



Worth County Schools 2023 – 2024 Calendar

Planning (no students)	Holiday (no students or staff)	Last Day of 9-Weeks	1 st Day of School
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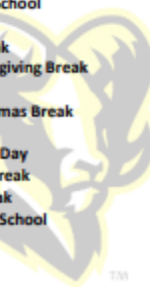
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- 8/1 First Day of School
- 9/4 Labor Day
- 10/6-10 Fall Break
- 11/20-24 Thanksgiving Break
- 12/15 Half-Day
- 12/18-1/3 Christmas Break
- 1/15 MLK Day
- 2/19 President's Day
- 3/8-12 Winter Break
- 4/1-5 Spring Break
- 5/22 Last Day of School
- 5/22 Half-Day
- 5/25 Graduation

Approved 2/9/23





FOREWORD

It is the purpose of the Worth County School District to operate each school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education that ensures the welfare and safety of all students who attend the schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, the Board of Education has adopted a policy that requires all schools to provide codes of conduct. These standards of behavior require students to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that facilitates an optimum learning environment for themselves and others.

We expect students to:

- Respect each other
- Respect school district employees
- Obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board of Education
- Obey rules established by individual schools

Each school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At bus stops
- At school or on school property at any time
- Off school property at any school activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events
- On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system

In addition, students may be disciplined if charged with a felony of which may pose a threat to the school's learning environment or the safety of students and employees.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community. Parents will have an opportunity to be involved in developing and updating the student code of conduct. We ask your cooperation in sharing this responsibility for maintaining a proper learning environment.

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

WORTH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

VISION, MISSION & SLOGAN

Vision:

Worth County Schools will prepare students to graduate and be productive citizens by providing them with access to high quality programs.

Mission:

Worth County Schools provides a quality education that develops graduates and life-long learners.

Slogan:

Committed to the Success of Every Student

PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of the **Worth County School District** to provide a safe and secure learning environment where “teachers can teach and students can learn.” Policies and regulations which are arrived at fairly and forthrightly with the collaboration of staff, parents, and students will create a positive learning climate for all.

Therefore, this **Code of Conduct of the Worth County School District** is important in providing and maintaining such a school climate.

The code will:

- Outline the roles of the student, school, and parents/guardians
- Define specific terms
- Specify the role and responsibilities of students, the school, and parents/guardians
- List general rules of conduct expected of all Worth County students
- Outline age appropriate, progressive discipline procedures for the schools, including consequences for unacceptable behaviors, from minor to severe
- Enumerate student support ideas, recommendations, and alternatives
- Match consequences with severity of behavior including removal of dangerous and chronically disruptive students from the learning environment
- Take into account any disability of the student when addressing misbehavior

In the Worth County School District, the students are expected to conduct themselves in compliance with school regulations and to exhibit courtesy and respect for authority at all times.

Rules for student conduct apply while students are on school grounds at any time, off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event, enroute to and from school on a school transportation vehicle, at a bus stop or on school transportation or private vehicle used to transport students to a school-sponsored function.

- Parents and guardians are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct with their children and to support its enforcement throughout the community.
- Parents and guardians are to sign or confirm receipt of the Code of Conduct.
- Failure to acknowledge receipt does not absolve the parent/guardian of any responsibility for information contained in the Code.
- Codes will be available in each school and classroom.
- All student handbooks shall include pertinent sections of Code of Conduct.
- Questions about the Code of Conduct should be addressed to the appropriate principal.

Students shall also be disciplined for engaging in off campus misconduct that could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the education process.

Disposition for such actions will result in the student appearing before a tribunal hearing to determine placement until verdict has been made at trial. Once case has been settled, the student will reappear before the tribunal committee to determine future placement.

The Superintendent and the Worth County Board of Education do fully support the authority of the teacher and principal to follow the mandates of Georgia law O.C.G.A. 20-2-738

Policies related to discipline are in the Worth County Board of Education policy manuals. The Policy Manual is available for public review at the Board of Education office and on the school system website (www.worthschools.net). Student handbooks are written to be consistent with Board of Education Policies and this Code of Conduct.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

To the extent appropriate to the situation, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of the discipline to be imposed by each school official should be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, while taking into account the totality of the situation, including the student's age, discipline history, and other relevant factors.

Infrequently, there are situations when school staff and parents/guardians disagree on discipline measures for a student. In those cases, the school principal will, based on this Code of Conduct, school discipline policy/procedures, and administrative judgment, assign appropriate discipline measures. In addition, the principal may make student discipline decisions determined to be in the best interest of the student and the school in any case of disruptive conduct not specifically covered in this Code.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communications through personal contacts are extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as on-going opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

Parents and students should contact the principal of the school if specific questions arise related to the Code of Conduct.

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

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

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

The law allows a local board of education to petition the juvenile court to require a parent to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by the principal pursuant to the laws cited above, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent or

guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

The Worth County School District seeks to promote a positive environment for Worth County Schools in which there is an awareness of, involvement in, and support for the system and its educational mission. Recognizing that open channels of communication are essential in fulfilling its role as a legislative body, the Board of Education invites parents, students, staff and others, to offer suggestions on policies by submitting in writing any suggested additions, changes or deletions to the policies. The Code of Conduct is reviewed annually and parents, guardians, and students are invited to participate in the review process.

PROCESS FOR PARENTS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS

When parents have concerns about their child's education or educational setting, the following is an outline of the process to follow:

1. The first step is to talk with the teacher(s) of the child. It may be convenient to have a discussion via phone (best) or electronically. If this does not resolve the concern, a parent/teacher conference should be scheduled and attended additionally by the school counselor and/or appropriate administrator.
2. If the parent is not pleased with the outcome or response after working with the teacher(s) on the specific concern, the parent needs to address his/her concerns to the principal of the school.
3. If the parent is still not pleased with the outcome or response after meeting with the principal, the parent will need to contact system level personnel based on the specific concerns.
 - Transportation – Mr. Rusty Parten, 229-776-8612
 - Maintenance – Mr. Jimmy Odom, 229-776-8600
 - School Nutrition – Mrs. Cynthia Thomas, 229-776-8600
 - Student Services & Human Resources – Mrs. Kira Outlaw, 229-776-8600
 - Special Education – Mrs. Sommer Clark, 229-776-8600
 - Curriculum & Instruction, Professional Learning – Mrs. Teresa Sumner 229-776-8600
 - Federal Programs/Testing – Mrs. Felecia Cook, 229-776-8600
4. The Superintendent of Schools is willing to work with parents regarding concerns. However, parents should try to resolve their concerns as close to their child's classroom setting as possible. This is where services are provided and the school personnel know the most about the child and the issue. If you feel that you have followed this process and have been unsuccessful at having your concerns addressed, contact the Superintendent's secretary at 229-776-860

CAMPUS VISITATION

VISITORS: All visitors to school campuses must report to the front office before visiting other parts of the school, as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-27. Visitors will need to have proof of identification in the form of:

1. a driver's license,
2. military ID or
3. other state issued ID.

A visitor's badge will be issued that will provide identification for the person having a reason to be on campus. Persons not wearing such a badge will not be allowed on campus. Unauthorized visitors will be requested to leave; failure to do so will result in official misdemeanor charges of a high and aggravated nature. Visitors are allowed to visit only the areas requested. Please check with the front office at the school site for further clarification of their visitation procedures.

These measures are necessary to protect children from unauthorized persons. Only those children enrolled in a Worth County school shall be able to utilize school facilities, equipment, and programs, and participate in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, subject to all other existing rules of participation.

Water Safety Education

Georgia House Bill 402, known as the Edna Mae McGovern Act, requires that all public schools provide annual notice to parents and guardians on the importance of water safety education.

Water safety education courses and swimming lessons play an important role in saving countless lives every year. An aquatic education opportunity is not currently offered in Worth County. However, listed below are the contact numbers for YMCA locations offering swimming classes within our surrounding area.

Albany Area YMCA (Central): 229-436-0531

Albany Area YMCA (Lee): 229-759-9770

Moultrie YMCA: 229-985-1154

Tifton YMCA: 229-391-9622

FACE MASKS

Students will be allowed, but not required, to wear face masks in all school areas under normal circumstances.

WCSS may alter mask flexibility and requirements at any time.

Face masks must not be a bandana or bandana like and must be worn appropriately. Face masks also fall under the same rules of any other piece of clothing. Any masks deemed inappropriate by school administration will not be permitted.

DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

Disciplinary hearings are held following any instance of an alleged violation of the student Code of Conduct if the principal recommends a suspension or expulsion of a student longer than ten days or following an alleged assault or battery upon any school system employee, if that employee requests a hearing. The purpose of the hearing is to hear the charges and the evidence; to determine if the Code of Conduct was violated; and if so, to determine appropriate disciplinary action. The student and parents/guardians have a right to this due process hearing before a long-term suspension (more than ten days) or expulsion can be administered. The maximum penalty that can be imposed by a disciplinary hearing is permanent expulsion; however, it is the preferred policy of the board that disruptive students are placed in alternative education settings. Regardless of the student's status at the time of the disciplinary hearing (e.g. student transfers, student withdraws), the district will proceed with the hearing on the date scheduled and provided to the parent/guardian in the charge letter.

Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8.16 Unsafe School Choice Option.

For grades 6-12

In the event that a student chooses to admit to a violation of the code of conduct or chooses not to contest the charges before a hearing officer; and if the school and a parent/guardian agree as to appropriate disciplinary action; and if the parent/guardian chooses to waive the opportunity to participate in a disciplinary hearing, present evidence, subpoena and cross examine witnesses and be represented by an attorney at such hearing; a Disciplinary Hearing Waiver Agreement may be written, co-signed and dated.

CHEATING

Any form of cheating/academic dishonesty/plagiarism will be initially handled by the classroom teacher. Consequences may include a zero on assignment/test/project etc. and parent notified. Repeat offenses may be forwarded to the school administration and warrant more severe consequences.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

A student attempting to enroll in the Worth County School District during the time in which the student is subject to a disciplinary order from another school district may be denied enrollment or be subject to the completion of the disciplinary actions handed down from the other school district.

NON-RESIDENT STUDENT

Any student who lives out of the county but wishes to attend Worth County Schools may apply for non-residence status. Certain criteria must be met and maintained in order to be approved. Policy and application can be found on the school website and at each school location.

WITHDRAWAL STUDENTS

Any student who withdraws from Worth County School District prior to the completion of a disciplinary hearing must submit to completion of the previous disciplinary hearing before consideration of readmission.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities are not subject to the same disciplinary procedures as other students. First, it must be determined if the misconduct is caused by or has a direct and substantial relationship to the disabling condition. If so, that determination must be made by persons having expertise with respect to students who have disabilities. If it is determined that the misconduct does not arise out of the disabling condition, the student then is subject to discipline. However, under no circumstances can educational services be discontinued altogether for the student with disabilities. A student with disabilities can be temporarily removed from the classroom prior to a hearing when necessary to protect the student, other students, or the teacher, but the hearing shall be held as soon as possible.

SEARCHING STUDENTS

School officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Student's vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, desks, and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Cell phones/multi-media/electronic devices taken from students due to possession and/or use in violation of school rules are subject to having their contents searched. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities that occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

BULLY REPORTING PROCEDURE

The Worth County School District expressly prohibits the bullying of any person, by any means or method, at school, on school property, at school-related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

Should a student feel that they are, or have been bullied (see definition) they should first report to the closest teacher or person of authority. If the problem is not resolved, the student should report to a guidance counselor for intervention in the situation. If interventions are not successful, the Principal/Assistant Principal/SRO officer should be notified verbally or by written form.

Use of E-mail

The Worth County School District e-mail system is the property of the school district. All messages composed, sent, or received on the district e-mail system are and remain the property of the district.

The district reserves the right to monitor the e-mail system and disclose communication contained therein in order to ensure that it is being used for approved purposes only and to ensure that the district policies and rules are being followed.

Administrative procedures shall ensure that staff are provided notice that e-mail is sometimes subject to public records law and that anything they produce on the district's e-mail may be subject to public scrutiny.

All users shall be prohibited from sending e-mail or otherwise using the e-mail system for activities prohibited by district policy or rule, including but not limited to:

- Distributing or maintaining discriminatory, offensive, obscene, or defamatory material
- Annoying or harassing other people
- Engaging in non-district related activities for gain or profit
- Advertising, soliciting, or fundraising for matters not related to the district
- Presenting personal views as those of the district
- Improperly disclosing confidential information

Inappropriate use of the district's e-mail system may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy and state law.

DATA COLLECTION

Several times throughout the year, it will be necessary to collect data through student surveys. These surveys will cover various topics in education. All student surveys are completely anonymous. The data collected will be used to identify critical areas of need such as to:

- Maintain a school environment that is free of drugs and violence.
- Promote a class atmosphere that allows teachers to teach and students to learn.
- Develop and offer experiences that involve students in applying the concepts of making healthy decisions, accepting responsibility for their behavior, and understanding consequences.

Parents or guardians have the right to review surveys and contact the school principal with any questions or concerns. Parents will be allowed to opt out their student's participation in any survey that asks questions about private family matters or that collects information for marketing purposes.

CLEAR BOOK BAG POLICY

- Only clear book bags will be allowed in grades PK-12.
- Clear book bags cannot be obstructed with graphics, stickers, or other artwork.
- Each school will have some clear book bags on hand for sale. Book bags sold will be at cost, not as a fundraiser.
- Regular purses are allowed as long as nothing larger than a regular sized textbook can fit inside of the purse.
- Each school will designate a location for students to secure non-clear bags containing athletic equipment or other extracurricular items.



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is required for students to be academically successful in school. Students who have excessive absences each year find themselves behind in their classes and in danger of grade retention or loss of credits. With this in mind, the Worth County School District (WCSD) is placing more emphasis on regular school attendance. We are asking for your support by making every effort to have your child in school every day, except when the child's illness or a family emergency requires his/her absence.

The Worth County School District is taking the following actions to encourage school attendance and to discourage truancy:

1. All schools will provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in school, a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By **September 1** of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student will be asked to sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. After two reasonable attempts by the school to secure such signature or signatures, the school shall be considered to be in compliance with this subsection if it sends a copy of the statement, via certified mail, return receipt requested, or first-class mail, to such parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child, or children. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local board policy.
2. Parents of all students will provide a written excuse from a physician/certified medical practitioner, parent or guardian, stating days missed and reason for absence to the school within the **first three (3) days** the student returns to school, after an absence.
3. Parents of students in grades K – 8th will provide an excuse from a physician/certified medical practitioner after the **fifth (5th)** written parental excuse.
4. Parents of students from ages 6-9 who have **five (5) unexcused absences** will receive notification from the WCSD by phone and/or 1st class mail. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences. Upon the **6th unexcused absence**, a letter via certified mail with return receipt requested will be sent to parent. The letter will require parent/guardian to clear up unexcused absences within 5 business days or a warrant can be taken against the parent/guardian(s).

Note -O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150 (c) All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of this state prior to their seventh birthday shall become subject to all of the provisions of this article, the provisions of *Code Sections 20-2-690 through 20-2-701*, and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance even though they have not attained seven years of age.

5. Parents of students from ages 10 – 16, who have **five (5) unexcused absences**, will receive notification from the WCSD via phone and/or 1st class mail. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences. Upon the **6th unexcused absence**, a letter via certified mail with return receipt requested will be sent to parent. The letter can require parent/guardian to clear up unexcused absences within 5 business days or a warrant will be taken against the

parent/guardian(s) and a juvenile complaint will be filed against the student Failure to receive written notices in no manner absolves the parents'/guardians' responsibility in complying with all system/school attendance policies and rules.

6. If a student ages 14-16 has ***more than ten (10) consecutive school days of unexcused absences*** in any semester, notice will be given, by the school system, to the juvenile court and student may be withdrawn from school for lack of attendance.
7. In grades 9 -12, the WCSD will mail attendance letters on the fifth (5th), and seventh (7th) absence. These letters will be for unexcused absences per class period and will outline the WCSD's attendance policy as it relates to course credit(s).
8. Student tardiness will be addressed through each school's progressive discipline plan.
9. The WCSD's Child Attendance Team (CAT) consists of a (an): school social worker and administrator from each school. Additionally, each school has a building-level CAT team consisting of a (an): administrator and other support staff as needed. The school-level team is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the rules and regulations adopted by the Attendance Protocol Committee and other support staff, as needed. The Worth Co. School District's Attendance Team will address school attendance matters. For students, who are excessively absent, the WCSD's Attendance Team will make attempts to resolve the matter with students at the local level. However, if students' absences continue, a CHILD IN NEED OF SERVICES (C.H.I.N.S.) petition can be filed and referred to the DJJ Judge.
10. Local law enforcement officials will take an active role in questioning school-age students whom they see on the streets or in other public places during the school day and who are not accompanied by a parent/guardian. Police officers are to return truant students to their appropriate school where school administrators will provide appropriate discipline.
11. The WCSD shall report student attendance rates to the Attendance Protocol Committee and the State Board of Education at the end of each school year, according to a schedule established by the State Board of Education.

DEFINITIONS

The following words are defined because they appear throughout the Code and require a common understanding for students, parents, and staff.

1. **Alternative School** – school designed to meet the needs of student in grades 6-12 who have not been behaviorally successful in a regular school setting
2. **Assault** - the **attempt** or **threat** of harm of another person.
3. **Battery** – (also known as physical assault) – intentionally made direct or indirect physical contact with another person in an insulting, offensive, or provoking manner or in a way that physically harms the other person.
4. **Behavior Support Process** – mechanisms for identifying and addressing the student support plans/behavioral needs of students through the provision of integrated resources that promote behavioral change and/or support.
5. **Bullying (sexual, racial, ethnic, other), hazing, intimidation, verbal or non-verbal taunting or stalking.** This also includes **Cyber bullying (social media, electronic device communication whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment) on or off campus that impacts school climate.** Ref. O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4
6. **Bus safety issues** – include but are not limited to refusal to stay quiet at railroad crossings, hanging out of windows, disturbance in inclement weather, being out of seat and throwing items out of the window.
7. **Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student** – a student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur.
8. **Code of Conduct** – a systematic collection of regulations, rules, or procedures regarding behavior and expectations of persons or groups.
9. **Disciplinary Officer** – the disciplinary officer conducts certain disciplinary hearings, especially in matters that may result in long term suspension, expulsion or assignment to the alternative school.
10. **Due Process** – the protection of the rights of a student through established, fair practices.
11. **Expulsion** – suspension of a student from a school beyond the current school semester.
12. **Fighting** – the exchange of mutual physical contact usually with malicious intent on both sides and lack of responsiveness to intervention.
13. **Grand Theft** – theft involving items/materials valued at greater than \$500.00.
14. **Habitual Violator** – A student who has been referred to the administrative staff an excessive number of times with similar behaviors.
15. **Harassment** – (Board policy definition) means any acts, conduct, or communication having gender, racial, religious, or ethnic demeaning implications which are created and communicated by a person to another with the intention to demean, intimidate, dominate, abuse, or browbeat the recipient of the act or communication and that such intent is reasonably perceived by the recipient for that purpose. The prohibited conduct does not apply to a single event incurred by the recipient but does apply to repetitious conduct on the part of a perpetrator, even though such conduct may be exhibited to a different person.

16. **Inappropriate Student Demeanor** – student behavior that shows disrespect, or contempt, to other students, administrators, faculty, or staff. Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts.
17. **Home Suspension (long term)** – removal of the student from the school campus and exclusion from all school-sponsored activities for more than ten (10) school days, but not beyond the current school semester. Students on long-term suspensions are not permitted on any school campus or any school-sponsored event.
18. **Home Suspension (short term)** – removal of the student from the school campus and exclusion from all school-sponsored activities for not more than ten (10) school days by the school administration. Students on short term suspension are not permitted on any school campus or at any school sponsored event.
19. **Horseplay** – misbehavior when students are not angry, and respond to interventions, and there is no malicious intent.
20. **In-School Suspension (ISS)** – removal of a student from class or classes with assignment to a designated supervisor. The student shall be marked present in each class when in attendance in ISS.
21. **Major Disturbance** – student behavior of such nature that it causes a cessation of activity on campus or in the classroom.
22. **Physical Violence** – intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with another person, or intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another unless such physical contacts or physical harms were in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Code Section 20-2-71.6.
23. **Progressive Discipline** – policies designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior with the previous discipline history of the student being considered and other relevant factors taken into account and all due process procedures required by federal and state law followed.
24. **Safety Hazard** – any behavior, article of clothing (including shoes) that constitutes a hazard to students or staff.
25. **School Safety Zone**—in or on any real property or buildings owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or school board and used for elementary or secondary education.
26. **Sexual harassment** - the deliberate, repeated, and unsolicited physical actions, gestures, verbal or written comments of a sexual nature, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. Examples include behaviors such as leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments or jokes, or pressure to engage in sexual activity. The Georgia General Assembly has required that in this Code of Conduct all parents and guardians shall be encouraged to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.
27. **Sexual misconduct/inappropriate sexual behavior** - any willful and/or deliberate act (spoken, written, or physically conducted) e.g. writing suggestive notes and making obscene gestures committed with the intent of promoting sexual favors or furthering acts lewd or lascivious in

nature, any unsolicited sexual proposal or offensive touching of any other person; or any act of indecent exposure or any sexual crimes as defined by state law.

28. **Tardiness** - not being in one's assigned classroom at the time the official school day and/or the class is scheduled to begin.
29. **Trespassing** – individuals (students or adults) who present themselves in any unauthorized area(s) (building or campus), i.e. being on school property without permission. No one is allowed on school property after hours except for scheduled school activities.
30. **Truancy** - failure to report or sign in to school without prior permission, knowledge or excuse by the school or the parents or "skipping" class or school; more than five unexcused absences during the school year.
31. **Time-Out** - a short-term removal from the K-2 classroom during which time the student is supervised in an alternative setting
32. **Weapons** –"Weapon" means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, and any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section 16-11-106. This paragraph excludes any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher. Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8.16 Unsafe School Choice Option.



VAPOR PRODUCTS

Vapor product means “any noncombustible product containing nicotine that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit, or other electronic, chemical, or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, that can be used to produce vapor from nicotine in a solution or other form. The term ‘vapor product’ shall include any electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product or device and any vapor cartridge or other container of nicotine in a solution or other form that is intended to be used with or in an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product or device.”¹

Possession of a vaping device by a minor under the age of 18 is prohibited by *GA Code Ann. §§ 16-12-171(b)(1)(A); 16-12-174(d) (2019)*.

According to the US Surgeon General, “E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless, most e-cigarettes contain nicotine – the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain – which continues to develop until about age 25. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can impact learning, memory, and attention. Using nicotine in adolescence can also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs. In addition to nicotine, the aerosol that users inhale and exhale from e-cigarettes can potentially expose both themselves and bystanders to other harmful substances, including heavy metals, volatile organic compounds, and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs. Many e-cigarettes also come in kid-friendly flavors. In addition to making e-cigarettes more appealing to young people, some of the chemicals used to make certain flavors may also have health risks. E-cigarettes can also be used to deliver other drugs, including marijuana (THC/CBD or derivative thereof). In 2016, one-third of U.S. middle and high school students who ever used e-cigarettes had used marijuana in e-cigarettes.”

¹ Public Health Law Center; www.publichealthlawcenter.org

BUS TRANSPORTATION

WCSD Bus Transportation Requirements for 2023-2024

Student safety is the number one priority of WCSD and students and parents are reminded that riding a school bus is an extension of the school day, and that students are expected to follow the same rules of respect and following directions as they are in the school building.

Riding a school bus is a *privilege* that the school district does not want to see any student lose; however, unruly, misbehaving students will be removed from the busses to protect the safety of all students. Students that ride the school bus must go by these rules in order to ride the bus. We want our drivers to be able to focus on the road ahead as well as student loading and unloading zones rather than being distracted due to student behavior.

Bus Rules:

- At **no time** will students act toward or address comments to a bus driver or monitor in a disrespectful manner or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
- Students shall get on or off the bus only at their assigned stop/route, unless otherwise directed with a note from the school office. Students riding a route other than what has been assigned will be returned to the school for the parent/guardian to pick them up.
- Students shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another person a place to sit.
- Students will be expected to **remain seated** for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until the bus door opens. No students will stand in the driver compartment.
- Students shall **not** throw any articles within the bus or out the bus window, and shall not extend any part of their body, clothing, or other articles out of the bus window.
- Students shall not take or handle any emergency equipment inside the bus, and shall never board or leave the bus through the emergency door except in an emergency.
- Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door except in cases of extreme emergency.
- Students shall not yell, scream, whistle, or operate an electronic device to a point where it interferes with the safe operation of the school bus.
- Students shall not write upon, disfigure, or destroy any part of the school bus. The parent or guardian may be held responsible for any damages to the school bus.
- **The use of obscene, vulgar, or profane language are forbidden.**
- Students shall not carry tobacco, including E-cigs/Juuls, etc., weapons, explosives (such as fireworks), knives, pointed articles, animals (pets), intoxicating beverages, drug paraphernalia or drugs on the bus.

- Large items will not be transported on the school bus. The driver has the discretion to allow certain larger than normal items which could be placed at the front of the bus. Items should be no larger than what could rest in student's lap. Balloons are prohibited. Glass vases are prohibited. Arrangements can be made with the parent or guardian and school staff for the pickup of large items.
- Students shall not eat, drink, or litter on the bus.
- No earbud or cell phone use while loading and unloading the bus. Those items should be put away inside book bag/pockets etc.
- Students loading the bus at the school bus loop should use care, be prompt, and ready to board without horse play. **Buses will not return to transport students that are horse playing etc.** School Administration will notify the parent or guardian to come transport the student. Depending on the circumstances, the Transportation Director or his designee may authorize the bus driver to return to the school for a student that has missed the bus.
- All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 12 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross. Students shall never cross behind the bus.
- Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip and shall keep their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the bus aisle.
- Students will abide by the individual school's rules and regulations concerning bus students.
- Serious offenses are defined but not limited to those listed above.
- Be courteous to the driver and other students.
- All rules (school and bus) apply on field trips.
- Emergency drills will be conducted each year. Student participation is required.
- The Director or Assistant Transportation Director are authorized to alter routes, reassign students and authorize the removal of a disruptive student.

STEPS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR IMPROPER CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

A bus conduct report is written and forwarded to the assigned Assistant Principal at the school attended by the rule violator. The Assistant Principal in charge of bus discipline will follow the district's code of conduct for transportation. The Director of Transportation will be notified of all discipline issues on a school bus by the Assistant Principal. The student's parent or guardian copy of the report will be issued to the student.

- The Student violates the rule.
- Driver completes a discipline referral form and submits to the transportation department to be forwarded to school administration.
- Assistant Principal investigates and resolves the discipline issue and notifies both the Director of Transportation and the student's parent.

Bus riding privileges may be revoked by the Administration of the Worth County School District.

Note:

- Worth County Schools has the authority to skip steps for serious violations or to designate such other punishment as deemed appropriate.
- If your child needs to be picked up or dropped off at a different location, please send a written note with your child to your child's school. The bus driver will be made aware of the change by the school administration.
- Any complaints in reference to concern with your children on the bus can be made to the Director of Transportation, Mr. Rusty Parten, 229-776-8612.

Safe School Bus Riding Practices

The school bus driver has authority over, and responsibility for, students while on the bus. It is the student's responsibility to follow the rules and follow the direction of their school bus driver. Proper student behavior is important because any driver distraction is potentially hazardous to student safety, the safety of the driver and the safety of other road users.

Students should be aware that they are responsible for their actions and behavior and that school bus transportation can be denied if they do not conduct themselves properly. The following are some general rules of conduct for student safety **while on the school bus**.

Students should:

- Follow directions of the school bus driver the first time given.
- Go directly to an available or assigned seat when entering the bus without delay.
- Remain seated.
- ***Sit the safe way, facing forward with your back against the back of the seat and your bottom against the bottom of the seat. In the event that the bus driver has to brake hard or if there is a serious accident, it is essential that the student is sitting properly in order for the compartmentalization protection of the padded high backed bus seats to be effective (keeping the student within the safety of the padded space that surrounds them).*
- Tell your bus driver if someone is picking on you or making you feel uncomfortable.
- Keep aisles and exits clear.
- ***Remain absolutely quiet at railroad grade crossings. This is a critical moment. The bus driver must be able to hear an approaching train.*
- Help keep the bus clean.
- Refrain from spraying fragrances such as perfume, cologne or body spray.
- Do not use mirrors, lasers, flash cameras or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Safe Student Bus Riding Instructions

Safety Rules at the Bus Stop

- Be at the designated bus stop five minutes before time for the bus to arrive. All school and bus rules apply at the bus loading zone.
- Wait a safe distance of 12' from the road, and be prepared to quickly board the bus.
- Refrain from pushing, horseplay, or any other unsafe activity while at the bus stop.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the red stop sign to come out, the red flashing lights to activate, and for the door to completely open before approaching the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops; then walk to the door and board the bus in an orderly manner. Stay within the view of the driver and never cross behind the bus.
- When having to cross the road, wait on your side of the road for the bus to arrive.
- Wait for the driver to give hand signal that it is ok to cross the road (Stop, look, listen).
- Be sure all traffic has stopped both ways before crossing the road.
- Use handrail when loading and unloading the bus.
- If you miss the bus, do not chase after the bus; go back home and tell your parents.
- Never stop to get mail from the mailbox until bus has moved and traffic is flowing again.
- At any time, if the bus horn sounds, this is a signal for danger and you should react quickly to the bus driver's directions to avoid injury.

Safety Rules While on the Bus

- All buses are designed with several "emergency exits." These locations are, but not limited to, the entrance/exit door, rear door, emergency exit windows and roof hatches.
- Always use the front entrance/exit door during an evacuation when possible.
- All other exits should be used only when the front entrance/exit door and the rear exit door are not available to use.
- When the loading door is not available and the rear door is the chosen exit, selected older/mature students are instructed to assist you to the ground by sitting and sliding out feet first.
- Leave all personal belongings on the bus and exit from the front to the back of the selected exit location.

Additional Guidelines

- Students may not walk to another school for the purpose of riding a bus home from that school. All students are to ride the bus home from their assigned school.
- Parents should avoid conversation with the driver during loading and unloading; during this critical time, complete concentration by the driver is required.
- The use of school bus videos may be used to corroborate disciplinary action but is not required in order to assign dispositions.

Code of Conduct
Progressive Discipline Plan
WORTH COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Progressive Discipline Plans - Grades K-5

Introduction

The progressive discipline model used by K-5 schools in Worth County includes levels that range from minor acts of misconduct which interfere with orderly school procedures, school functions, and extracurricular programs, approved transportation to the most serious cases of chronically disruptive behavior, extremely violent behavior, and weapon possession. In between the extremes are discipline offenses that are intermediate acts of misconduct that require administrative intervention, and offenses of serious misbehavior that are a serious disruption of the school environment that must be immediately reported to the principal. The latter violations may require the use of outside agencies and/or law enforcement.

The Lamb Promise

The Lamb Promise will be posted throughout the school to remind all students at Worth County Primary School (WCPS) of how they are expected to act. It will be recited each morning as part of the announcements. Parents are asked to use it at home to reinforce behavior and citizenship.

The Lamb Promise: Today I promise to do my best, to respect myself, others and my world; to be a responsible and honest Lamb; and to show compassion to all.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES/CODE OF CONDUCT

Our goal at Worth County Primary School is to establish and maintain a discipline plan which will provide each student with a safe and wholesome learning environment. It is also our goal to teach each student the importance of self-discipline. In order to accomplish these goals, we have developed a plan using positive consequences (rewards) for appropriate behavior and negative consequences (punishment) for inappropriate behavior.

Consequences:

The school administration reserves the right in all matters and cases of school discipline to determine the forms of punishment to be administered. The number of repeat offenses and the severity of the offenses will determine the punishment. Any student who constantly refuses to behave appropriately or commits a major offense will be dealt with accordingly. Dispositions may be increased or decreased as warranted by circumstances.

Students who show good behavior on a regular basis will continue to receive privileges and positive recognition. Consequences for not following the rules may include but not limited to:

- 1. Parent Notification/Conference**
- 2. Conference with Principal**
- 3. Time-Out**
- 4. Out of School Suspension**
- 5. Corporal Punishment**
- 6. Bus Suspension**
- 7. Bus Behavior Contract**

Violation	Disposition
<p>Acts of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee.</p>	<p>Immediate out-of-school suspension pending hearing, possible recommendation for expulsion, further disposition is at the administrator's discretion, complaint filed with law enforcement.</p>
<p>Bullying:</p>	<p>1st Offense: Notify parents of accused and victim. Administrator's discretion from counseling to parent conference.</p> <p>2nd Offense: Notify parents of accused and victim. Administrator's discretion from parent conference to suspension.</p> <p>3rd Offense: Notify parents of accused and victim. Administrator's discretion from suspension to hearing.</p>
<p>Classroom/School Disturbances: Acts which cause disruption of learning opportunities and/or threaten the safety of other students.</p>	<p>Administrator's discretion from counseling to suspension.</p>
<p>Computer Misuse by Student/ Vandalizing School Property</p>	<p>Parent responsible for repair(s) before student can use technology</p>
<p>Failure to Accept Disciplinary Action/Insubordination: Rude and disrespectful behavior and/or refusal to carry out instructions of faculty or staff.</p>	<p>Administrator's discretion.</p>
<p>Fighting {Includes fighting on school bus; 1st offense on bus = bus suspension for the length determined by the school principal}</p>	<p>Notify parents and legal authorities at administrator's discretion.</p> <p>1st Offense: Notify parents/guardians.</p> <p>2nd Offense: 1 -3 days suspension.</p> <p>3rd Offense: 3 -5 days suspension.</p> <p>4th Offense: Suspension until hearing. Repeat offenses and/or the severity of the fight may result in immediate suspension pending hearing.</p>

<p>Possession of Electronic Communication device during instructional time.</p> <p>A student may possess a cell phone or other electronic device on school property or during school activities; however, the device may not be in use or visible for any reason from the opening time until the closing time of each school day.</p>	<p>1st Offense: Student Warning, confiscation of item, parent contact, parent must pick up item.</p> <p>2nd Offense: Time Out, confiscation of item, parent contact, parent must pick up item.</p>
<p>Threat: Any Verbal or Written Statement Towards Bodily Harm.</p>	<p>Administrative Discretion</p>
<p>Use of any electronic device for the purposes of photographing, filming (video), audio recording, circulating and/or posting inappropriate behavior to any website on the internet.</p>	<p>Parent notified. Suspension up to 10 days per administrator's discretion. May include hearing & referral to law enforcement.</p>
<p>Use or Display of Disruptive, Profane or Vulgar Language:</p>	<p>Administrator's discretion, from counseling to suspension/expulsion. In severe cases, referral to juvenile or superior court.</p>
<p>Violence on Another Student: Simple assault and/or battery on another. Striking, pushing, touching in a threatening manner and/or threatening bodily harm.</p>	<p>Disposition depends upon circumstances from counseling to suspension. Aggravated assault will result in referral to law enforcement.</p>
<p>Weapons (see definition): A student may not, possess, handle, use or transmit a dangerous instrument or weapon on school property, at school functions or on school bus. Weapons may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-21, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade. 	<p>Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year expulsion and reported to law enforcement. The Superintendent may either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing reduce the mandated one-year expulsion under circumstances where the one-year expulsion appears excessive to the superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any hazardous object, including any fake weapon(s), dirk, bowie knife, switchblade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, toy gun, and any stun gun or taser. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher. 	<p>Students who possess other weapons or hazardous objects as described in paragraph 2 will be subject to discipline as determined by the principal to be appropriate, which may include in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or a tribunal referral, depending on the seriousness of the offense, the age of the student and other relevant factors.</p>
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NOTE: NO BUS CHANGES WILL BE MADE OVER THE PHONE! You may fax in transportation changes to 229-776-8665 or text the school phone at 229-445-6476. The text must come from the phone number provided by the parent on the student information sheet.

Note sent with student concerning bus changes must include:

1. Name of child and teacher.
2. Name and address of person and place where student is going.
3. Actual date of change: 10-04-13: NOT “today or tomorrow”.
4. Signature of parent or guardian.
5. Phone number of person to be contacted if more information is needed on change.
6. The student should give this note to his/her teacher upon arrival at school.

Consequences for Inappropriate Bus Behavior/Administrative Procedures

Worth County Primary School

1. 1st Referral to office – Student warned and parent notified through student agenda and phone contact
2. 2nd Referral to office – Parent conference and bus behavior contract signed.
3. 3rd Referral to office – Parent conference and one to three-day bus suspension
4. 4th Referral to office – Three (3) to five (5) day bus suspension and parent conference.

Further Offenses: Suspension at the discretion of the administrator. Suspension 5 or more days.

Note: Dispositions may be increased or decreased as warranted by circumstances. All major infractions are dealt with through immediate suspension.

ARRIVAL

Doors open at 7:30 AM. **Do not drop your child off prior to 7:30AM. There is no adult supervision before that time.** Students being transported by car should be dropped off at the front of the school. Please have your student remain in your vehicle until our staff comes outside to unload him/her. Please have your student on the passenger side of the car. Students will be served a free breakfast in the lunchroom. **Breakfast will stop being served at 8:00.**

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

We work very hard to ensure that our arrival and dismissal procedures run smoothly and provide for the safety of all students. You can support our efforts by complying with these guidelines.

- Pull single file into the lane nearest the school.
- Only drop off and pick up students at the front of the school.
- Only drop off students at the curb at one of the five drop-off spots. During dismissal we will use spots 1-10.
- Do not put your child in a hazardous situation by dropping him/her off in an unauthorized area.
- Do not pull into one of the center lanes or into the lane nearest the flag pole in order to let your child out. It is not safe to cross the driveway when so many other vehicles are entering or exiting.
- The center lanes must be left open for emergency vehicles and for staff members who need to enter or exit their parking lots.
- Be patient. Stay in the line and please remain in your vehicle. Staff members will assist students entering and exiting their cars.
- If you need to come into the building, please park in one of the two front parking lots.

- You must get in the pickup line and wait until your child's name is called. Any parent that skips the line will be asked to pull through the drive and go to the back of the line.
- Persons picking up students from school must have the school issued pick up tag displayed in their windshield. Failure to have the tag displayed will result in having to go inside the school and show an ID to pick up the child.

CHANGES IN DAILY ROUTINE

Absolutely no changes in transportation routines will be made without a written note from the parents/guardians. **Notes must be brought in, faxed, or text the school phone.** No changes will be made over the telephone. If a student is to go home on a different bus, parents/guardians must send a note daily with the name, phone number, and address of the person at whose house the student is to be dropped off. If more than one child attends WCPS, a note is needed for each homeroom teacher.

CHANGE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Parents must immediately notify the school of changes of address, telephone number, employment, or emergency information. This information is critical. If your child gets sick and needs to go home, WCPS needs a current telephone number to contact you.

CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

Students who leave prior to 3:00 p.m. must be signed out at the front desk. **Students may not be checked out after 2:30 PM.** Students will be released only to individuals listed on the student information sheet. **Anyone not listed on the sheet will be required to have a note and identification to check out a child.** If deemed necessary, a call will be made to the parent to verify permission. A parent who suspects that some unauthorized person may try to check out his/her student should notify the office. Unless the school has legal custody papers on file stating that only one parent has legal custody, a student will be released to either natural parent.

DRESS CODE

Students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness, neatness, and conservative standards of dress and appearance. In order to maintain discipline and reduce distractions within the classroom, the following rules of dress must be respected:

- Shorts and skirts must be of reasonable length.
- Shirts or tops must reach the beltline.
- No vulgar/offensive language or advertisements for alcohol or tobacco products.
- No hats/caps inside the building.
- Shoes must be suitable for outside play (no flip flops)
- Avoid wearing jewelry or accessories that may pose a danger to active children.

EXPLANATION OF Communication Folder

This communication folder is being provided at no charge. Please take time to review it with your child. If the communication folder is lost, it will be necessary for you to pay \$2.00 to cover the cost of a replacement. Organization is one of the keys to success. The communication folder is a useful tool for teaching this skill. Students will record assignments, reminders, or notes in the communication folder. It is also a tool for communication between home and school. Notes from

school or home should be written in the parent/teacher comment section. Please check your child's communication folder and sign this space daily. Students are expected to have the communication folder in school every day, so please help your child remember to always carry it. After reviewing this handbook with your child, please sign the agreement at the end of the handbook section.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students are dismissed at 3:00 PM. There will be **no student checkout after 2:30 PM**. Students who leave early miss valuable instruction time, and interrupt the educational process for other students. Please do not check your child out early unless it is an emergency. If you are picking your child up at dismissal, please stay in your car and your child will be brought out front to be picked up. The office is very busy at dismissal, and we want to make sure all students get home the right way. A note should be written in the agenda if your child will be an early dismissal. The time and reason for leaving should be included. Medical and dental appointments should be made after school hours when possible.

GIFTED SERVICES

Gifted services are offered to students in kindergarten, first and second grade who meet state eligibility criteria provided in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38. A student may be referred for consideration for gifted educational services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. Details of the program, referral procedures and eligibility requirements are available from WCPS.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Worth County Primary School has a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program with many components. Our guidance counselor, Laura Bartley is available as a support system to help students experience educational success. Individual counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance opportunities are services provided to improve student performance, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. Through collaboration with educators, parents, and community, the counselor guides students through their educational experience to ensure positive results.

HEAD LICE

Any student found to have head lice will not be allowed to remain at school or board a bus. Parents will be notified and must pick up the student. Worth County Board of Education regulations require that a student be treated and all nits removed from their hair before returning to school. To return to school, the student must be brought by an adult. The student must report at 8:00 AM and the accompanying adult must remain present until the student has been checked by trained school personnel and declared to be nit free. Proof of treatment such as a bottle or box giving the name of the medicated shampoo used, must be presented. The student may resume riding the bus only when found to be nit free. A head lice infestation is not an excuse for extended absenteeism.

HOMEWORK

Homework reinforces classroom work and provides opportunities to apply skills learned at school. It also allows students to complete unfinished class assignments and make up work missed during absences. All students may have assigned homework Monday through Thursday nights.

HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND SERVICES

If a student should need to be absent from school for more than 10 consecutive or intermittent school days because of serious illness or an accident, arrangements may be made to provide instruction at home. In accordance with state rule 160-4-2.31 Hospital/Homebound Services, students with absences due to psychiatric/emotional disorders, as defined in the latest edition of the Diagnostic, and Statistical Manual (DSM), may be eligible for hospital-homebound instruction. The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to request hospital/homebound instruction as soon as possible. The school counselor who is designated as the School Hospital/Homebound Coordinator should be contacted for more information regarding policies, procedures, and the application process.

ILLNESS AND INJURY

You will be called if your student becomes sick or injured at school. Please make every effort to pick up your student promptly. **Also, please make sure that your telephone number is current.**

MEALS

Worth County School District will continue a program available to the State of Georgia called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2023-2024 school year. All enrolled students of Worth County School District are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at **NO CHARGE** to your household each day of the 2023-2024 school year. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee. If you were paying for full-priced or reduced-priced meals in the past, you will not be paying those charges this year for your child to receive a breakfast or lunch. However, if students wish to have extra items, other than the reimbursable meal, those items will have a charge. Students must have monies to pay for those items or the items will not be allowed to be purchased. A note from a doctor is required if the food service staff is to make menu adjustments due to food or milk allergies or diabetes.

Worth County Primary School invites parents to have lunch with their children. We ask that you communicate with the teacher in advance to see if space is available. We cannot accommodate other siblings for lunch. Please bring a lunch from home or purchase a school lunch.

Monthly lunch menus will be available on the district and school websites at www.worthschools.net.

MEDICINE

All medicine must be brought and picked up in the school clinic by a parent or guardian. Do not send medicine on the bus. Medicine sent with a student will not be administered and must be picked up by a parent. Medicine will not be administered by the school nurse unless it is in the original container with dosage instructions and appropriate paperwork on file. Forms must be completed and are available in the clinic. Any medicine not picked up by the end of the year will be disposed of by the nurse.

MESSAGES

Refrain from calling the school to leave messages for students. Classrooms are not interrupted for messages. Except in emergencies, teachers will be given parent's messages and they will return calls during their planning period, at lunch, or after class hours.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Since opening in the fall of 1995, WCPS has had the goal of educating kindergarten through second grade students to respect and protect the natural environment by making nature an important part of the school's curriculum. We believe that teaching students to be good stewards of the earth will instill respect for life and prepare them to be responsible, caring adults. The outdoor classroom project at WCPS has two target areas: nature trail and our school garden - "The Lamb's Yard".

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Mrs. Amy Graddy serves as the Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator at WCPS. She is available to assist and facilitate parents during the school year. We encourage all of our parents and families to become more involved with their child's education and school activities. Throughout the school year, Mrs. Graddy plans activities that provide opportunities for parents and families to participate in school and their child's educational experiences. These activities include, parent workshops, afterschool activities, and special events for parents, families, and students. We also have a Parent and Family Resource center that offers a variety of resources available for use at home. The resource room has an extensive collection of materials. We invite you to come and talk with her or any staff member about the materials available for check-out. We can provide a list of websites for student participation that includes educational activities and games to enhance student learning.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to contact the school to discuss a student's work. Parents may call the office or write a note to their child's teacher requesting a conference. Conferences may be scheduled before school, during teacher's planning time, or after school. Conferences may not be held during instructional time. All parents must attend a fall and spring conference with their teacher; however, we encourage you to meet with your child's teacher as often as possible. Communication is necessary to ensure your child's progress is monitored on a regular basis. The school may also initiate a parent conference during the school year, and your attendance at such conferences is encouraged.

PARENT VISITATION

Parents are welcome to visit the classroom, **but must make prior arrangements with the teacher and it must be approved by the Principal.** For safety reasons all parents/visitors are asked to report to the front office prior to visiting any classroom. All parents/visitors are required to sign-in and out on the computer and receive a visitor's pass. Please remember that instructional time is valuable and should not be interrupted.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property. Students should not bring to school such articles as CD players, radios, expensive jewelry, caps, sports equipment, Nintendo players, personal hand held devices, toys, large sums of money, etc. Items may be confiscated and returned at the school's discretion.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

WCPS 776-8660

WCPS Fax 776-8665

WCPS Lunchroom 777-8538

Bus Shop 776-8612

Central Office 776-8600

Food Services 777-8386

Code of Conduct
Behavior Support Process

Behavior support process is a mechanism for identifying and addressing the behaviors and environmental influences that promote the positive emotional, mental, social and physical health needs of students. With the foregoing in mind, the following is a list of support suggestions, recommendations and opportunities available for students in the Worth County School District:

Parent/Guardians	
Adult Education	702 Walnut Street Sumner, GA 229-776-7645 Worth County High School 229-776-8625
Aspire Behavioral Health	601 11 th Avenue Albany GA, 31701 229-430-4140
Churches	Family's Choice
Department of Family & Children Services	503 North Henderson Street Sylvester, GA 229-777-2000
Family Connections	304 N. Isabella St., P.O. Box 171 Sylvester, GA 31791 229-886-3067 ldylinski@hotmail.com (Lisa Dylinski)
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	WCMS & WCHS
Georgia Crisis & Access Line (Suicide Hotline)	1-800-715-4225
Guidance Counselors /Advisors	WCPS 229-776-8660, WCES 229-776-8605 WCMS 229-776-8620, WCHS 229-776-8625
Intervention Prevention Services, Inc. (Youth/Adult prevention and development service company)	128 First Street Suite #226 Tifton, GA 31794 229-386-2100
Mental Health Services	Dougherty County Mental Health Services 601 W. 11 th Ave. Albany, GA 31701 229-430-4140
Network of Trust	WCHS Guidance Counselors
Pathways to Hope Counseling Service	1341 W. Hill Avenue Valdosta, GA 31601 229-249-7730
Response to Interventions	WCPS 229-776-8660, WCES 229-776-8605 WCMS 229-776-8620, WCHS 229-776-8625
School Resource Officers	WCMS & WCHS; also available at other schools for specific programs
School Social Worker	Worth County Board of Education Sylvester, GA 31791 229-776-8600
Student Support Teams (all schools)	All schools; see guidance counselor
Title I Parent Coordinators	WCPS 229-776-8660, WCES 229-776-8605

	WCMS 229-776-8620, WCHS 229-776-8625
Worth County Health Department	1012 West Franklin Street Sylvester, GA 229-777-2150
Other - Professional agencies that parents may select	

COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION/HARRASSMENT

The Worth County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability or gender in employment decisions or educational programs and activities, including its athletic programs. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the Worth County School District based upon any of the factors listed above should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or the appropriate coordinator as listed below, who will implement the Board’s discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures. Students may also report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor.

The Title VI Coordinator is:

Name or Title: Mrs. Sommer Clark
Office Address: 103 Eldridge St.
Sylvester, GA 31791
Telephone Number: 229-776-8600

The Title IX Coordinator is:

Name or Title: Mrs. Kira Outlaw
Office Address: 103 Eldridge St.
Sylvester, GA 31791
Telephone Number: 229-776-8600

The Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator is:

Name or Title: Mrs. Sommer Clark
Office Address: 103 Eldridge St.
Sylvester, GA 31791
Telephone Number: 229-776-8600

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act Coordinator is:

Name or Title: Mrs. Kira Outlaw
Office Address: 103 Eldridge St.
Sylvester, GA 31791
Telephone Number: 229-776-8600

Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Policy JAA (Equal Educational Opportunities) or under Policy IDFA (Equity in Sports) is located in the School District policy manual which is available on the Worth County District website or by request

at the school or central office.

HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is the federal law that governs the educational rights of children and youth in homeless situations. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In an effort to strengthen accountability at both the state and local level, the reauthorization includes the requirement for every school district in the country to designate a homeless liaison. Homeless children have the right to a free, appropriate public education.

If you or your child:

- live in a shelter;
- share housing with relatives or others because you lost your housing or cannot afford housing;
- live in a campground, car, abandoned building, or other inadequate shelter;
- do not have a permanent address and/or permanent housing;
- live on the street;
- live in temporary foster care; and/or
- if you are an unaccompanied youth.

You have the right to:

- immediately enroll in and attend school without having health and school records with you;
- enroll in school where you are living or the school attended when permanently housed... if in your child's best interest;
- receive transportation to and from school of origin;
- participate in school related activities and receive other needed services; and
- utilize dispute resolution process if you have a grievance

For Further Information:

Contact Tracie C. Turner, Worth County Schools Homeless Liaison, 229-776-8600, turner@worthschools.net or the Georgia Department of Education, www.doe.k12.ga.us.

RIGHT TO KNOW PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

In compliance with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act the Worth County School would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher

- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's or paraprofessional's qualification, please contact the principal at your child's school.

NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENT OF RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) AND THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (the "Act"), parents/guardians have the right to:

- Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is their child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or those who are emancipated, their own education records. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to their principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parent/guardian or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parent/guardian or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent of student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 S.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the Worth County Board of Education to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated there under. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

FERPA Directory Information Notice:

WCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name, address and telephone number;
- Student's date and place of birth;
- Student's participation in official school clubs and sports;
- Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
- Dates of attendance at WCS; and
- Awards received during the time enrolled in WCS.

Unless a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters or institutions of higher learning, upon request, with the name, address, and telephone numbers unless parents/guardians have advised the school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. Parents/guardians have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If parents/guardians wish to exercise this right (Opt-Out), they must notify the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

Parents/guardians are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, video taped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event; unless a parent/guardian objects in writing to their student being photographed, video taped or interviewed, to the principal of the school where their student is enrolled. Parents/guardians must notify the principal of their objection by the date specified above. The principal will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, parent/guardian submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that their student will not be interviewed in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notice:

No student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of

the parent or eligible student.

A parent/guardian of a student may, upon request, inspect any survey created by a third party containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8) above before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student and may choose to opt the student out of participation in the survey. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for (1) granting a request by a parent/guardian for reasonable access to such survey within a reasonable period of time after the request is received, and (2) making arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of the administrations or distribution of a survey to a student containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8). The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

A parent/guardian of a student may, upon request, inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for granting a request by a parent/guardian for reasonable access to instructional material within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to the administration of physical examinations or screenings that the school may administer to students. This notice shall offer the parent/guardian the opportunity to opt the student out of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is (1) required as a condition of attendance; (2) administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and (3) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

The parent/guardian of a student shall be notified prior to the commencement of activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose.) Such notice shall offer the parent/guardian the opportunity to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of such information before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and to opt the student out of such activities. The Principal shall develop procedures that: (1) make arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of such collection, disclosure, or use, and (2) grant a request by a parent/guardian for reasonable access to such instruments within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

Computer/Internet Policy Statement

All students using school system computer resources and Internet shall comply with the Worth County Board of Education's Acceptable Use of Computer Internet Resources Policy, the administrative procedures provided by the Superintendent regarding such use, and the Board of Regents. In order for a student to access the Internet via school system equipment, the student's teacher must have signed a Staff Computer/Internet Access Agreement, or the student must sign and have parent/guardian permission through the Student Computer Internet Access Agreement. Both forms are available through each school's technology committee. Information can be found in the Board Policy IFBG and IFBGE.

SECTION 504

A request for a Section 504 evaluation may be made by a teacher, educator, or parent/guardian who suspects that a student may have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. All requests for Section 504 evaluations must be directed to the school counselor who is designated as the School Section 504 Coordinator.

Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system’s central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS

IDEA (34 CFR 300.566) requires each local school system to maintain documentation of confidentiality for those having access to special education records. All records and original files are maintained at WCBOE. Therefore, **all requests**, including parents or other agencies requesting special education records, must be made for these records through:

Worth County Special Education Department
103 Eldridge Street
Sylvester, GA 31791 229-776-8600

Special Needs Public School Options:

A parent/guardian can request a transfer to another public school within their school system as long as there is available space at that school and the school has a program with the services agreed to in the student’s existing individualized education program (IEP). If the parent/guardian chooses this option, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the school.

The parent/guardian may request a transfer to a school in another school system if there is available space and the system and school have a program with the services agreed to in the student’s existing individual education program. If a school system accepts the child, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the school in that system.

The parent/guardian may also request a transfer to one of the State schools for the deaf and/or blind operated by the State Board of Education. Acceptance into a State school will depend on whether or not that setting is appropriate for the student’s needs. If the parent/guardian chooses this option, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the State school. Please contact the Georgia Department of Education for more information about transferring to a State school.

Special Needs Private School Choice Options:

Parents/guardians of students who receive special education services in WCS have the option to exercise public and private school choice. Under a State law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents/guardians of students who receive special education may choose to transfer their

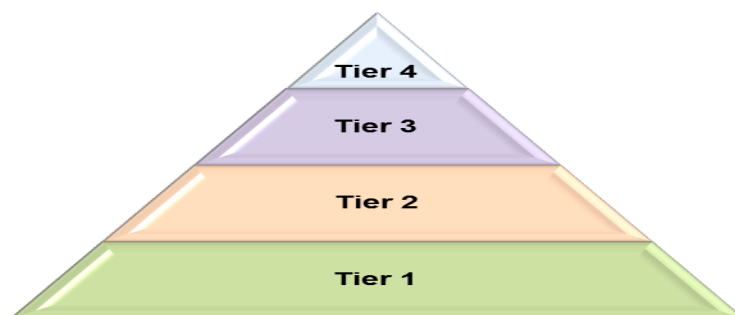
child to another public school or private school in Georgia. Parents/guardians must be current residents of Georgia and have been residents for one year.

Parents/guardians interested in transferring their child to a private school in Georgia may be able to take advantage of a Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. These scholarships provide funding that can be used to offset tuition costs at participating private schools in the State of Georgia. For more information on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship and the parent application process, visit the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/sb10.aspx>

Multi Tiered System of Support MTSS (RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION):

Response to Intervention is an ongoing process that is used to determine and address student needs. Students who show weaknesses in the area(s) of academics, behavior, and/or speech and language receive support through the Pyramid of Intervention. Student progress is monitored and analyzed, and instruction is adjusted accordingly to increase student achievement.

WCPS Pyramid of Intervention



Tier 1: Standards-Based Classroom

All students participate in general education instruction that includes universal screenings three times per year to identify students in need of specific academic support. The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) are implemented in each classroom using standards-based classroom structure and differentiated instruction for all students. Support is provided for struggling students as identified through the universal screenings. Student progress is monitored through multiple formative assessments and classroom assessments. Professional Learning Communities analyze progress monitoring data and use this data to guide instruction. Students are recommended for interventions based on analyzed data.

Tier 2: Needs-Based Teaching and Learning

In addition to Tier 1, targeted students participate in additional instruction including needs-based instructional groups for implementation of research-based and/or evidence-based interventions. Progress is monitored more frequently, and additional screening tools are often used to identify specific weaknesses (including academic, behavioral, and/or speech/language needs).

Tier 3: SST (Student Support Team)-Driven Learning

In addition to Tiers 1 and 2, targeted students participate in specific, research-based interventions

tailored to individual needs (including an increase in intensity of Tier 2 interventions) as determined by the SST. Frequent progress monitoring is used to determine effectiveness of interventions. If the SST determines that progress is not adequate after appropriate interventions have been implemented for a sufficient amount of time, consideration for an evaluation referral might be warranted.

Tier 4: Specially-Designed Learning

In addition to Tiers 1, 2, and 3, targeted students receive specially designed instruction through programs such as TAG, Special Education, & ESOL with a higher frequency of progress monitoring.

WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

Georgia House Bill 402, known as the Edna Mae McGovern Act, requires that all public schools provide annual notice to parents and guardians on the importance of water safety education.

Water safety education courses and swimming lessons play an important role in saving countless lives every year. An aquatic education opportunity is not currently offered in Worth County. However, listed below are the contact numbers for YMCA locations offering swimming classes within our surrounding area.

Albany Area YMCA (Central): 229-436-0531

Albany Area YMCA (Lee): 229-759-9770

Moultrie YMCA: 229-985-1154

Tifton YMCA: 229-391-9622

I have read the information in the Worth County Primary School handbook and understand its contents. I also understand that the school must operate in accordance with the State policies and procedures. This information has been reviewed and discussed with my child.

Parent's Signature

Student's Name (Please Print)

Teacher's Name

Grade

Date

