Controlled Substance - A pill, capsule, tablet or other item which is not a controlled substance, an alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, or marijuana, but which by overall dosage unit or appearance, including color, shape, size, marking or package, or by representations made, is intended to lead or would lead a reasonable person to believe that such a pill, capsule, tablet or other item is a controlled substance, an alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, or marijuana.

In-School Suspension - A student may be removed from his regular schedule of classes and assigned to a classroom for the entire day for a reasonable period of time. The student is detained in the room for the day.

Prescription Drug or Medication - Any drug or other substance used in treating diseases, healing, or relieving pain, including those prescribed by a health care provider and all over-the-counter drugs.

Reasonable Suspicion - A belief based upon objective facts and the rational inferences that may be drawn from such facts or based on direct or reported observation. Factual foundations may include, but are not limited to, observation of the student's behavior, appearance or performance such as bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, staggering, odor of alcohol, erratic behavior or other behavior uncharacteristic of the student, agitation, explosiveness, altercations or violence, excessive absenteeism and tardiness, lethargy, or apparent consumption of alcohol or controlled substances.

Referral to Law Enforcement Officials - Violations of law may be handled by referring the case to law enforcement officials in addition to the use of other disciplinary measures. All incidents involving assault; assault and battery; sexual assault; death; stabbing, cutting or wounding; alcohol, marijuana, controlled substances, imitation-controlled substances, anabolic steroids; threats against school personnel; the illegal carrying of a firearm onto school property; any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices or hoax explosive devices, or chemical bombs; or any threats or false threats to bomb will result in referral to law enforcement officials in accordance with the Code of Virginia Section 22.1-279.3:1.

Special Assignment - A student may be given a special assignment as a corrective measure. This may include, but not be limited to, reasonable assignments for general assistance at the school facility.

Suspension from Extracurricular Activities - A student's privilege to participate in all or certain extracurricular activities or school-sponsored activities may be suspended for a fixed period of time or until certain specified conditions have been fulfilled. Suspension from extracurricular activities may be imposed in conjunction with other penalties. A student holding a leadership position, such as club and organization offices, and a student representing the school or school organization in contests, special delegations or honorary positions will give up the leadership position and opportunity to represent the school or its organizations beginning with the date of suspension. Additionally, team rules or organization constitutions or by-laws at the individual school level may deny participation beyond the term imposed by the school administration.

Suspension from School - A student may be suspended from school for violation of this regulation as set forth in the Code of Virginia Sections 22.1-277, 22.1-277.04, 22.1-277.05. A student shall not be permitted to participate in any school-sponsored activities while suspended. The principal may impose up to a ten-day suspension as deemed appropriate. A recommendation for suspension in excess of ten days or expulsion will be forwarded to the discipline Hearing Officer. Regularly scheduled school days that have been cancelled by the Superintendent due to unforeseen circumstances do not count toward completing the assigned out-of-school suspension.

Suspension of Computer Privileges - Prohibited from access to computer networks and server resources.

Warning and Counseling - Warning and counseling are used where appropriate to assist a student to understand that his or her conduct interferes with the educational process, threatens the rights of others, or is contrary to school policy or regulations and needs to be corrected.

Weapons: Possession or Use - Shall include, but is not limited to, guns, firearms, blank guns, starter guns, pellet guns, air guns, toy guns, tear gas guns, chemical weapons, knives, metallic knuckles, blackjacks, explosive devices, joined rings, and other objects which may be used as weapons or imitation weapons.

Students may be disciplined as specified in the following applicable paragraphs:

Violation of Law and School Board Policy

Violations of law may be handled by referring the case to law enforcement officials in addition to the use of school disciplinary measures. All incidents involving assault; assault and battery; sexual assault; death; stabbing, cutting or wounding; alcohol, marijuana, controlled substances, imitation-controlled substances, anabolic steroids; threats against school personnel; the illegal carrying of a firearm onto school property; any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, or chemical bombs; or any threats or false

threats to bomb will result in referral to law enforcement officials in accordance with the Code of Virginia Section 22.1-279.3:1. The principal or designee also shall notify the parent or legal guardian of any student involved in such an incident regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken against such student or the nature of the disciplinary action. Such notice shall relate to only the relevant student's involvement and shall not include information concerning other students.

Violation of School Regulations

- Continued or willful disobedience;
- Disrespect;
- Defiance of authority of any employee of the school system;
- Willful interruption or substantial disturbance of any school;
- Leaving school grounds without the prior written permission of the principal or designee;
- Misuse of electronic devices;
- Absence from school without a valid excuse;
- Misrepresenting oneself using e-mail, or logging into or attempting to log into a school computer system server using an account not assigned to the student by the computer system administrator ;
- Trespassing on Mecklenburg County School property;
- Cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise representing the work of others as one's own; and
- Any other conduct that interferes with the orderly operation of the school.

Threats to Persons

Conduct of such character as to constitute a danger to the physical well-being of others;

A threat, oral or in writing (including electronically transmitted communication producing a visual or electronic message), to kill or do bodily harm, regardless of whether the person who is the object of the threat actually receives the threat, if the threat would place the person who is the object of the threat in reasonable apprehension of death or bodily harm;

Physically striking or otherwise committing an assault upon any teacher, administrator, other employee, or any other person;

Cursing, bullying, or verbally abusing any person;

Sexual misconduct, whether consensual or not;

Verbal or physical harassment based upon another's race, gender, religion or disability;

Profane language or conduct, obscene language or conduct, or demeaning remarks directed at students or staff;

Use or possession of any type of weapon, either operable or inoperable, or a look-alike weapon; violation of this regulation will result in out-of-school suspension and may include a

recommendation for expulsion;

Use of or possession of any object deemed by the principal to be a threat to the safety or welfare of the student or other persons;

Defiance or insolence directed at a teacher or other staff member to include insubordination or disregard of a verbal instruction or direction;

A student who brings a firearm as defined in Section 22.1-277.07D of the Code of Virginia or 921 of Title 19 of the United States Code, or as prohibited by Section 18.2-308.1 of the Code of Virginia on school property or to a school-sponsored activity may be expelled for a minimum of 365 days. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee may determine, based on the facts of the particular case that special circumstances exist and that another disciplinary action is appropriate. Nothing herein shall prohibit the permanent expulsion of such students.

Threats to Property

- Taking or attempting to take another person's personal property or money, including school-owned property or money;
- Damaging or attempting to damage school property or the property of others;
- Unauthorized occupancy of any part of the school or school grounds, or failure to leave promptly after having been directed to do so by the principal, other school employee, or law enforcement officer;
- Willfully damaging or attempting to damage software, operating systems, or data files stored on school computer systems
- Any threat, false or not, or attempt to bomb, burn or destroy in any manner a school building or any portion thereof.

The range of consequences listed in alphabetical order to be used individually or in any combination as determined appropriate by the principal or enforcing authority.

- alternative placement
- community service
- confiscation of prohibited items
- counseling
- detention in school
- exclusion from class
- recommendation for expulsion
- recommendation for long-term suspension
- referral to law enforcement officials
- special assignments
- suspension from extracurricular activities
- suspension of computer privileges

- overnight suspension
- suspension out of school
- warning

Substance Abuse

A substance abuse offense is a serious infraction of the Mecklenburg County Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct and Attendance and the Code of Virginia. A substance abuse offense includes the possessing, using, being under the influence, distributing, receiving, or attempted/intended distribution of:

- alcohol, alcohol product, or alcohol container
- prescription and over the counter drug
- anabolic steroid or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or controlled substance (as defined in the Drug Control Act of Chapter 15.1 of Title 54 of the Code of Virginia and as defined in schedules I thru V of 21 U.S.C.81)
- imitation controlled substance
- drug paraphernalia (as defined in Section 18.2-265.1 of the Code of Virginia)
- any drugs or any other noxious chemical substances including but not limited to fingernail polish or model airplane glue, containing any ketones, aldehydes, organic acetates, ether, chlorinated hydrocarbons or vapors, deliberately smelled or inhaled, or causing others to do so, with the intent to become intoxicated, inebriated, excited, stupefied or to dull the brain or nervous system (inhalants)

Upon reasonable suspicion that a student is in violation of this regulation regarding substance abuse, the principal or designee may require that the student be tested for alcohol by use of an approved test by the school resource officer or tested for drugs at a designated facility, as appropriate. Reasonable suspicion is defined as a belief based upon objective facts and the rational inferences, which may be drawn from such facts or based on direct or reported observations. Factual foundations may include, but are not limited to, observation of the student's behavior or performance such as bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, staggering, odor of prohibited substance, erratic behavior or other behavior uncharacteristic of the student, agitation, explosiveness, altercation or violence, excessive absenteeism and tardiness, lethargy, or apparent consumption of alcohol, marijuana, or controlled substances. A student who refuses to submit to alcohol or drug testing in such cases may be disciplined, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion. A suspected violation may be referred to law enforcement officials. All incidents involving a violation of these prohibitions shall be reported to the principal.

Consequences for certain violations are as follows:

a. Alcohol

Using, possessing, distributing, receiving, or being under the influence of alcohol or alcohol products is prohibited and shall result in suspension and may result in expulsion according to the following schedule:

First offense: (a) a ten day out-of-school suspension; (b) forty-five (45) school day suspension from participation in or attendance at all after school or school sponsored activities; (c) loss of parking privileges for 365 days. A student violating this policy when fewer than forty-five (45) school days remain in the school year will complete the remaining days of suspension from participating in or attendance at all after-school or school-sponsored activities beginning the first day of the next school year.

Second offense: a recommendation for extended suspension or expulsion

b. Drugs:

Possession of:

Marijuana, Controlled Substance, Imitation Controlled Substance or Drug Paraphernalia

Section 22.1-277.08 of the Code of Virginia, requires that a school board expel a student who has been determined “to have brought a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, as defined in Section 18.2-247 of the Code of Virginia, or marijuana onto school property or to a school sponsored activity.” A student who possesses, distributes, or receives any controlled substance, imitation controlled substance or marijuana at any time while on school property or at a school sponsored activity will be recommended for suspension by the principal, with the option to send to the Discipline Hearing Officer for a discipline hearing. In the case of a first violation, the Discipline Hearing Officer may determine, based on the facts of the particular case that special circumstances exist and that another disciplinary action is appropriate. Nothing herein shall prohibit the permanent expulsion of such students.

Under the influence of:

Suspicion of being under the influence of marijuana or any controlled substance or possessing drug paraphernalia is prohibited and shall result in suspension or expulsion according to the following schedule:

First offense: a ten day out-of-school suspension and a hearing before the discipline committee to decide if further disciplinary action will be taken.

Second offense: a recommendation for expulsion.

c. Prescription Drugs

The illegal use of prescription drugs is prohibited. Further, no student may have in his or her possession any prescription drug. The parent or legal guardian shall take all such items to the office of the principal or designee for safekeeping and administration within prescribed procedures. Any student who possesses, distributes, or receives a prescription drug at any time while on school property or at a school-sponsored activity will be recommended for suspension

by the principal, with the option to send to discipline hearing with the Discipline Hearing Officer. In the case of a first violation, the Discipline Hearing Officer may determine, based on the facts of the particular case that special circumstances exist and that another disciplinary action is appropriate. Nothing herein shall prohibit the permanent expulsion of such students.

d. Over-the-Counter Drug

No student may have in his or her possession any over-the-counter drug, even if recommended or prescribed for the student's use. The parent or legal guardian shall take all such items to the office of the principal or designee for safekeeping and administration within prescribed procedures. Possessing, using, distributing, or receiving over-the-counter drugs by a student is prohibited and may result in a disciplinary action as determined by the principal.

Tobacco Violations

Using or possessing tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and hookahs, is prohibited, and shall result in suspension or expulsion according to the following schedule:

First offense: three-day out-of-school suspension

Second offense: five-day out-of-school suspension

Third offense: ten-day out-of-school suspension and a referral to the Discipline Hearing Officer and may require substance intervention program prior to readmission

Fourth offense: suspension for a minimum of ten days and may include a recommendation for extended suspension or expulsion per Superintendent or Superintendent's designee

STUDENT PLEDGE PROGRAM/PRIVILEGED ACTIVITY RANDOM ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING

In keeping with the mission of the Mecklenburg County Public Schools, the Mecklenburg County Public School Board hereby establishes the Student Pledge Program to protect student health, safety and welfare and to strengthen partnerships among faculty, administrators, coaches, parents, and students in order to reduce alcohol and other drug (AOD) related barriers and hazards to academic, athletic and personal development and success.

Gang Activity

Criminal street gangs are defined in the Code of Virginia, Section 18.2-46.1. Gang-related activity will not be tolerated in any school or at any school activity and may be subject to disciplinary consequences, to include out of school suspension and a recommendation for expulsion. Symbols of gang membership are expressly prohibited. Examples include clothing that symbolizes association, rituals associated with, or activities by an identified group of

students. Students may be disciplined for participating in specific activities such as tagging, graffiti, wearing of bandanas, beads or any like objects or symbols associated with membership or participation in gangs. All suspected gang activity will be reported to the school's resource officer or other law enforcement representative.

Weapons

A student shall not use or have in his or her possession any type of weapon either operable or inoperable. Violation of this regulation will result in out-of-school suspension and may result in a recommendation for expulsion. For more information, see section Q. B., Definitions, and Va. Code § 22.1-277.07; certain offenses require the principal to recommend the student for expulsion to the Discipline Hearing Officer,

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is illegal behavior that harms the victim and negatively impacts the school system by creating an environment of fear, distrust, and intolerance. Because Mecklenburg County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, healthy environment for all students that promotes respect, dignity, and equality, it is the purpose of this regulation to create and preserve an educational environment free from unlawful sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools strictly prohibits all forms of sexual harassment on school grounds, school buses, and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events. It shall be a violation of this regulation for any student, employee or third party (school visitors, vendors, etc.) to sexually harass any student.

Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communications of a sexual nature, and any other gender-based harassment, whether initiated by students, employees or third parties when:

Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education (including any aspect of the student's participation in school-sponsored activities or any other aspect of the student's education);

Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting a student's academic performance, participation in school-sponsored activities, or any other aspect of a student's education;

The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance or participation in school-sponsored activities, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Examples of school-related conduct that the school system considers unacceptable and often a part of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

Rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, attempted sexual assault, forcible sexual abuse, hazing, and other sexual and gender based activity of a criminal nature as defined by the laws of Virginia;

Unwelcome sexual invitations or requests for sexual activity in exchange for grades, promotions, preferences, favors, selection for extracurricular activities or job assignments, homework, etc.;

Unwelcome and offensive public sexual display of affection, including kissing, making out, groping, fondling, petting, inappropriate touching of one's self or others, sexually suggestive dancing, and massages;

Any unwelcome communication that is sexually suggestive, sexually degrading, or implies sexual motives or intentions, such as sexual remarks or innuendoes about an individual's clothing, appearance, or activities; sexual jokes; sexual gestures; public conversation about sexual activities or exploits; sexual rumors and "ratings lists;" catcalls and whistles; sexually graphic computer files, messages or games, etc.;

Unwelcome and offensive name-calling or profanity that is sexually suggestive, sexually degrading implies sexual intentions, or that is based on sexual stereotypes or sexual preference;

Unwelcome physical contact or closeness that is sexually suggestive, sexually degrading, or sexually intimidating such as the unwelcome touching of another's body parts, cornering or blocking an individual, standing too close, spanking, pinching, stalking, frontal body hugs;

Unwelcome and sexually offensive physical pranks or touching of an individual's clothing, such as hazing and initiation, "streaking," "mooning," "snuggies," or "wedgies," pinching, placing hands inside an individual's pants, shirt, blouse, or dress;

Unwelcome leers, stares, gestures, or slang that is sexually suggestive, sexually degrading, or implies sexual motives or intentions;

Clothing with sexually obscene or sexually explicit slogans or message;

Unwelcome written or pictorial display or distribution of pornographic or other sexually explicit materials such as magazines, videos, films, Internet material; and

Any other unwelcome gender-based behavior that is offensive, degrading, intimidating, demeaning, or that is based on sexual stereotypes and attitudes.

In compliance with applicable federal law, it is the policy of the Mecklenburg County Public Schools to investigate promptly and resolve equitably all complaints of sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex. Victims of sexual harassment shall be afforded avenues for filing complaints that are free from bias, collusion, intimidation, or reprisal.

Victims of sexual harassment should document the harassment as soon as it occurs and with as much detail as possible, including the nature of the harassment, dates, times, and places it has occurred; names of the harasser(s) and any witnesses; and the victim's response to the

harassment.

The victim should directly inform the building administrator of the complaint and should clearly indicate what action he or she wants taken to resolve the complaint. While victims are encouraged to submit a complaint in writing, complaints may be made orally.

Any school employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment from a student shall inform the student of the employee's obligation to report the complaint to the building administrator and then shall immediately notify the building administrator. Any employee who fails to report student complaints to the building administrator may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Any building administrator who fails to investigate student complaints of sexual harassment may be disciplined up to and including dismissal.

Students are encouraged to report complaints as soon as possible and at least within 30 days of the incident, so that the complaint can be effectively investigated. Any school employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment from a student shall inform the student of the employee's obligation to report the complaint to the building administration, and then shall immediately notify the building administrator. The building administrator shall promptly investigate the complaint, at least within ten days, and report the results to the parties. If the building administrator determines that the complaint is well founded, he or she shall take appropriate disciplinary action or report the matter to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee for action.

The privacy and confidentiality of all parties and witnesses to complaints will be respected. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced against the school system's obligation to cooperate with the criminal justice authorities, afford due process to the accused, conduct a thorough investigation, and take appropriate corrective measures, the school system reserves the right to disclose the identity of parties and witnesses in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

Any act of retaliation against any person who opposes sexual harassment, who has filed a complaint, or who has testified, assisted or participated in any way in the handling of a sexual harassment complaint is prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

False or malicious complaints of sexual harassment may result in disciplinary action against the complainant.

This policy shall be posted in each facility in the school system and shall be published in the employee handbook.

Hazing of Students

It is unlawful to haze or otherwise mistreat so as to cause bodily injury to any student at any

school or in any school activity whether it is part of an initiation ritual for club or extracurricular activity membership or athletic program. Students found to be in violation will be suspended out of school for harassment.

Any student found to be in violation and causing bodily injury to another student shall be referred to law enforcement consistent with Va. Code § 18.2-56. Any student found guilty of hazing by the court system will be recommended to the School Board for expulsion. Complaints of hazing shall be reported to the building administrator to be investigated using the same procedures as for sexual harassment.

Bullying

A student, individually or as part of a group, shall not harass or bully others. Bullying behavior may include physical, intimidation, taunting, name calling and insults; comments regarding the race, gender, religion, physical abilities or characteristics of associates of the targeted individual; and falsifying statements about the targeted individual or associates. Bullying behavior may be verbal or non-verbal.

A student who is found in violation may be suspended out of school; repeated violations may result in a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

Bullying via social media will be handled by administration and may involve school Resource Officer.

Student Use of Technology

Mecklenburg County Public Schools strives to provide equitable access and encourages the use of technology, whenever possible and appropriate, to support the curriculum and student learning objectives. Technology includes but is not limited to computers, other hardware, and electronic devices including: software, Internet, Intranet, e-mail, and all other networks.

- a. Acceptable use of technology and electronic information systems by students includes:

Accessing research databases and libraries of information in the form of text, graphics, photographs, video, and sound; Interacting and collaborating with others; Acquiring knowledge and skills to support learning objectives; Publishing opportunities; and Extending teaching and learning opportunities.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools allows students to access electronic information systems while safeguarding students from potential hazards by filtering objectionable sites. Students are allowed access to Internet resources with the understanding that some material may be inaccurate or objectionable. The use of inappropriate resources is not permitted. Mecklenburg County Public Schools does not endorse and is not responsible for content associated with links outside of the Mecklenburg County Public Schools' network. Mecklenburg County Public Schools reserves the right to block downloading from specific file extensions or specific sites. Students

using Mecklenburg County Public Schools' electronic information systems are subject to monitoring by Mecklenburg County Public School personnel. Students must sign an acceptable use agreement annually.

b. Unacceptable use of technology and electronic information systems by students includes, but may not be limited to:

sending or accessing material containing obscene or sexually explicit language or images such to include sending, forwarding, displaying, retaining, storing or posting sexually explicit, lewd, indecent or pornographic photographs, images or messages by or on any cell phone, computer or other electronic means during school hours or activities on or off campus, while on school division property, during any recess, lunch or leave periods on or off school division property, by use of school division property, or beyond the hours of school operation if the behavior detrimentally affects the personal safety or well-being of school-related individuals, the governance, climate or efficient operation of the school or the educational process or experience; sending e-mail containing inappropriate, profane, obscene, abusive, or offensive language; sending e-mail conveying a threat against any student, school personnel, or school property; providing personal or confidential information about another individual or sharing or exchanging passwords for purposes not appropriate to the educational program; posting harassing, inflammatory, or threatening information about a person or event; violating copyright, privacy, plagiarism, or intellectual property laws; accessing material for commercial purposes that do not support the instructional mission; damaging any computers, computer systems, computer networks, or other electronic information systems; using Mecklenburg County Public Schools' electronic information systems for purposes that do not support the instructional mission; and altering or attempting to alter school system data.

The use of technology as an educational and instructional resource requires that students entrusted with the privilege of its use be held accountable. It is the responsibility of the user to obey the rules and procedures governing acceptable use at all times. Students are personally accountable for any and all activities logged to their computer identification and password. Any activities that disrupt or interfere with the safety and welfare of the school community are prohibited, even if such use takes place off school property. Such activities will be subject to school disciplinary action.

c. Penalties for improper use of technology by a student or a violation of the acceptable use agreement by a student may include: warning, conference with student or parent, in school detention, suspension or termination of computer privileges, suspension out of school, recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion, legal action, restitution

d. Mecklenburg County Public Schools offers an open wireless connection. All individuals that take advantage of this open wireless connection agree to be bound by the Mecklenburg County Public Schools' rules and regulations set forth by the School Board. All students and employees of Mecklenburg County Public Schools must submit all necessary forms and receive permission to use this open wireless system. All persons that are given access to this open wireless system agree to be bound by the rules and regulations set forth in the BYOD Policy and Guideline Form. Mecklenburg County Public Schools are not responsible for any damage, lost data, upkeep, repair, or security of these devices. Accessing this wireless connection without

permission and authentication is a direct infraction of school policy and will be dealt with as such. The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires all network access to be filtered regardless of the device; **no personal wireless connections can be used.**

Use of Cellular Telephone by Students

If a student wishes to possess a cellular telephone while on school property, the cell phone should not be visible at any time. The student may not turn on or use the cellular telephone during the official instructional day unless instructed by the teacher to use it according to the BYOD policy. Students’ phones should not be visible when entering or exiting their car or bus in the morning or afternoons. These safety procedures are in the best interest of each driver and student.

- First offense: warning and conference with administrator
- Second offense: overnight suspension and parent meeting
- Third offense: two days of In School Suspension
- Fourth offense: one day Out of School Suspension

Any subsequent offense will result in loss of cell phone privileges and meeting with Elementary or Secondary Director.

Search and Seizure

Lockers and other facilities made available to students for storing their personal possessions remain under the joint control of the school administration. The school administration has the right to search lockers, desks, and other storage facilities for items that violate law or school policies and regulations, or that may be harmful to the school or its students. Vehicles parked on school property, lockers, and other storage facilities may be subject to periodic and random searches by school officials as well as by trained dogs.

The school administration also has the right to search any student and the student's belongings when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student possesses an item that violates law or school policies and regulations, or that may be harmful to the school or its students.

Video Surveillance

As a component of a comprehensive safe school plan, video surveillance, with or without audio capability, may be used in the common areas of certain schools and on school buses to maintain the security of students, staff members and visitors. Surveillance equipment may or may not be monitored at any time. Video recordings may be used for disciplinary purposes. To protect the confidentiality of all students, only school personnel may view video recordings that include more than one student. Law enforcement representatives in the course of a criminal investigation

may view video recordings.

Disciplinary Authority Under Certain Circumstances

The Discipline Hearing Officer may require any student to attend an alternative education program regardless of where the crime occurred if the student has been:

charged with an offense relating to Virginia law or with a violation of School Board policies, on weapons, alcohol or drugs, or intentional injury to another person; found guilty or not innocent of an offense relating to Virginia laws on weapons, alcohol or drugs, or of a crime that resulted in or could have resulted in injury to others, or for which the disposition ordered by a court is required to be disclosed to the Superintendent pursuant to Va. Code §16.1-305.1; found to have committed a serious offense or repeated offenses in violation of School Board policies; suspended pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-277.05; or expelled pursuant to Va. Code §§ 22.1-277, 22.1-277.06, 22.1-277.07, or 22.1-277.08.

Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion

1. Suspension for Ten Days or Less

The principal, any assistant principal, or in their absence, any teacher may suspend a pupil for ten school days or less using the following procedures:

- a. The student shall be apprised of the nature and facts of the alleged misconduct.
- b. The student shall be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the alleged misconduct from his or her perspective.
- c. The principal shall verify that the student has not been identified as a student with a disability or is suspected of being a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act before suspending the student for more than an aggregate of ten days in a school year.
- d. The student shall be informed of the conditions of the suspension, such as the required conference with the parent or legal guardian prior to return, prohibition from coming on school property, and prohibition on attending scheduled school activities or school-sponsored events.
- e. The principal shall execute a letter of suspension stating the condition of the suspension and the date that the student may return to school. Copies of the letter of suspension shall be given to the student, if possible, and mailed to the student's parent or legal guardian.
- f. The parent or legal guardian shall be notified of the right to an appeal and the procedures for appeal.

2. Emergency Suspension

Any student whose presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing

threat of disruption may be summarily removed from school immediately. The notice, explanation of facts, and the opportunity to present his or her version required under Suspension for Ten Days or Less shall be given as soon as practicable thereafter.

3. Suspension in Excess of Ten Days

The Superintendent's designee may suspend a student from school in excess of ten school days after the student and the parent or legal guardian have been provided written notice of the proposed action, the reason therefore, and the right to a hearing before the Superintendent's designee. The Superintendent's designee shall execute a letter of suspension, stating the condition of the suspension and the date that the student may return to school. In any case in which a student has been suspended by the Superintendent's designee after a hearing, the student and the parent or legal guardian may appeal the decision to the School Board. Such appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the Superintendent's designee within seven calendar days of the suspension decision. Failure to file a written appeal within the specified time will constitute a waiver of the right to an appeal. The School Board will consider the appeal upon the record of the suspension hearing within 30 calendar days of the appeal.

4. Expulsion

The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee may recommend that a student be expelled. Recommendations for expulsion for actions other than those specified in Va. Code §§ 22.1-277.07 and 22.1-277.08 shall be based on consideration of the following factors:

nature and seriousness of the violation;

degree of danger to the school community;

student's disciplinary history, including the seriousness and number of previous infractions;

appropriateness and availability of alternative education placement or programs;

student's age and grade level;

results of any mental health, substance abuse, or special education assessments;

student's attendance and academic records; and

other matters as deemed appropriate

No decision to expel a student shall be reversed on the grounds that these factors were not considered, and these factors may be considered as special circumstances for the purposes of complying with Va. Code §§ 22.1-277.07 and 22.1-277.08.

The principal shall notify the student and the parent or legal guardian in writing of the following:

proposed action and the reasons therefore; right of the student and the parent or legal guardian to a hearing before the Superintendent's designee; and right to inspect the student's school records. If the Superintendent's designee upholds the recommendation of expulsion, the student shall be suspended until the School Board decides the matter. The Superintendent's designee may impose a lesser sanction. In cases involving weapons as described in the Va. Code § 22.1-277.07 or drugs as described in Va. Code § 22.1-277.08, the Superintendent's designee may conduct a preliminary review of such cases to determine whether a disciplinary action other than expulsion is appropriate. If a determination is made that another disciplinary action is appropriate, then the Superintendent's designee may implement that disciplinary action so long as it is taken in accordance with procedures related to student discipline in this regulation.

If the Superintendent's designee upholds the principal's recommendation of expulsion, the student and the parent or legal guardian may request a hearing before the School Board. Such request must be in writing and must be filed with the Superintendent's designee within seven calendar days of the decision to uphold the principal's recommendation. Failure to file a written request within the specified time will constitute a waiver of the right to a hearing before the School Board. In cases where there is no appeal of the recommendation for expulsion, the School Board will act on the recommendation for expulsion in the absence of the parent or legal guardian and the student. Upon a timely request for a hearing before the School Board, the Superintendent's designee shall notify the student and the parent or legal guardian of the time and place of the hearing.

5. School Board Hearing

The procedure for the School Board hearing shall be as follows:

- a. The School Board shall determine the propriety of attendance at the hearing of persons not having a direct interest in the hearing. The hearing shall be private unless otherwise specified by the School Board.
- b. The School Board may ask for opening statements from the principal, the principal's representative, the Discipline Hearing Officer, and the student or the parent, legal guardian or representative and, at the discretion of the School Board, may allow closing statements.
- c. The parties shall then present their evidence. The principal has the ultimate burden of proof and shall present evidence first. Witnesses may be questioned by the School Board members and by the parties (or their representatives). The School Board may, at its discretion, vary this procedure, but it shall afford full opportunity to both parties for presentation of any material or relevant evidence and shall afford the parties the right of cross-examination; provided, however, that the School Board may take testimony of a student witness outside the presence of the student in the discipline case, the parent, legal guardian or their representative if the School Board determines, at its discretion, that such action is necessary to protect the student witness.
- d. The parties shall produce such additional evidence the School Board may deem

necessary. The School Board shall be the judge of the relevancy and materiality of the evidence.

- e. Exhibits offered by the parties may be received in evidence by the School Board and, when so received, shall be marked and made part of the record.
- f. The School Board may, by majority vote, uphold, reject, or alter the recommendation.
- g. The School Board shall transmit its written decision to the student, the parent or legal guardian, the principal and Superintendent, including the reasons therefore, the length of the expulsion, the availability of community-based educational programs, alternative education programs or other educational options. The cost of any community-based educational program, alternative education program, or educational option that is not a part of the educational program offered by the division shall be borne by the parents.

The School Board may permit or require an expelled student to attend an alternative education program provided by the School Board for the term of the expulsion. If the School Board determines that the student is ineligible to return to regular school attendance or to attend during the expulsion an alternative education program or adult education program in the school division, the School Board shall advise the parent or legal guardian that the student may petition the School Board for readmission to be effective one calendar year from the date of expulsion and of the conditions, if any, under which readmission may be granted. Petitions for readmission must be submitted by the parent or legal guardian to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee no fewer than 60 days and no more than 90 days prior to the expiration of the expulsion or within such other

Procedure for Appealing Out-Of-School Suspension for Ten Days or Less period as may be established by the School Board in the notice of expulsion.

A decision to suspend a student may be appealed by the student's parent or legal guardian. An appeal of a suspension shall not hold the suspension in abeyance. Failure to file a written notice of appeal within the prescribed time will constitute a waiver of the right to appeal. A parent or legal guardian may appeal a suspension to the principal of the school, and then to the Elementary or Secondary Director in the following manner.

1. A parent or legal guardian shall submit a written letter of appeal to the principal of the school within two administrative working days of notification of the suspension. The parent or legal guardian should state specifically the reasons for the appeal and consider the following before appealing a suspension: (a) whether the facts warrant the suspension, (b) if the consequences were appropriate for the behavior, and (c) whether school and county procedures were followed.

The principal shall review the suspension, all the evidence, and render a written decision as soon as possible but within three working days.

2. To appeal further, the parent or legal guardian shall submit written notice to the principal,

within two administrative working days of the principal's decision to uphold the suspension, requesting that the principal forward the letter of appeal and all documentation to the Elementary or Secondary Director. The Director shall review the information, gather any additional information, or conduct a hearing if necessary, and render a written decision. For suspensions of ten days or less, the decision of the Director shall be final.

Procedure for Appealing Out-Of-School Suspension of More than Ten Days or change in placement

The Discipline Hearing Officer may suspend a student from school in excess of ten school days or modify the student's school setting after the student and the parent or legal guardian have been provided written notice by the principal of the proposed action, the reason thereof, and the right to a hearing. A decision which alters a students' school setting or extends out of school suspension may be appealed by the student's parent or legal guardian. An appeal of a suspension shall not hold the suspension in abeyance. A parent or legal guardian may appeal a suspension in excess of ten days to the School Board in the following manner:

1. When a student has been suspended more than ten days or whose school setting has been altered by the Discipline Hearing Officer, the student and the parent or legal guardian may appeal that decision to the School Board. Such an appeal must be in writing and must be filed within seven calendar days of the decision to suspend in excess of ten days. The parent or legal guardian should state specifically the reasons for the appeal and consider the following before appealing a suspension: (a) whether the facts warrant the suspension, (b) if the consequences were appropriate for the behavior, and (c) whether school and county procedures were followed. Failure to file a written appeal within the specified time will constitute a waiver of the right to appeal.
2. The School Board shall, within 30 calendar days of the decision to suspend in excess of ten days, conduct a review of the record and render a written decision.

Procedure for Imposing and Appealing Out-of-School Exclusions

Any student who has been suspended for more than 30 days or expelled by a public or private school in or outside of Virginia, or for whom admission to a private school has been withdrawn may be excluded from attendance from Mecklenburg County Public Schools upon written notice to the student and the parent or legal guardian setting forth the reasons therefore and the opportunity for a hearing before the Superintendent's designee. The decision of the Superintendent's designee shall be final unless altered by the School Board, upon a written petition filed with the Superintendent's designee by student or the parent or legal guardian within five days of the decision of the Superintendent's designee to exclude. Upon a timely petition, the School Board shall review the matter on the record.

In the case of a suspension of more than 30 days, the term of the exclusion may not exceed the duration of such suspension.

In excluding any expelled student from school attendance, the School Board may accept or waive any or all of any conditions for readmission imposed upon the student by the expelling school board. The School Board shall not impose additional conditions for readmission to school.

Upon the expiration of the exclusion period for an expulsion or a withdrawal of admission, a period that shall be established by the Superintendent's designee, the student may again petition the School Board for admission. If the School Board again rejects the petition for admission, the School Board shall identify the length of the continuing exclusion period and the subsequent date upon which the student may petition the School Board again for admission.

Discipline of Students With Disabilities

1. Definition

For purposes of this regulation, a student will be considered disabled if identified as disabled by the Eligibility Committee and not subsequently terminated from the special education program or if, prior to the date on which the misconduct occurs, there is reason to suspect a disability.

2. Short-Term Suspension

A student with disabilities may be suspended out of school for ten days or less at a time in accordance with regular suspension procedures. The imposition of any additional short-term suspension after the first ten days cumulative in a school year must be reviewed to determine whether it will result in a change in placement. If it is found to result in a change in placement, then the discipline procedures for a suspension of greater than 10 days must be followed.

The principal is to keep a tally of the total number of days of suspension received by each disabled student. When a student has accumulated more than ten days of suspension in any single school year, the principal must refer the student to the administrator of special education in the school for a review of the student's educational program and to consider whether the suspensions have effected a change in placement. More than ten cumulative days of short-term suspensions in a single school year may be a change in placement requiring a manifestation determination review, functional behavior assessment, behavior intervention plan, reevaluation, and procedural protections. A student with a disability may be removed from the student's current educational setting for a period of time that cumulatively exceeds ten school days in a school year for separate incidents of misconduct as long as the removals do not constitute a pattern. Isolated short-term suspensions for unrelated instances of misconduct may not be considered a pattern. Factors to consider in determining whether a change in placement has occurred are the length of each suspension, the proximity of the suspensions, and the total number of days suspended in a single year. If it is determined that this suspension would result in a change in placement, then the procedures in Section 3 for Long-term Suspension and Expulsion must be followed. In any case, once suspensions have totaled ten days in a single school year, the administrator of special education in the school shall convene an IEP committee meeting to develop a functional

behavioral assessment plan, create a behavior intervention plan, and determine if any modifications in the special education program or updated evaluations are required. Customary procedures for notice of:

- a. Evaluation and of the IEP meeting, including procedural safeguards, must be followed.
- b. Suspension from the bus may count as a day of suspension if the student does not receive the services specified in the IEP during the suspension.
- c. In-school suspensions may count as a day of suspension if the student is not allowed the opportunity to continue progress in the general curriculum, receive the IEP services, or participate with non-disabled students to the same extent.

3. Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion

If it is proposed that a student with a disability be expelled or receive a single suspension of more than ten days at a time, the following procedures must be followed in addition to the regular suspension and expulsion procedures:

The principal shall notify the Superintendent's designee immediately of the proposed disciplinary action.

Because long-term suspensions and expulsions are a change in placement, notice of the contemplated disciplinary recommendation, the reasons for the disciplinary action, and notice of procedural safeguards must be given to the parent or legal guardian the same day as the recommendation for discipline is made. The notice will be considered as given if mailed first class postage prepaid on the date the recommendation for discipline is made. The Principal or his/her designee is responsible for seeing that these notices are given.

A functional behavior assessment plan must be developed at an IEP meeting held within ten business days of the recommendation for discipline. A behavior intervention plan is developed or reviewed as soon as practicable after the completion of the functional behavior assessment. If an evaluation is required to conduct the functional behavior assessment, written permission from the parent or legal guardian will be required. The timeline for concluding the functional behavior assessment should be established during the IEP meeting.

The Manifestation Review Committee composed of the members of the IEP Committee and other qualified individuals must be convened within ten school days of the recommendation for a long-term suspension or expulsion. The committee should be composed of members familiar with special education or the student. At least one or more members of the committee must be knowledgeable about the student. The following typically serve as members of the committee and additional members may be appointed by the Principal or his/her designee:

- o principal and/or principal designee
- o student's special education teacher
- o school psychologist
- o school social worker
- o parent or legal guardian
- o student's regular education teacher

The parent or legal guardian is to be notified of the manifestation review meeting and invited to participate. The Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for notifying the parent or legal guardian of the time, date, place, and purpose of the meeting and must identify the individuals who will be attending the meeting. Accommodations in the scheduling should be made to permit the parent or legal guardian to attend, although timelines must be met. Documentation of efforts to notify the parent or legal guardian shall be maintained. If the parent or legal guardian declines to attend or fails to attend after having been given notice, the committee may meet without them. The parent or legal guardian may have representation during the meeting at his or her own expense, if desired.

The committee is to consider all relevant information including evaluation and diagnostic results, information supplied by the parents, observations of the student, the student's IEP, placement, and records. The committee will then decide whether the misconduct is a manifestation of the disability.

Minutes of the meeting shall be maintained. The minutes shall include those attending, the information considered, the consensus of the committee and the rationale for the decision.

The Principal or his/her designee shall give written notice to the parent or legal guardian of the committee's decision and of procedural safeguards including the right to contest the committee's decision through a due process hearing.

If the committee determines that there is no manifestation, the student may be considered for a long-term suspension or expulsion through regular disciplinary procedures. The student still must be provided with a free appropriate public education, although in another setting.

If the committee determines that there is a manifestation, the student may not receive a long-term suspension or expulsion. The student may still be suspended for a maximum of ten days for this offense by following the short-term suspension requirements for students with disabilities.

The student may not be suspended from school for more than ten days while the manifestation committee process is being followed unless the parent or legal guardian gives permission for a longer suspension or for a change in placement that may be homebound instruction. In the

absence of parental consent, authorization for a longer suspension or change in placement may be sought from the court or from a hearing officer. Students with disabilities (1) who bring weapons to school or possess weapons on school premises or at a school function or (2) knowingly possess or use illegal drugs or sell or solicit the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function may be removed from school for 45 calendar days. A student in these circumstances may be placed in an interim alternative education program without parental consent and regardless of whether the misconduct is a manifestation of the student's disability. This unilateral authority to remove the child from their IEP placement does not limit the authority of the administrator to recommend appropriate discipline.

While proceedings are pending to contest the imposition of discipline, and except as provided above, the student must remain in his or her current educational placement.

e. In those cases where the handling of discipline is specified in the student's IEP, the IEP's provisions shall supersede this regulation.

If prior to the misconduct occurring there is knowledge by the school that the student has a disability but has not yet been identified, the student is entitled to assert the protections afforded to identified students with disabilities.

A student, who is referred for identification as disabled after disciplinary measures are taken and for whom there was no knowledge of a disability prior to the misconduct occurring, is subject to the same disciplinary procedures as students without disabilities. The student is entitled to an expedited evaluation. Special education and related services will be provided if the student is found to be eligible. The manifestation review decision and the educational services provided to a student with disabilities while disciplined may be challenged in a due process hearing under applicable special education laws.

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 18.2-56, 18.2-83, 18.2-85, 18.2-87.1, 18.2-308, 18.2-

308.1, 18.2-380.7, 18.2-433.1, 22.1-70.2, 22.1-253.13:7.C.3, 22.1-276.3, 22.1-277, 22.1-277.07, 22.1-277.2, 22.1-279.1, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.001.

Student Parking

Students violating Virginia law or School Board policy regarding alcohol or other illegal or controlled drugs, regardless of the time or place of the violation, shall lose all parking privileges for a period of at least 365 days from the date of the violation.

Bookbags

At the secondary level, bookbags shall be kept in lockers upon arrival to school.

Attendance

Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-254

Compulsory attendance required; excuses and waivers; alternative education program attendance; exemptions from:

A. Except as otherwise provided in this article, every parent, guardian, or other person in the Commonwealth having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday shall, during the period of each year the public schools are in session and for the same number of days and hours per day as the public schools, send such child to a public school or to a private, denominational or parochial school or have such child taught by a tutor or teacher of qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent or provide for home instruction of such child as described in §22.1-254.

As prescribed in the regulations of the Board of Education, the requirements of this section may also be satisfied by sending a child to an alternative program of study or work/study offered by a public, private, denominational or parochial school or by a public or private degree-granting institution of higher education. Further, in the case of any five-year-old child who is subject to the provisions of this subsection, the requirements of this section may be alternatively satisfied by sending the child to any public educational prekindergarten program, including a Head Start program, or in a private, denominational or parochial educational prekindergarten program.

Instruction in the home of a child or children by the parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of such child or children shall not be classified or defined as a private, denominational or parochial school.

The requirements of this section shall apply to (i) any child in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections who has not passed his eighteenth birthday and (ii) any child whom the division superintendent has required to take a special program of prevention, intervention, or remediation as provided in subsection C of § 22.1-253.13: and in § 22.1-254.0. However, the requirements of this section shall (a) be satisfied for those persons 16 through 18 years of age who are housed in adult correctional facilities when such persons are actively pursuing a general educational development (GED) certificate but are not enrolled in an individual student alternative education plan pursuant to subsection D and (b) not apply to any child who has obtained a high school diploma, its equivalent, or a certificate of completion or who has otherwise complied with compulsory school attendance requirements as set forth in this article.

B. A school board shall excuse from attendance at school:

1. Any pupil who, together with his parents, by reason of bona fide religious training or belief is conscientiously opposed to attendance at school. For purposes of this subdivision, "bona fide religious training or belief" does not include essentially political, sociological or philosophical views or a merely personal moral code; and

2. On the recommendation of the juvenile and domestic relations district court of the county or city in which the pupil resides and for such period of time as the court deems appropriate, any pupil who, together with his parents, is opposed to attendance at a school by reason of concern for such pupil's health, as verified by competent medical evidence, or by reason of such pupil's reasonable apprehension for personal safety when such concern or apprehension in that pupil's specific case is determined by the court, upon consideration of the recommendation of the principal and division superintendent, to be justified.

C. A school board may excuse from attendance at school:

1. On recommendation of the principal and the division superintendent and with the written consent of the parent or guardian, any pupil who the school board determines, in accordance with regulations of the Board of Education, cannot benefit from education at such school; and

2. On recommendation of the juvenile and domestic relations district court of the county or city in which the pupil resides, any pupil who, in the judgment of such court, cannot benefit from education at such school.

D. Local school boards may allow the requirements of subsection A of this section to be met under the following conditions:

For a student who is at least 16 years of age, there shall be a meeting of the student, the student's parents, and the principal or his designee of the school in which the student is enrolled in which an individual student alternative education plan shall be developed in conformity with guidelines prescribed by the Board, which plan must include:

a. Career guidance counseling;

b. Mandatory enrollment and attendance in a general educational development preparatory program or other alternative education program approved by the local school board with attendance requirements that provide for reporting of student attendance by the chief administrator of such GED preparatory program or approved alternative education program to such principal or his designee;

c. Counseling on the economic impact of failing to complete high school; and

d. Procedures for reenrollment to comply with the requirements of subsection A of this section.

A student for whom an individual student alternative education plan has been granted pursuant to this subsection and who fails to comply with the conditions of such plan shall be in violation of the compulsory school attendance law, and the division superintendent or attendance officer of the school division in which such student was last enrolled shall seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law as set forth in this article.

Students enrolled with an individual student alternative education plan shall be counted in the average daily membership of the school division.

E. A school board may, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article 3 (§ 22.1-276.0 et seq.) of Chapter 14 of this title and upon a finding that a school-age child has been (i) charged with an offense relating to the Commonwealth's laws, or with a violation of school board policies, on weapons, alcohol or drugs, or intentional injury to another person; (ii) found guilty or not innocent of a crime that resulted in or could have resulted in injury to others, or of an offense that is required to be disclosed to the superintendent of the school division pursuant to subsection G of § 16.1-26; (iii) suspended pursuant to § 22.1-277.0; or (iv) expelled from school attendance pursuant to § 22.1-277.0 or § 22.1-277.0 or subsection B of § 22.1-27, require the child to attend an alternative education program as provided in § 22.1-209.1:2 or § 22.1-277.2:1.

F. Whenever a court orders any pupil into an alternative education program offered in the public schools, the local school board of the school division in which the program is offered shall determine the appropriate alternative education placement of the pupil, regardless of whether the pupil attends the public schools it supervises or resides within its school division.

The juvenile and domestic relations district court of the county or city in which a pupil resides or in which charges are pending against a pupil, or any court in which charges are pending against a pupil, may require the pupil who has been charged with (i) a crime which resulted in or could have resulted in injury to others, (ii) a violation of Article 1 (§ 18.2-7 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2, or (iii) any offense related to possession or distribution of any Schedule I, II, or III controlled substances to attend an alternative education program, including, but not limited to, night school, adult education, or any other education program designed to offer instruction to students for whom the regular program of instruction may be inappropriate.

This subsection shall not be construed to limit the authority of school boards to expel, suspend, or exclude students, as provided in §§ 22.1-277.0, 22.1-277.0, 22.1-277.0, 22.1-277.0, and 22.1-277. As used in this subsection, the term "charged" means that a petition or warrant has been filed or is pending against a pupil.

G. Within one calendar month of the opening of school, each school board shall send to the parents or guardian of each student enrolled in the division a copy of the compulsory school attendance law and the enforcement procedures and policies established by the school board.

H. The provisions of this article shall not apply to:

1. Children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases while suffering from such diseases;
2. Children whose immunizations against communicable diseases have not been completed as provided in §22.1-271.;
3. Children under 10 years of age who live more than two miles from a public school unless public transportation is provided within one mile of the place where such children live;
4. Children between the ages of 10 and 17, inclusive, who live more than 2.5 miles from a public school unless public transportation is provided within 1.5 miles of the place where such children live; and
5. Children excused pursuant to subsections B and C of this section.

Further, any child who will not have reached his sixth birthday on or before September 30 of each school year whose parent or guardian notifies the appropriate school board that he does not wish the child to attend school until the following year because the child, in the opinion of the parent or guardian, is not mentally, physically or emotionally prepared to attend school, may delay the child's attendance for one year.

The distances specified in subdivisions 3 and 4 of this subsection shall be measured or determined from the child's residence to the entrance to the school grounds or to the school bus stop nearest the entrance to the residence of such children by the nearest practical routes which are usable for walking or riding. Disease shall be established by the certificate of a reputable practicing physician in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board of Education.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Attendance

School attendance is critical to academic achievement and preparing students for the world of work and personal success. Each parent or guardian, having charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age, shall be responsible for the child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required under provisions of state law. For students age 18 or over, the requirements of this policy will apply to the student rather than the parent or guardian. Every teacher shall keep an accurate daily or class record of attendance of all children assigned. The Superintendent shall provide online access of the compulsory school attendance law and this attendance policy to the parent or legal guardian of each student within the first calendar month of each school year. Printed copies may be obtained at each school at the request of a parent or guardian.

A. Expectations

The School Board expects students and their parents or guardians to actively take responsibility

for ensuring attendance, with support from the school. For elementary students that is equivalent to 3 and one half hours. High school students must be present for 2 complete blocks to be counted present. For VHSL purposes, a student must be present for 3 complete blocks at the high school level and 2 blocks at the middle school level.

A student who is approved to participate in a school-sponsored field trip or other approved activity shall be counted as in attendance. Students shall attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused. Secondary students shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work-study program. The Superintendent or designee must approve all other exceptions to a full day schedule on an individual basis.

A student who is tardy to school or leaves early from school, regardless of whether it is excused or not, may disrupt the learning environment for all. The principal or designee must approve tardies to school or early dismissals from school. Tardies to school or early dismissals from school may be considered excused for the same reasons as are listed for absences in Section B. Students must be present for 2 complete blocks to be counted present. For VHSL purposes, a student must be present for 3 complete blocks at the high school level and 2 complete blocks at middle school level.

B. Absences

There are times when a student is unable to attend school. Each parent or legal guardian, having charge of a child enrolled in Mecklenburg County Public Schools, shall contact the school each day his or her child is absent all or part of any school day. Schools have phone systems in place to receive voice messages at all times. Schools will make reasonable effort to contact a parent or legal guardian of each absent student every day and a log will be kept of contact attempts.

Absences that may be considered excused upon receipt of a valid written note (5 per semester) or other form of notice approved by the school from the parent or guardian on the day of the student's return to school include:

- Illness (if over two days, the school may require a note from the physician);
- Medical and dental appointments;
- Court appearance;
- Death in the family;
- Observance of a religious holiday; and
- Extenuating circumstances as determined by the school administration.

For a day of absence for which there is no valid written excuse, the principal or designee will make a reasonable effort to directly contact the parent or guardian.

C. Excessive Absences

Excessive absences, excused and unexcused, are those which create a pattern and loss of instructional time. Any student who displays a pattern of excessive absences, tardies, or early dismissals, whether excused or not, may be referred to the principal or designee for truancy. They shall investigate and recommend appropriate corrective action, including a conference with the parent or guardian, alternative placement, or referral to the appropriate agencies.

For any student whose absences exceed, during a school year, more than ten school days or ten class periods of a course scheduled daily, or five class periods of a course on the block schedule, the principal or designee may require a conference with the parent or legal guardian to discuss the implications for learning and achievement, the consequences of failure to attend, and any corrective actions that need to be made. Further, the principal or designee may require documentation beyond the written excuse if more than 5 handwritten notes have been sent for that semester.

Any student whose absences exceed, during a school year, 20 school days in a year or 20 class periods of a course scheduled daily or 10 class periods for a block class may not receive credit for the course. The principal may require the parent, guardian, and student to attend a conference whereby documentation can be discussed for the days absent. The principal may waive this requirement upon consideration of extenuating circumstances. This consequence complies with the state Standards for Accrediting Public Schools that define the standard for awarding course credit for graduation. For elementary and middle school students, excessive absences may be a factor in decisions regarding a student's promotion to the next grade.

MCPS Truancy Prevention Procedure:

For any student whose absences are not documented by a parent note or parent contacting the school, the principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to directly contact the parent to obtain an explanation for the absence. They will explain the consequences of nonattendance. A plan will be developed jointly with the parent and student to resolve the student's nonattendance. If the student is absent for an additional day after the direct contact, a conference shall be scheduled with the parent and student within 10 days and held no later than 15 days after the sixth absence. Upon the seventh absence, the principal or designee will notify the MCPS Truancy Officer to take the actions prescribed by Section 22.1-258 of the Code of Virginia. Actions include either or both of the following: 1) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision or 2) instituting proceedings against the parent pursuant to Section 18.2-371 or Section 22.1-262, Code of Virginia.

MCPS Truancy Prevention Flowchart

AT EACH ABSENCE: MCPS staff will document their contact in SIS.

At 3rd Unexcused Absence:

- o Phone call to parent/guardian
- o 3 day letter sent
- At 5th Unexcused Absence:
- o Phone call to parent/guardian
- o 5 day letter sent
- o Meeting scheduled for parent/guardian to come in and complete attendance contract
- o Complete and sign attendance contract
- At 6th Unexcused Absence:
- o Phone call to parent/guardian
- o 6 day letter sent
- o Second parent/guardian conference scheduled
- o Truancy conference held
- At 7th Unexcused Absence:
- o Phone call to parent/guardian
- o 7 day letter sent
- o Refer to student support services for possible legal action.

D. Make-up Work

When a student is absent from school , a parent may call the school and request that work be gathered from each teacher and sent to the guidance office or the main office to be pick up and completed. It is the student's responsibility, or the parent or guardian of an elementary student, to communicate with the teacher on the day he or she returns to class to schedule the make-up of missed work. Students are expected to make up all work missed within 3-5 days of return. The principal or designee, however, may consider extenuating circumstances in extending the time limit.

E. Release of Students

Principals shall not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the student's parent or legal guardian. Students shall be released only on the request and authorization of the parent or legal guardian. The burden of proof that the release is authorized is on the person receiving the student.

Schools will maintain a formal checkout system to ensure this requirement is met.§ 22.1-279.3.

Parental responsibility and involvement requirements:

- A. Each parent of a student enrolled in a public school has a duty to assist the school in enforcing the standards of student conduct and compulsory school attendance in order that education may be conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property, and supportive of individual rights.
- B. A school board shall provide opportunities for parental and community involvement

- in every school in the school division.
- C. Within one calendar month of the opening of school, each school board shall, simultaneously with any other materials customarily distributed at that time, send to the parents of each enrolled student (i) a notice of the requirements of this section; (ii) access to online copy of the school board's Student Code of Conduct and Attendance; and (iii) access to a copy of the compulsory school attendance law(as noted in the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance). These materials shall include a notice to the parents that states that by signing the statement of receipt, parents shall not be deemed to waive, but to expressly reserve, their rights protected by the constitutions or laws of the United States or the Commonwealth and that a parent shall have the right to express disagreement with a school's or school division's policies or decisions. Printed copies of each may be obtained at parent request.
- D. The school principal may request the student's parent or parents, if both parents have legal and physical custody of such student, to meet with the principal or his designee to review the school board's Student Code of Conduct and Attendance and the parent's or parents' responsibility to participate with the school in disciplining the student and maintaining order, to ensure the student's compliance with compulsory school attendance law, and to discuss improvement of the child's behavior, school attendance, and educational progress.
- E. In accordance with the due process procedures set forth in this article and the guidelines required by § 22.1-279.6, the school principal may notify the parents of any student who violates a school board policy or the compulsory school attendance requirements when such violation could result in the student's suspension or the filing of a court petition, whether or not the school administration has imposed such disciplinary action or filed a petition. The notice shall state (i) the date and particulars of the violation; (ii) the obligation of the parent to take actions to assist the school in improving the student's behavior and ensuring compulsory school attendance compliance; (iii) that, if the student is suspended, the parent may be required to accompany the student to meet with school officials; and (iv) that a petition with the juvenile and domestic relations court may be filed under certain circumstances to declare the student a child in need of supervision.
- F. No suspended student shall be admitted to the regular school program until such student and his parent have met with school officials to discuss improvement of the student's behavior, unless the school principal or his designee determines that readmission, without parent conference, is appropriate for the student.
- G. Upon the failure of a parent to comply with the provisions of this section, the school board may, by petition to the juvenile and domestic relations court, proceed against such parent for willful and unreasonable refusal to participate in efforts to improve the student's behavior or

school attendance, as follows:

1. If the court finds that the parent has willfully and unreasonably failed to meet, pursuant to a request of the principal as set forth in subsection D of this section, to review the school board's standards of student conduct and the parent's responsibility to assist the school in disciplining the student and maintaining order, and to discuss improvement of the child's behavior and educational progress, it may order the parent to so meet; or

2. If the court finds that the parent has willfully and unreasonably failed to accompany a suspended student to meet with school officials, pursuant to subsection F, or upon the student's receiving a second suspension or being expelled, it may order the student or his parent, or both, to participate in such programs or such treatment, including, but not limited to, extended day programs, summer school, other educational programs and counseling, as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior or school attendance. The order may also require participation in a parenting, counseling or a mentoring program, as appropriate or that the student or his parent, or both, shall be subject to such conditions and limitations as the court deems appropriate for the supervision, care, and rehabilitation of the student or his parent. In addition, the court may order the parent to pay a civil penalty not to exceed \$500.

H. The civil penalties established pursuant to this section shall be enforceable in the juvenile and domestic relations court in which the student's school is located and shall be paid into a fund maintained by the appropriate local governing body to support programs or treatments designed to improve the behavior of students as described in subdivision G.

2. Upon the failure to pay the civil penalties imposed by this section, the attorney for the appropriate county, city, or town shall enforce the collection of such civil penalties.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools Dress Code

Parents and students must assume the responsibility of the student's proper attire as outlined in the policy. If a student's dress or appearance is inappropriate, lacking in cleanliness or is not in good taste, and substantially disrupts class or learning activities, the student will be required to change his or her dress or appearance. This policy serves as the warning in reference to the dress code. For specific guidelines and consequences, see your student handbook.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation

It is the county's goal to transport all children to and from school safely and free from intimidation or fear of harm. All students who ride a school bus are subject to and expected to abide by the laws, rules, and regulations set by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Mecklenburg County School Board. The driver is in charge of the bus and students who ride the bus. The student must accept the authority of the driver and cooperate with his/her requests. At any time, a parent conference may be required by the principal or his designee before a student can return to the bus. Riding a school bus is a privilege. Abuse of this privilege will not be tolerated. Please refer to your student's handbook for details and guidelines set forth by MCPS and the transportation department.

The Mecklenburg County public school system does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, disabilities or national origin in employment or in its educational programs and activities. More info: www.mcpsweb.org.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Brent Richey, District 1
Dale Sturdifan, District 2
Wanda Bailey, District 3
Lindell Palmer, District 4
Gavin Honeycutt, District 5
Rob Campbell, District 6
Dora Garner, District 7
Kenneth Johnson, District 8
Glenn Edwards, District 9
Paul Nichols, Superintendent

Bring Your Own Device Policy:

Students and teachers may utilize their laptops or other devices at school. Cell phones may be used by students with teacher permission.

Guidelines:

1. Any student/teacher who wishes to use a personally owned laptop or other digital device within Mecklenburg County Schools must read and sign this agreement and submit to the librarian. Only after all agreements are signed by student and parent and the student has a signed AUP on file, will the student be allowed to use a personal laptop. If a teacher brings his/her own device; they will just need to sign this document and have the librarian set them up an account.

2. The student/teacher takes full responsibility for his/her digital device and keeps it with him/her at all times. The school is not responsible for the security of the device.

3. The student/teacher is responsible for the proper care of their digital device, including any costs of repair, replacement or any modifications needed to use the laptop at school. The school technicians will not work on personal computers. All participants must have up-to-date virus protection software loaded on their computer.

4. Violations of any Board policies, administrative procedures or school rules involving a student's/teacher's personally owned laptop may result in the loss of use of the laptop in school and/or disciplinary action.

5. Before using the laptop in any class, the student must inform the teacher and ask permission to use the device. The student must comply with teachers' request to shut down the computer or close the screen.

6. Personal laptops shall be charged prior to bringing it to school and shall be capable of running off its own battery while at school.

7. The student may not use the laptop to record, transmit or post photos or video of a person or persons on campus. Nor can any images or video recorded at school be transmitted or posted at any time without the express permission of a teacher or administrator.

8. The student should only use their device to enhance learning, which could include note taking, research, or teacher led instruction. No personal laptops will be used for Benchmark or SOL testing. Also students should note that they will not be able to print from their laptop to a school's printer.

9. The student will use the BYOD wireless network. **Use of personal wireless connections (i.e. hot spot or wireless card) is not allowed.** Internet filtering is a requirement of all public schools. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires all network access to be filtered regardless of the device you use to access it while in a public school. You own your device, but the network you are using belongs to the school and Internet access will be filtered.

As a student I understand and will abide by the above policy and guidelines. I further understand that any violation of the above may result in the loss of my network and/or laptop privileges as well as other disciplinary action.

As a parent I understand that my child will be responsible for abiding by the above policy and guidelines. I have read and discussed them with her/him and they understand the responsibility they have in the use of his/her laptop.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools
Parent/Student Acknowledgements of
Student Code of Conduct and Attendance
2016-2017**

Student Name (*print*) _____ Grade _____
Teacher Name (*print*) _____ Date _____

This code has been drawn up to help your son/daughter gain the greatest possible benefit from his/her school experience. Parents/guardians have the responsibility for the actions of their children and should be involved in the education of their children. Students are responsible to be an active part of their school safety through involvement in the reporting of potential violent acts. All students will sign annually when they have been inserviced in the major areas of the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance. The teacher or administrator will house the signature sheet.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) need to become involved in the education of their children and have the responsibility to provide the school with the current emergency contact person and/or telephone numbers. They also have the responsibility to notify the school of anything (such as medical information) that may affect their child's ability to learn, to attend school regularly, or to take part in school activities. Parents should take special notice of the Attendance section of this document as well as the Suspension and Expulsion provisions, which are in accordance with School Board Policy.

The school system must have proof that every student and every parent/guardian has had a chance to review the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance. Signed acknowledgement must be part of every student's record. Your signature means that you have received information about the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance document and have been made aware of how to electronically access the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance @ www.mcpsweb.org (It does not mean that you agree or disagree with them.)

Failure to return this acknowledgement will not relieve a student or the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) from responsibility to know the contents of the Student Code of Conduct and Attendance and will not excuse the student's non-compliance with the Code of Student Conduct. Contact your local Principal or the District Office Student Services Department if you have questions or concerns.

Please check if you would like to request a printed copy of the 2016-2017 Student Code of Conduct.



Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Student /Date

Virginia Department of Education
Parent Notification Letter
Right to Request Information of Teacher Qualifications
As Required Under Title III Statewide Consortium Assurances

Mecklenburg County Public Schools

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) is a member of the Virginia Title III Statewide Consortium. As a part of this membership, MCPS must inform you as a parent of a student attending our schools that you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waved.
- The teacher's college major and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please contact the Title III Coordinator at (434) 738-6111 and we will provide the information to you in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Title III Coordinator