



TOWNS COUNTY SCHOOLS
STUDENTS REACHING THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

TOWNS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

**1400 U.S. Highway 76 East
Hiawassee, Georgia 30546
(706) 896-4131**

www.towns.k12.ga.us

Mr. Darren Berrong, Principal

Mrs. Melissa Williams, Superintendent

The Board of Education:

**Emily Phillips, Chairperson
Larry Kimsey, Vice Chairperson
Michael Anderson, Member
Donna Hedden, Member
Jerry Taylor, Member**

Approved August 1, 2011

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I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

TCMS REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012

1 st Period	8:00 - 9:10
Periods 2 – 6 flexible	
7 th grade Connections	9:15 – 10:40
6 th grade Connections	10:45 – 12:10
8 th grade Connections	1:35 – 3:00
Buses Leave	3:05
11:45 – 12:15 Lunch 8 th Grade	
12:00 – 12:30 Lunch 7 th Grade	
12:15 – 12:45 Lunch 6 th Grade	

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Towns County Middle School is to inspire every teacher and student to think, to learn, and to achieve at their highest potential.

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

Welcome to Towns County Middle School! I hope you will have a successful school year.

This handbook was especially prepared for you and your parents as a ready reference to information necessary for the appropriate daily operation of the school. If you need to know something more, or need clarification on any topic, please feel free to ask your teachers, counselor or principal.

The school's primary goal is to educate students in a safe, nurturing and disciplined learning environment. When the behavior of an individual student conflicts with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole.

The faculty and staff pledge to work in a cooperative effort for your success. Our expectation for you this year is that you have the best school year possible.

Have a great year!

Sincerely,
Mr. Darren Berrong
Principal

TOWNS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

NAME

POSITION

Mr. Chris Adams	Drama, Chorus
Mr. Darren Berrong	Principal
Mrs. Dionne Berrong	Special Education
Mrs. Sherri Behrens	6 th Grade Social Studies
Mr. Thomas Boyd	8 th Grade Georgia History
Ms. Melissa Brumbaugh	6 th Physical Science
Mrs. Erica Chastain	Counselor
Mr. Ricky Ellis	Health/PE Connections
Mr. Todd Flanagan	Introduction to Agriculture Connections
Mrs. Sue Garrett	Special Education Paraprofessional
Mrs. Libby Hall	8 th Grade Earth Science
Mr. Ken Hamilton	8 th Grade Math
Mrs. Connie Hobbs	6 th Grade Math
Mr. Al Hudson	Special Education
Mr. Daniel Isaacs	Band
Ms. Lesia Johnson	7 th Grade Language Arts
Ms. Becky Keenum	Special Education Paraprofessional
Mr. John McGuire	Special Education
Mr. Jim Melton	In-School Suspension
Mrs. Jennifer Moss	7 th Grade Life Science
Mrs. Joyce Moss	Receptionist
Mrs. Betty Nichols	Media Clerk
Mrs. Gena Oliver	Nurse
Mrs. Lana Parker	6 th Grade Language Arts
Ms. Carrie Phillips	Remediation Connections
Mrs. Michelle Pырlik	Special Education Director
Ms. Alys Richards	School Psychologist
Ms. Jenni Rogers	7 th Grade Math
Mrs. Judy Rogers	Technology/Business Connections
Ms. Amy Rosser	Family Connection
Mr. Tim Rosser	7 th Grade Social Studies
Mrs. Barbara Shook	Attendance Clerk
Mrs. Sandra Shook	Media Specialist
Ms. Diane Taylor	Special Education Paraprofessional
Mrs. Julie Thompson	8 th Grade Language Arts
Mrs. Beatrice Thurman	Records Clerk
Mrs. Vicki Turner	Interventions Paraprofessional
Ms. Loretta Youngblood	Remediation Connections

GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

IF YOU NEED

GO TO

Athletics Information	Mr. Jim Melton, Main Office
Attendance, Check In/Out	Mrs. Barbara Shook, Main Office
Band Events	Mr. Daniel Isaacs, Room 210
Discipline Information	Mr. Darren Berrong, Main Office
Fees and Fines	Main Office
Grievance	Teacher; Mr. Darren Berrong, Principal
Guidance/Counseling	Mrs. Erica Chastain, Guidance Office
Lost and Found	Main Office
Lunch Room	Mrs. Kathy Dills, Cafeteria
Medical Attention / Medications	Mrs. Gena Oliver, Elementary School Clinic
Telephone	Main Office
Testing	Mrs. Aundra Wilson
Tickets for Athletic Activities	Main Office
To Report Vandalism	Administrator, SRO Officer, Room 205
Sports Equity	Mrs. Melissa Williams, BOE Office
Transcript Request	Mrs. Beatrice Thurman, Main Office
Withdrawal from School	Mrs. Beatrice Thurman, Main Office

SCHOOL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS

Address and phone:

**Towns County Schools
1400 U.S. Highway 76 East
Hiawassee, Georgia 30546**

**Phone: (706) 896-4131
FAX: (706) 896-6628**

Personnel:

**Mr. Darren Berrong, Principal Ext. 1011
Joyce Moss, Receptionist Ext. 0
Beatrice Thurman, Registrar Ext. 1016
Phyllis Clemons, Bookkeeper Ext. 1014
Barbara Shook, Attendance Ext. 1018
Erica Chastain, Guidance Counselor Ext. 1122
Sandra Shook, Media Specialist Ext 1702
Michelle Pyrlik, Director of Special Education Ext 1050
Aundrea Wilson, Curriculum, Personel, Federal Programs, & Testing, 706-896-2279
Jim Melton, Athletics Director, Ext 1231
Vicki Turner, Interventions, Ext 1134**

OTHER DIRECT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

**Board of Education.....(706) 896-2279
Board of Education FAX.....(706) 896-2632
Bus Shop.....(706) 896-3843
Field House.....(706) 896-4131 Ext 2602
Middle School Gym.....(706) 896-4131 Ext 1525**

NON-DISCRIMINATION

In the operation of the Towns County School System no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, handicap, disability, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in educational programs, activities, or employment practices. The following staff persons have been designated to field questions, comments, and complaints regarding instances of alleged discrimination:

Title VI Coordinator:	Mrs. Melissa Williams	896-2279
Title IX Coordinator	Mrs. Melissa Williams	896-2279
Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator	Mrs. Melissa Williams	896-2279
Equity in Sports Act Coordinator	Mrs. Melissa Williams	896-2279

GUIDANCE

The school counselor works in the office, classrooms and small groups, coordinating classroom guidance, career awareness classes, personalized programs, student placement, new student orientation, and school-wide testing. The counselor consults with parents in regard to social, emotional, and educational concerns experienced by their children. Consulting with teachers is necessary to help plan activities and programs for individual growth and classroom policies, curriculum and programs for individual growth and classroom management. The counselor provides support during personal crisis, develops skills for individual growth and classroom problems, helps students set positive goals, exercise self-responsibility, and improve academic progress. Counseling is provided to facilitate discussions which develop communication skills that help students understand themselves and others.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences may be arranged between 3:05-3:30 PM or during the teacher's planning period by sending an e-mail or letter to the teacher or by telephoning the school office.

GENERAL CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Towns County Middle School operates on the semester system. This program provides for two semesters of approximately 90 days each during the regular school year. Report Cards are given to all students at the end of each nine-week grading period. Progress Reports are given midway between Report Cards. Parents can monitor grades at all times by accessing the school website using their access code. Codes are dispersed through the main office. Parents may also receive grades upon request by sending their e-mail address to the main office.

GRADING SCALE

100 – 90 = A 80 – 89 = B 70 – 79 = C Grades below 70 = F
I=Incomplete

Students receiving an incomplete for a semester's work will have up to 10 days to make up work after returning to school.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Towns County Middle School students must pass three out of four academic subjects and three out of four exploratory-connection classes. **Eighth grade students must meet these criteria in order to participate in the commencement ceremony in May.** For all subjects, a passing grade will be 70 or higher. Student report card grades will reflect numerical grades for academic classes and numerical or letter grades for exploratory-connection classes.

CRITERION REFERENCE COMPETENCY TESTS (CRCT) STATE REQUIREMENTS

Under No Child Left Behind requirements, *all students*, including students with disabilities, must meet Georgia's proficient level of academic achievement. According to Georgia State Law, students must pass the specified sections of the CRCT either during the main administration or during the retest in order to be promoted to the next grade. The Reading and Math sections are the specified sections of the CRCT that all eighth graders must pass in order to be promoted to the ninth grade. The minimum passing score for Reading and Math is 800.

PARENT - STUDENT RIGHTS

Parent Right-to-Know Information

Guidance C-6 is for Advising Parents of the Right to Know Information about a Teacher's Qualifications as Required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act of 1965 (ESEA) [Section 1111(6) (A)]

At **Towns County Middle School**, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications. Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact Mr. Darren Berrong at Towns County Middle School at 706-896-4131 ext. 1011 or email me at dberrong@towns.k12.ga.us.

Parent - Student Rights

Parents and students have certain rights under Federal Law (20 U.S.C., 1232h) commonly known as the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. Pursuant to this law, all instructional materials, including teacher's manual, films, tapes, or other supplemental materials which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available for inspection by parents or guardians of the students. In addition parents have the right upon request to review before administration or use of protected information surveys of students and instruments used to collect personal information from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. In addition consent will be required before students are

asked to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education that reveals any information concerning any of the following protected areas:

Political affiliations, mental or psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his/her family, sex behavior or attitudes, illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom students have close family relationships, legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers; or income without prior written consent of the parent.

Parents and eligible students have the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of any other protected survey regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening provided by state law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Parents or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5929

Student reporting acts of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct

"20-2-751.7.(a) The Professional Standards Commission shall establish a state mandated process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student which shall not prohibit the ability of a student to report the incident to law enforcement authorities. Each local school system shall be required to implement and follow such state mandated process and shall include the mandated process in student handbooks and in employee handbooks or policies.

(a) Any student (*or parent or friend of a student*) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

(b) Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. *If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.*

(c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

FERPA

The Towns County School System complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The act provides that parents, guardians or eligible students have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The School Principal or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. Request the amendment of the student's educational records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that Federal Law authorizes without consent.
4. File with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by this school or the Towns County School System to comply with FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5929

We are required to apprise parents of the types of information that may be given out by the school system as "directory information".

Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Towns County Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Towns County Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of

directory information is to allow the Towns County School District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings - unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Towns County Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by August 28, 2009. Towns County Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance

Public notice is hereby given by the Towns County School System, pursuant to the Family Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g (a) (5) (b), that the following information pertaining to students enrolled in the Towns County School System may be given upon request to law enforcement agencies, PTSO and school related groups, U.S. Armed Forces recruitment agencies, and schools and colleges accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation: name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height if a member of an athletic team, dates of attendance, grade level, awards received, the most recent previous educational institution attended, and other similar information. Student names may be obtained for athletic programs as well as a tentative list of graduation seniors for media publication. Parents of students under eighteen (18) years of age objecting to the release of this information should notify Mr. Darren Berrong, Principal, in writing.

Under the Family Rights and Privacy Act, Towns County Middle School will disclose without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person with whom the school has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an

official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, Towns County Middle School will disclose educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

TOBACCO FREE SCHOOL

In an effort to promote a healthy lifestyle for our young people, Towns County School System has banned the use of tobacco on campus. This includes the use of tobacco products during all school functions by students and adults. We appreciate everyone's help in setting a positive example for the students of Towns County.

The Towns County School System does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability in educational programs, activities, or employment.

EQUITY IN SPORTS ACT

In accordance with the Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. & 20-2-315, Towns County School System does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. Mrs. Melissa Williams can be reached at the Towns County Board of Education Office, 67 Lakeview Circle, Suite C, Hiawassee, GA 30546 or by phone at (706) 892-2279.

HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND

Hospital/homebound instruction is a teaching service provided to students having a medically diagnosed physical condition which prevents school attendance for a period of ten (10) days or more. Students eligible must be absent for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days unless a physician certifies that the student has a chronic health condition causing the student to be absent for intermittent periods of time during the school year. Hospital/homebound services are not available for students with communicable diseases, pregnant students except when a physician certifies that complications exist, or in cases of expulsion or out-of-school suspension.

POLICY OR RULE CHANGES

The Towns County Board of Education and Towns County Middle School reserves the right to change policies, rules, and procedures without prior notification. The Towns County Board of Education and Towns County Middle School do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, handicap, age, religion, or ethnic origin in educational programs, activities, employment, or admission to its programs.

II. STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

(revised 06/25/10)

School System Procedures

Towns County School System will monitor student attendance daily. Codes for attendance used in the student records database (Power Grade) will be consistent between schools to indicate excused and unexcused absences, tardies, early dismissals, and in-school and out-of-school suspensions, etc. Excused absences shall be delineated by the reason for the excuse. The Towns County Board of Education will adopt policy and procedure outlining the specific steps to be taken to monitor and address the attendance of all students. Each school will create a building level procedure in accordance with this policy based on the following definitions.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

In order for a student to have an excused absence, a written excuse from the parent or doctor must be presented to the Attendance Clerk within three days after the absences. These excuses will be maintained in the student's attendance folder. Based on Towns County and state Board of Education policy, only the following may be considered excused:

1. A student having a personal illness such that his or her attendance in school would endanger the student's health or the health of others. In the instance of head lice, two days will be excused for treatment. When sent home by the school nurse, that day's absence will be entered as a medically excused. If the student is sent home due to having a fever 100.4 or higher, the following day's absence will also be medically excused.
2. A serious illness, death, or emergency in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. Observation of religious events or holidays that necessitate absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A period not to exceed one day is allowed for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. Excused status can be obtained in advance for special circumstances at the discretion of the principal.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

A student is absent any time he or she is missing from school or from any assigned class or school activity for reasons other than those stated above and/or has not provided a valid written excuse within three days.

Parents may provide up to five (5) written notes for absences for reasons listed under "EXCUSED ABSENCES". Written notes after five will be considered unexcused unless reviewed by the principal and excused at his/her discretion.

TRUANT

Any student subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences in a semester and NO MORE than ten (10) days total during the school year is considered truant.

TARDY

A student is tardy when he or she arrives at an assigned place after the designated time.

EARLY DISMISSAL

An early dismissal is when a student is checked out before the end of the school day.

Repeated or habitual tardiness and early dismissals are disruptive to the orderly instructional process. Teachers and/or principals shall have the discretion to take corrective action such as detention, ISS, silent lunch, etc.

ATTENDANCE RECOVERY

Opportunities are provided for students to make up time missed and receive academic assistance during the regular school schedule due to tardies and absences. Examples: before-school programs, after-school programs, and other times as designated by the principal or assistant principal.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Removal of a student from their regular classes and assignment of the student to a location isolated from their peers.

HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND

A hospitalized or homebound student who receives three hours of instruction per week from a certified hospital/homebound teacher may be counted present at the school for that week.

NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS

Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents/guardians shall be given notice of State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1 and Towns County Board of Education school attendance policy. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the policy by requesting signatures from parents/guardians that this notice was received and understood. At the middle and high schools, students will also receive this notice and provide signature. At the elementary level, this notice will be received by students who have reached age ten (10) or above by September 1 of that school year. This notice should also be included in each school’s Code of Conduct.

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM

Each school will establish an Attendance Support Team (AST) which will be chaired by the Attendance Coordinator and include one or more of the following as it’s members: the principal of each school or his/her designee, School Counselor, SRO/DARE officer, appropriate members of the Attendance Protocol Committee, and faculty having direct contact with the parents/guardians and/or providing direct service to the specific student(s) to be discussed. Each school’s AST will meet when deemed necessary by the attendance protocol to discuss excessive absenteeism and will be responsible for implementing and monitoring policy to reduce tardiness, early dismissals, and truancy. Parents/guardians shall be invited, as well as encouraged, to attend these meetings. For purposes of this Protocol, the term “parent” may include any adult who has charge and control over the child, including a biological, adoptive, foster, step-parent, a guardian, or any other person who has control or charge of the child’s attendance at school. In this regard, two parents residing in the same household with the child are equally responsible for the child’s attendance at school.

Daily attempts shall be made to call parents of absent students. *In cases known to involve joint or shared custody or guardianship of a student, efforts should be made to contact all individuals with custodial rights. This standard shall also apply to steps hereinafter.*

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES
SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012**

	After 3-5 Unexcused	After 5-7 Unexcused	After 10 or more	After 15 or more “TOTAL”
Absences	Parent Contact made by Administrator	Attendance Support Team Meeting. Parent Contact made by Attendance Coordinator	Referral to Truancy Court	Students absent more than 15 days, regardless of excuse, in a school year might be retained if student does not attempt attendance recovery through 21 st Century program or Saturday School.
Unexcused Tardy/Early Dismissal	1 day Saturday School at 5 tardies or Early Dismissal from school. Failure to attend Saturday School will result in 1 day ISS.	2 days Saturday School at 10 tardies or Early Dismissal from school. Failure to attend Saturday School will result in 1 day ISS.	5 unexcused tardies and/or early dismissals will equal 1 unexcused absence. The above procedures will be followed as absences accumulate from tardies and/or early dismissals	

- At three (3) unexcused absences, the principal or his/her designee will contact the parent either by phone or in writing. This serves to notify the parent(s) of attendance to date.
- At five (5) unexcused absences the Attendance Coordinator will send a letter via certified or registered mail to the parent(s) along with a copy of the attendance law mandated by the state. This letter will request the parent contact the Attendance Coordinator to arrange an Attendance Support Team (AST) meeting and will require a signature of receipt.
- At seven (7) unexcused absences and/or ten (10) unexcused absences total the Attendance Coordinator will call the parent(s) to investigate and request an AST meeting to review the case and consider making a referral.
- At ten (10) unexcused absences, the Attendance Coordinator and School Administrator(s) will make a referral if one has not been made previously.
-

Attendance Coordinator Timeline

- ⇒ Attendance Coordinator will meet with the student and/or attempt a home visit to explore the reasons for excessive absences and to recommend avenues to the student and family for addressing the cause of absences.
- ⇒ Upon review of attendance records, parent contacts made by school staff, and other pertinent information, the Attendance Coordinator will set an AST meeting to review the case and notify the parents and appropriate AST members.
- ⇒ After the Attendance Support Team meeting, the Attendance Coordinator will monitor the decisions/contract completed and take whatever actions were deemed necessary by the committee. (A sample of the Attendance Support Team Contract can be found on page 12).
- ⇒ If upon further investigation and the determination of the Attendance Support Team the student's attendance has not improved and/or the decisions/contract terms not been fulfilled, the Attendance Coordinator will refer parent(s)/guardian(s) of students ages six (6) to eleven (11) to either the Juvenile Court for Educational Deprivation, or to the Magistrate Court for Failure to comply with Compulsory Attendance, and/or (c) refer the family to the Department of Family and Children Services for deprivation/educational neglect. Students ages twelve (12) to sixteen (16) will be referred to Juvenile Court for Truancy and/or (d) notify the Department of Motor Vehicles as specified in O.C.G.A. 40-5-2 regarding denial of driving permits and/or licenses for students age fourteen and above. **NOTE: In most cases, Court referrals will be made at this point or at the next unexcused absence.**
- ⇒ Review end of year attendance records with each school's Principal and determine a list of active referrals for the beginning of the next school year.

Criminal Prosecution for Violation of School Attendance Law

O.C.G.A. & 20-2-690.1 requires any person in this State who has control or charge of a child between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) to enroll and send that child to school, including public private and home schooling.

A child is responsible to attend school and is subject to adjudication in Towns County Juvenile Court as an unruly child for violation of the statute. If a parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the child *causes* the child's absence, then *that* person, and not the child, is in violation of this statute. Such a violation is a misdemeanor and carries a penalty of up to \$100 fine and 30 days in jail for each violation. The law specifies that *each* day's absence constitutes a separate offense.

A. Filing Juvenile Complaints

A juvenile complaint should be filed in the Juvenile Court of Towns County against a child who is habitually and without justification truant from school. Such a child is "unruly"/truant.

For the purposes of this Protocol, habitual truancy or absence is defined as five (5) or more days of unexcused absence from school. After seven (7) unexcused absences, the child's circumstances will be reviewed by the Attendance Support Team. At this review the following options will be discussed:

1. Refer the child and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) to the appropriate community resources.
2. Request further medical documentation if appropriate
3. File an "unruly child"/truancy complaint with the Juvenile Court of Towns County
4. Make a referral to Department of Family and Children's Services for deprivation/educational neglect.

The Attendance Coordinator will be responsible for obtaining and monitoring compliance with the recommendations of the Attendance Support Team.

B. Juvenile Justice Procedures

1. Intake Process for Juvenile Complaints
 - a. The Clerk of Juvenile Court in Towns County will immediately forward a copy of all Truancy complaints to the Intake Officer of the Department of Juvenile Justice for Towns County. The intake officer will process complaints.
 - b. Complaints will be entered into the Juvenile Tracing System and any past history will be assessed.
 - c. The Intake Officer may contact the Attendance Coordinator for any further pertinent information.
 - d. Truancy complaints will receive immediate attention and be placed on the most current Juvenile Court Calendar of arraignment.
2. Adjudication and Disposition
 - a. A youth may be placed on contract and/or probation for Truancy by the Juvenile Court Judge upon receipt of a Truancy charge. At this time, the Judge and/or the Department of Juvenile Justice may request a

Protective Order to ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) actively assist in the youth's compliance with court mandates and the youth's attendance at school.

- b. The Probation Officer will monitor the youth's attendance, at a minimum, on a bi-monthly basis. Further unexcused absences from school by youth will result in immediate sanction by the Department of Juvenile Justice. Upon adjudication for Truancy-related Violation of Probation, the Juvenile Court Judge will determine what further action or intervention is appropriate.
- c. Judicial truancy reviews will be held as the judge instructs from the date of the initial Truancy Contract/Probation Order for Truancy-related cases. These reviews will assess the youth's attendance at school and effectiveness of any services that may be involved to assist youth and/or family. All parties involved should be prepared to report on youth's progress at these reviews.

A Probation Order may be terminated by the Juvenile Court Judge prior to the two-year expiration date if youth's attendance and/or progress had reached a level satisfactory to all parties involved.

C. Prosecution in Juvenile Court

When it is clear that the parent is the direct cause of the child's absence, a warrant for violation of OCGA & 20-2-690.1 should be sought against the parent. In other circumstances, the Attendance Support Team may, but is not required to, take into account the following considerations when recommending a criminal warrant is sought for the parent of a child:

1. The child is under the age of 13 years
2. The child has an illness for which the parent has not been diligent in pursuing medical attention or in seeking financial assistance to procure the proper medical attention
3. The parent is absent from the home or neglectful to an extent that it hinders the child's willingness or ability to attend school.
4. The child is a deprived child.

The child and parent/guardian MUST comply with the Attendance Support Team's recommendations. Failure of the child or parent to comply with the recommendations, including, but not limited to, further unexcused absences from school, will result in juvenile adjudication of the child and/or prosecution of the parent/guardian. In any event, if the child accumulates ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any school year, the Attendance Coordinator will file a juvenile complaint. When a parent/guardian is prosecuted, regular school attendance will be assigned as a condition of bond.

Community Support

A. Law Enforcement

Each school in Towns County has access to an employee of the Towns County Sheriff's Office, either on-site or within minimal driving distance. These individuals are certified peace officers designated as "School Resource Officers." In support of improved school attendance, the School Resource Officers shall:

- ❖ Attend Attendance Support Team meetings, as appropriate
- ❖ Forward complaints against parents directly to the Sheriff's Office regarding compliance with mandatory attendance laws
- ❖ Honor any applicable school-related transportation basis, transport truant students to school.

B. School Health Services

Each school in Towns County has access to licensed staff available to serve students via an on-site clinic. Our Health Services staff shall:

- ❖ Be responsible, in cooperation with other staff, for the final determination at each school regarding when a child should be sent home early for the day, due to health related concerns, and excusing any resulting absences.
- ❖ Be available to parents for preliminary verification to the school of illness pending an appointment with a physician and advocate with physician's offices for timely appointments, as appropriate
- ❖ Follow any orders written by students' physicians regarding medication or other medical treatment to be provided during school hours.
- ❖ Coordinate immunization evaluations for Kindergarten registration and Scoliosis screens for students provided through Public Health
- ❖ Work in conjunction with Teachers, School Administrators, and Public Health to promote general health and safety for students, school staff, and the community.

C. Public Health Services

The Towns County Health Department is an integral partner in community health related to school readiness, attendance, and success. Towns County Health Department shall:

- ❖ Continue to support and promote Towns County Health Services
- ❖ Provide immunization evaluations, immunizations, and immunization records required for school enrollment
- ❖ Provide Scoliosis screens for students
- ❖ Provide various medical, dental, and prescription services, referrals, and education to students and families in Town County to promote personal and community health.

D. Mental Health Services

Avita Community Partners offer crucial support for the mental, physical, and emotional well being of students and their families, including individual and group sessions on-site at the schools for student clients of Towns County. In support of this Protocol, Avita Community Partners shall:

- ❖ Notify and/or refer student clients to the School Counselor or Attendance Coordinator when efforts to conduct individual or group sessions at school repeatedly fail, due to absences.
- ❖ Coordinate and host regular Emergency Staffing Committee meetings, which facilitate support and treatment planning for at-risk youth, including students who are truant.
- ❖ Attend court proceedings, when appropriate, for cases involving truancy and support any court orders for treatment of emotional or family issues contributing to absences.
- ❖ Offer clinical support, when possible and appropriate, to any truancy prevention or treatment programs instituted.

In accordance with state and federal laws related to confidentiality, Avita Community Partners and Towns County Schools shall, as appropriate, obtain releases of information to allow communication as outlined above.

E. Department of Family and Children Services

The Towns County Department of Family and Children Services often provide social services to the families of truant students. During the course of an investigation or an on going protective service or placement case the Towns County Department of Family and Children's Services shall:

- ❖ Accept and consider information related to school attendance, behavior, and performance in reports and investigations of other suspected abuse and/or neglect
- ❖ Address school attendance in departmental case plans and safety plans
- ❖ Ensure school enrollment and regular attendance for students in emergency shelter care, temporary guardianship arranged by the Department, or foster care
- ❖ Verify involvement of the Attendance Coordinator when available attendance information indicates more than ten (10) unexcused absence
- ❖ Attend court proceedings, when necessary, for cases involving truancy and/or complaints against parents/guardians related to mandatory school attendance.

Monitoring the Protocol

To insure the written protocol procedures are followed, the Protocol Committee will meet bi-annually, as required by law. The Committee's goal will be to improve communication between agencies, encourage inter-agency cooperation, and update the protocol as necessary. Each participating agency shall monitor and evaluate compliance with this protocol and, as needed, recommend protocol revision and implementation that best meets the needs of the community and complies with Federal, State, and local statutes, as well as agency policy.

Steps to Prevent Truancy

Various measures are currently being explored to address truancy from a prevention perspective.

- ❖ The Family Connections Program in Towns County serves as a pre-adjudicatory measure. This program offers a strong family lever component of intervention against truancy.
- ❖ Towns County Student Attendance Protocol Signature Sheet
- ❖ Each student/parent is given a copy of the Attendance Procedures at the beginning of the school year in addition to the protocol being included in the Student Handbook.
- ❖ A signature page is kept in each student's attendance file showing that the parents and/or the student have received a copy of the protocol included in the student handbook.

III. DISCIPLINE PLAN

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The 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 school or on school property at any time
- Off school grounds 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; and
- At school bus stops.

Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the school educational process.

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.

As required by the Georgia General Assembly, parents and guardians are encouraged to inform their children on the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

Standards for Student Behavior

Standards for student behavior are designed to create the expectation that students will behave themselves in such a way so as to facilitate a positive learning environment for themselves and other students. The standards are designed also to encourage students to respect each other and school district employees, to motivate students to obey student behavior policies adopted by this board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within this school district.

Behavioral Expectations

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy with all individuals regardless of circumstances, even when others do not;
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline;
- Attend all classes regularly and on time;
- Prepare for each class by taking appropriate materials and assignments;
- Meet the Towns County Middle School standard of grooming and dress;
- Respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and other employees of Towns County Schools;

- Respect the property of others, including Towns County Schools property and facilities;
- Cooperate and assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline; and
- Refrain from committing violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

Disciplinary Procedures

The disciplinary procedures outlined in this behavior code are clearly stated to insure that all students are aware of unacceptable behavior that is in violation of school district policies and the consequences of such policy violations. Offenses are classified as Level One, Level Two, or Level Three.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Assault: Any threat or attempt to physically harm another person or any act which reasonably places another person in fear of physical harm. (Example: threatening language or swinging at someone in an attempt to strike).

Battery: Intentionally making physical contact with another person in an insulting, offensive, or provoking manner or in a way that physically harms the other person.

Bomb: A device containing combustible materials and a fuse.

Burglary: Unauthorized entry into a school building (unoccupied) with the intent of committing a felony when the building is closed to the students and the public. (See Theft)

Bullying: In accordance with Georgia law, bullying is defined as an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

- (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
- (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- (3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
 - (A) Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
 - (B) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - (C) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
 - (D) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bus Privileges (Loss of) – The student is suspended from the bus for a specified period of time by the local school administrator. The student is expected to attend school, but the parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school.

Cheating – The act of seeking, giving, taking or receiving unauthorized assistance with the intent of claiming credit for work which results from such assistance. This includes copying homework, copying tests, changing grades, and all forms of plagiarism.

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.

Corporal Punishment: Physical punishment of a student by a school official in the presence of another school official.

Cyber bullying: When a student is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another student(s) using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or cell phones.

Detention: A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after school. Students are given one days' warning so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.

Disciplinary Tribunal: School officials appointed by the Board of Education to sit as fact finder and judge with respect to student disciplinary matters.

Disobedience/Insubordination – Failure of the student to comply with a reasonable direction or instruction by staff.

Disrespect – Responding in a rude and impertinent manner.

Disruption – Behaving in a manner, which interferes with educational activities.

Dress Code: The current dress code is explained in the student handbook.

Drug: The term drug does not include prescriptions issued to the individual, aspirin or similar medications and/or cold medications that are taken according to product use recommendations and board policy. Caffeine pills are considered drugs

Expulsion: Suspension of a student from a public school beyond the current school quarter or semester. Such action may be taken only by a disciplinary tribunal.

Extortion: Obtaining money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

False Fire Alarm – Reporting a fire to school or fire officials or setting off a fire alarm without a reasonable belief that a fire exists.

Fighting – Involves the exchange of mutual physical contact such as pushing, shoving and hitting, with or without injury.

Fireworks: The term “fireworks” means any combustible or explosive composition or any substance of combination of substances or article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation, as well as articles containing any explosive or flammable compound and tablets and other devices containing an explosive substance.

Gambling: Engaging in a game or contest in which the outcome is dependent upon chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value.

Harassment/Intimidation/Verbal Abuse – Disturbing consistently, by pestering or tormenting in the classroom, on the school bus, or elsewhere on the school site.

Inappropriate Dress – Dressing in a manner than disrupts the teaching and learning of others or in violation of the school’s dress code.

In-School Suspension: Removal of a student from class(es) or regular school program and assignment of that student to an alternative program isolated from peers.

Permanent Expulsion – The student is removed from all public school property and activities or events for an indefinite period of time. The Board of Education or Disciplinary Tribunal panel may take this action. Schoolwork may not be made up or credit given.

Prescription Drug – Use of a drug (medication) authorized by a registered physician and prescribed for the student. Student or parent should inform the school on the use of medically prescribed drug.

Physical Violence: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another: or intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another.

Short-Term Suspension – The student is suspended out of school up to ten (10) days by the local school administrator. The student may be suspended for an accumulation of offenses, as well as a major offense. Suspended students may make up those tests and assignments that the teacher determines will have impact on the student’s final grade and mastery of course content. Assignments that the teacher does not require to be made up will not count towards a student’s final grade. It is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements to make up work within five (5) school days upon return to school. During the term of suspension the student is not allowed on the school campus or at any school activity or school-sponsored event.

Suspension: Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed 10 days (short-term) or for a period greater than 10 days (long-term, which may be imposed only by a disciplinary tribunal). During the period of suspension, the student is excluded from all school-sponsored activities including practices, as well as competitive events, and/or activities sponsored by the school or its employees.

Theft: The offense of taking or misappropriating any property, of another with the intention of depriving that person of the property, regardless of the manner in which the property is taken or appropriated.

Truancy – The student stays out of school without permission or valid excuse.

Vandalism/Graffiti – The willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property.

Waiver: A waiver is an agreement not to contest whether a student has committed an infraction of the Code of Conduct and the acceptance of consequences in lieu of a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal.

Weapons: The term weapon is defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1 and for the purpose of this policy includes any object which is or may be used to inflict bodily injury or to place another in fear for personal safety or well-being. The following things may be defined as dangerous weapons: any pistol, revolver, or any weapons designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, any stun gun taser, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife, straight-edge razor or razor blade, spring stick, metal knucks, chains, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way as to allow them to

swing freely, which may be known as a nunchaku, or fighting chain, throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind.

LEVEL ONE

Student offenses classified as **Level One** are those that threaten the safety of students and staff, disrupt the orderly school environment, and/or may result in injury or loss of property.

Level One Offenses include:

- **Possession of a weapon in a school safety zone**
- **Possession of a firearm in a school safety zone** as defined by 18 U.S.C. § 921.
- **Unlawful use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol**, including, but not limited to:
 - Possession, distribution, sale, attempted sale, use, and/or under the influence of narcotics, alcohol, stimulants, narcotic drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or other intoxicant.
 - Sale, attempted sale, distribution, or being under the influence of a prescription or over the counter drug; including the misuse or abuse of auto-injectable epinephrine; otherwise known as an epipen.
 - Possession, distribution, attempted sale or sale of substances represented as drugs or alcohol.
- **Possession of fireworks or any explosive.**
- **Verbal assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions**
- **Physical assault or battery, including sexual battery, of other students, or persons attending school-related functions**
- **Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel:**
- **Any off-campus behavior of a student which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.**
- **Willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school or to personal property of any person legitimately at school.**
- **Marking, defacing, or destroying school property.**
- **Stealing, theft, or extortion of school district property or the property of others.**
- **Unexcused absence, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission, failure to comply with compulsory attendance law**
- **Bullying, including cyber bullying, as defined by subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-751.4.**
- **Willful and persistent violation of the student code of conduct.**

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

- (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
- (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or

(3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:

(A) Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;

(B) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;

(C) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or

(D) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited at Towns County Middle School. Upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of school officials that a student has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to the alternative school;

When school administration determines that a student has committed an act of bullying the parents of the student who bullied and the parents of the student who has been bullied will be notified.

Any retaliation by a student following a report of bullying shall be considered as a separate incident of bullying.

Any teacher or other school employee who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal.

Students, parents, guardians, or others who have control or charge of a student are encouraged to report bullying activity. Such a report may be made by contacting school administration. Such a report may be made anonymously by leaving a voice message on the phone of the school principal or assistant principal.

LEVEL TWO

Student offenses classified as **Level Two** are serious violations of the behavior code. Level Two offenses include, but are not limited to:

- **Disrespectful conduct toward teachers, administrators, and other school personnel, including use of vulgar or profane language;**
- **Fighting;**
- **Possession/use of tobacco products.**
- **Violation of school dress code.**
- **Disruption of the orderly school environment, including but not limited to the inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts or harassing other students or any school employee.**
- **Failure to comply with the local and district-wide provisions relating to the use of the electronic communication network as defined by policy IFBG - *Internet Acceptable Use*;**
- **Leaving campus without proper authorization.**
- **Failure to comply with compulsory attendance as required under Code Section 20-2-690.1 and the Towns County Schools Attendance Protocol.**
- **Repeated occurrence of offenses listed under Level Three.**

- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat**
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives;**
- **Disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff**
- **Classroom and school disturbances**
- **Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words or indecent exposure**
- **Use during instructional time of cell phone or electronic communication device, except for health or other reasons approved by an administrator**
- **Moving and non-moving driving violations**
- **Giving false information to school officials**
- **Chronic disciplinary problems**

Before a student is suspended (in-school or out-of-school) for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. **If the student is suspended (in-school or out-of-school), a reasonable attempt will be made to notify the student's parents.**

LEVEL THREE

Offenses classified as Level Three are less serious violations of the Behavior Code. Offenses classified as **Level Three** include, but are not limited to:

- **Public affection;**
- **Gambling;**
- **Cheating;**
- **Violation of the Towns County Middle School dress code;**
- **Forgery;**
- **Possession of explicit/obscene material;**
- **Profanity;**
- **Any behavior which disrupts the learning environment of the classroom or school not listed as a major offense.**

I. PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program.

The following disciplinary actions may be imposed for any violation of this Code of Conduct:

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Loss of Privileges
- Isolation or Time Out
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Corporal Punishment
- Detention
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal as outlined in the Board of Education policies.

Parents or students may elect not to contest whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved also by the disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer in accordance with local board policy.

Before a student is suspended for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. If the student is suspended, the student's parents will be notified if possible. School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence surrounding a situation necessitates their involvement or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported.

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. Students 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. 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 which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

Student Support Process

Student support processes are designed to consider, as appropriate in light of the severity of the behavioral problem, support services available at each school, the school district and other public entities or community organizations which may assist students to address behavior problems;

Towns County Middle School provides a variety of resources to help address student behavioral problems. These resources include Student Support Teams, school counselors, graduation coach, principal and assistant principal, chronic disciplinary problem student plans, and the Towns County Schools Attendance Protocol.

Parental Involvement Processes

Parental involvement processes are designed to enable parents, guardians, teachers, and school administrators to work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance. The process should enable parents, guardians, and school employees to communicate freely their concerns about student behaviors which detract from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communication through personal contacts is extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents, as well as ongoing 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 or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite the parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or 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/guardian 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.

Towns County Middle School shall involve parents in updating student codes of conduct. Each code shall require disciplinary action for each infraction of the code.

Bus conduct

The student behavior code applies to all school district transportation and at school bus stops. Many of the violations of the student behavior code will result in immediate removal from any school bus transportation. The following are additional provisions prescribing and governing student conduct and safety rules on all school buses and at school bus stops:

- Students shall be prohibited from acts of physical violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, bullying as defined by subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-751.4, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior;
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, audible radios, tape or compact disc players ; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus; and
- Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

If a student is found to have engaged in physical acts of violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, the student shall be subject to the penalties set forth in that Code Section. The consequences for physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel may include expulsion for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public schools.

A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school officials must be held to form a school bus behavior contract whenever:

- A student is found to have engaged in bullying; or
- A student is found to have engaged in a physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

The school bus behavior contract shall provide for age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Provisions may include, but are not limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, a suspension from riding the bus, and suspension from school. These provisions regarding use of a bus behavior contract are not to be construed to limit the instances when other code of conduct violations may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

Other infractions of bus conduct rules include:

- Failure to remain seated;
- Eating or drinking on the bus;
- Putting any part of the body outside a window;
- Consistent tardiness to bus stop;
- Unnecessary noise;
- Loading or unloading at unassigned stops; and/or

- Refusal to sit in assigned seat.

Disciplinary actions by an administrator include, but are not limited to:

- Conference with student;
- Conference with parent/guardian;
- Detention;
- Saturday School;
- In-school Suspension;
- Corporal Punishment
- Suspension from the bus transportation system; or
- Suspension from School.

Bus referrals are cumulative over the school year. Recommended action includes, but is not limited to:

- First referral - Form sent to parents;
- Second referral - Suspension for five days from the bus;
- Third referral - Suspension for nine days from the bus; and
- Fourth referral - Suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year.

DRUG SCREENING POLICY

The Towns County Board of Education firmly believes that the use and abuse of drugs that are not prescribed or used as prescribed are detrimental to the physical, emotional and mental well being of its students. The Board further believes that this abuse seriously interferes with the academic and athletic performance of students and creates an unhealthy learning environment. These concerns have prompted the Board to authorize the Superintendent and his staff to develop and implement drug screening procedures for all students who wish to participate in any interscholastic athletic activity or any interscholastic extra curricular activity.

Drug Screening Procedures

I. Definitions

- A. Alcohol shall mean any beverage, mixture, or preparation, including any medication or other products, containing alcohol or ethanol.
- B. Chain of Custody refers to the procedures for maintaining control and accountability from initial collection to final disposition for all such materials or substances and providing for accountability at each stage in handling, testing, and storing specimens and reporting test results.
- C. Drugs shall mean any substance screened for under the policy and shall include, without limitation, alcohol, amphetamines, anabolic steroids, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates, phencyclidine, and propoxyphene.
- D. Specimen means urine, tissue, hair, or a product of the human body capable of revealing the presence of drugs or their metabolites, as approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration or the Agency for Health Care Association.
- E. A Participating Student is any student enrolled in Towns County High School or Towns County Middle School who participates in or applies for participation in any interscholastic athletic program or extracurricular activity, or who parks a vehicle on school property.
- F. Privileged Activity encompasses all high school and middle school interscholastic sports, extracurricular activities, and parking a vehicle on school property.

II. Drug Screening Procedures

- A. **Consent:** Each participating student and his or her parents are required to sign a written consent for drug testing form prior to being allowed to participate in any privileged activity. Any random drug testing done throughout the course of the school year will be paid for by the school. Any refusal by a participating student to be tested shall constitute a violation of this policy.
- B. **Medication:** Participating students who have been selected for drug testing and who are or have been taking prescription or non-prescription medication should disclose that fact at the time of drug testing and, upon request, provide verification. This verification may be done by either submitting a copy of the prescription or by the physician's written authorization.

- C. **Selection Process:** Drug testing of participating students shall occur at various times throughout the school year. Individuals will be selected at random using a numerical selection process where each participating student's name and identity remain unknown until the random selections are completed. The random selection will occur monthly throughout the school year. The random drawing of participating students will be performed by the contracting body and provided to the Towns County High School or Towns County Middle School administration. This method is to ensure fairness and confidentiality for students. Retesting of participating students following a first offense or first positive drug test will occur at times not previously disclosed to the participating student to deter the participating student from committing a subsequent violation.
- D. **Specimen Collection Procedures:** Procedures for the collections, testing and result verification of specimens will be set forth by the testing facility contracted with to perform such services and will be distributed to all the students. The testing for our students will be conducted in private under the supervision of the school nurse. The method of testing for our students will utilize an oral fluid test which involves the student's collection of saliva on a collection pad (swab). The collection pad (swab) will be placed into a sealed vial by the student and sent by the nurse to the testing company laboratory for analysis.
- E. **Guidance Counselor:** The designated counselor will receive all reports of positive drug test results and will be supplied with information to determine the correct name of each participating student whose identifying number appears on a positive test result report.
- F. **Appeal:** A participating student who has tested positive and whose test results have been forwarded by the Guidance Counselor to the school principal or his or her designee for the imposition of action provided under policy IDF shall be entitled to appeal such a decision to the school principal. The principal's decision can be appealed only to the Towns County Board of Education.

III. General Provisions and Penalties

- A. **Standard of Conduct for Participating Students:** The use or possession of a drug, as defined herein, by a participating student is both dangerous and detrimental to a student's ability to drive and participate in athletics or extracurricular activities and is hereby prohibited.
- B. **Penalties:** Any participating student whose drug test administered according to this policy renders a positive test result as indicated by the testing facility or any participating student who otherwise violates this policy shall be subject to the following consequences.
 - 1. **First Offense or First Positive Drug Test Result:** The participating student and his or her parents will be required to attend a conference held with one or more of the following staff members as determined by the Principal, Counselor, Athletic Director, Principal, or Principal's designee. The participating student will be required to offer evidence of participation in a drug

assessment/counseling program within 30 days of a positive test result. The participating student will be subject to recurring drug tests at times not be previously disclosed to the participating student to deter the participating student from committing a subsequent violation of this policy.

2. **Second Offense or Second Positive Test Result:** The participating student will be suspended from participating in privileged activities for 45 days. The participating student may reapply to the athletic director or principal for reinstatement of his/her eligibility to participate in privileged activities only after a negative test result is obtained and successful completion of an appropriate drug assessment/counseling program.
3. **Subsequent Offense or Subsequent Positive Drug Test Results:** Upon determination of a third or subsequent positive drug test result, the participating student shall be prohibited from participation in all privileged activities for one full calendar year. At the end of the year in order for a student to be allowed to resume participation in privileged activities, the student must provide evidence of the successful completion of an appropriate drug assessment/counseling program and a negative test result from the school's testing program that was obtained after the year's prohibition.
4. **Violations of the drug testing policy** are accumulative during a student's entire career at Towns County Middle School or Towns County High School; therefore, penalties will increase in severity for each violation that occurs while a student is enrolled at either of the schools. (Note: Violations are not carried over from the Middle School to the High School.)

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Appropriate dress is essential to success in school and in the work-place; however, students are allowed a measure of freedom in choosing appropriate clothing to wear in school. Clothing should not be distracting or disruptive to the orderly and professional operation of the school. Students with inappropriate apparel will be sent to the office to correct the dress code violation. Appropriate dress includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Dresses, skirts and shorts should be at a length below your fingertips while standing.
2. All wearing apparel with obscene or suggestive language, pictures or language that promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco, racism or hatred are not permitted.
3. Tank tops are not permitted.
4. Students must wear shoes.
5. Hats, hoods, stocking caps, bandannas and other headgear may not be worn.
6. Sunglasses may not be worn.
7. No student should dress in such a way that his/her underwear is partially or totally visible. Waist and top portions of boxer shorts and briefs, panties, bra straps and bra sides may not be shown.
8. No student may wear clothes with holes anywhere above the knees.
9. Blouses, dresses, skirts, or shirts which expose areas of the stomach, side, or back are not permitted.
10. Low cut, see through, strapless, or backless dresses/shirts may not be worn.
11. Girl's sleeveless tops must be as wide as your palm at a shoulder.
12. Cheerleaders may wear uniforms on game days.

NO APPAREL CAN BE WORN WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION DETERMINES TO BE UNACCEPTABLE BY COMMUNITY STANDARDS OR WHICH IS DISRUPTIVE TO NORMAL SCHOOL OPERATIONS.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF DRESS CODE:

1. The student will be asked to modify his/her attire without leaving campus or will be offered something furnished by the principal to wear to class.
2. If the attire cannot be modified to be in compliance, parents will be notified and asked to bring acceptable clothing to school. The student will be placed in ISS to complete schoolwork while awaiting the clothing.
3. The student may (with permission of a parent) return home to correct their attire. Any absence from class is unexcused and the student may not receive credit for work made up upon their return.
4. Out of School Suspension (OSS) for 1 – 3 days for repeated offenses.

DRUG FREE SCHOOL ZONE ACT

It is illegal to engage in drug activity in, on, or within 1000 feet of any school property. An individual convicted will be guilty of a felony and imprisoned for up to 20 years and/or fined up to \$20,000 for a first offense.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Towns County School District provides bus transportation to those locations which buses may access safely. Students are expected to observe all rules appropriate in school while on the bus in addition to the following:

1. Any problems on the school bus should first be reported to the bus driver.
2. Only ordinary conversation is permitted. No loud talking or yelling.
3. Students must refrain from throwing anything.
4. Students must not put any part of their body out of the windows.
5. Only administrators or bus driver may assign seats.
6. No eating or drinking is allowed.
7. Vandalism may result in bus suspension until damages are paid for.
8. A student who sets off the emergency alarm or opens an emergency door may be assigned ISS and/or face other disciplinary consequences.
9. A student who opens an emergency door on a moving bus may be assigned OSS.
10. Students may only be picked up and dropped off at their homes unless a Transportation Request form is signed by the parent in the office in advance. Serious disciplinary problems on the school bus may result in the suspension of bus riding privileges. This does not excuse the student from attending school.

IV. GENERAL STUDENT INFORMATION

CHANGE IN ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

It is critical that the school knows how to contact parents in an emergency. If a change in address or phone number occurs, the school should be contacted immediately.

ELIGIBILITY RULES

Towns County Middle School students participating in extracurricular activities must take five academic classes and two exploratory classes and pass a minimum of five classes in the semester immediately preceding participation. Exploratory classes shall be averaged to count as one subject for eligibility purposes. Second semester students not meeting this requirement will be ineligible for one semester and remain ineligible until they pass five subjects preceding participation.

FIRST AID/ILLNESS

Students who require first aid or who become ill during the school day should report to their regularly scheduled class and obtain a hall pass to the nurse's clinic or to phone home in the office.

FOOD SERVICE

The cafeteria is operated without profit for the benefit of students. Students are expected to assist in keeping the cafeteria clean; therefore, they are responsible for cleaning up their own tables and spillage. Students are expected to keep the noise level down and maintain reasonable cleanliness of the lunchroom.

- Breakfast (K-12) for full-pay students is \$.80, reduced price is \$.30, staff is \$.90, visitors is \$1.50
- Lunch (K-5) for full-pay students \$1.50, (grades 6-12) is \$1.70, reduced price is \$.40 for (K-12), staff is \$2.75, visitors is \$3.00

A student may only charge three meals up to a total of \$10.00 to their account. Afterwards students will be given a courtesy meal which consists of a sandwich and milk until the account is paid.

Applications for free or reduced meals are mailed to every student before the first day of school and must be returned by August 13, 2011.

Special meals are provided for any student when prescribed by a medical doctor only. An official document from the doctor must be given to the principal.

During the lunch period students must stay in the lunchroom. To help maintain a safe environment, no student may leave the campus to eat lunch at another location. No food or drink can be brought into classrooms except for specific activities, which are approved by the faculty member in charge of the class.

AGENDA BOOKS

All students will carry an agenda book. Students will keep assignments current in the agenda book. Students may be required to use agenda book as a hall pass. If students lose their agenda books, they must pay for replacement agendas.

INSURANCE

School insurance is available for purchase during the first two weeks of the new school year. Students and parents should be aware that the insurance is limited.

Insurance is required for participation in athletic teams. School insurance is available for purchase during the first two weeks of the new school year. Personal insurance is acceptable.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are issued to students with their condition noted by the teacher. It is the responsibility of each student to take proper care of this school property. Missing or damaged textbooks will be paid for by the student based on the condition when issued.

LOCKERS

A locker is assigned to every student and furnished with a pad lock rented for **\$5.00**. This prevents students from having to carry their notebooks and textbooks all day long. Students must keep lockers locked at all times and not give combinations to anyone. Student lockers are considered the property of Towns County Schools and may be searched by the Administration at any time during the school year. The school does not assume responsibility for the contents of a student's locker if the items are stolen or lost.

LOST AND FOUND

Found articles are kept in the main office.

MEDICATION and SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

If students need to take prescription or over the counter medications during the school day, the medication must be left with the school nurse with a consent form completed by parents authorizing the school to administer the medication as prescribed by the doctor.

An auto-injectable epinephrine is defined as a disposable drug delivery device that is easily transportable and contains a premeasured single dose of epinephrine used to treat life-threatening allergic reactions. In order for a student to carry and self-administer prescription auto-injectable epinephrine the student's parent or guardian shall provide: A written statement from a licensed physician detailing the name of the medication, method, amount, and time schedules by which the medication is to be taken, and confirming that the student is able to self-administer auto-injectable epinephrine. A written statement by the parent or guardian consenting to the self-administration, providing a release for the school nurse or other designated school personnel to consult with the physician regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication, and releasing the school system and its employees and agents from civil liability if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of self-administering auto-injectable epinephrine pursuant to Georgia law. The written statements specified in this subsection shall be provided at least annually and more frequently if the medication, dosage, frequency of administration, or reason for administration changes. Any student who is authorized for self-administration of epinephrine pursuant to this Code section may possess and use auto-injectable epinephrine; while in

school; at a school sponsored activity; while under the supervision of school personnel; or while in before-school or after-school care on school operated property. To protect the safety of all students the misuse or abuse of auto-injectable epinephrine will be considered a Level One violation of the Towns County Middle School Code of Conduct.

Students with special health needs must make these known to the principal so that a notation can be made in school records. A student health form along with a letter of explanation will be made available to parents.

MONEY AND OTHER VALUABLES

Students should leave money and other valuables at home except for that which is necessary for school. The school will **not** be responsible for money left in clothes, dressing rooms, and lockers or unattended in the classroom or other places on the school grounds. Students in the gym may ask the PE teacher or coach to hold valuables for them.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND 60 SECONDS OF SILENCE

In accordance with Georgia Law, the opportunity is afforded daily for reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America followed by 60 seconds of silence daily.

TELEPHONES

Telephones in all offices are for school business only, unless an emergency situation arises. Personal business should be taken care of before or after school hours. Personal messages will not be forwarded to the students during school hours.

CELL PHONES

Cell phone use is not allowed throughout the school day. Cell phones can only be used before and after regular school hours before 7:30 and after 3:30. Violators will have their phones taken up to be returned at the end of the school day or returned to a parent.

VISITORS

Parents and other visitors must enter at the front of the school and immediately check in at the reception desk in the office to obtain a visitor's pass before visiting on campus. All visitors are subject to the rules and regulations of the school.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL PROCEDURES

All withdrawals are handled by the records clerk. Parents must contact Mrs. Beatrice Thurman before withdrawal procedures can begin.

INTERNET AND E-MAIL USE

ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR THE COMPUTER NETWORK OF THE TOWNS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Towns County School System is pleased to make available to students access to interconnected computer systems within the District and to the Internet, the world-wide network that provides various means of accessing significant educational materials and opportunities.

In order for the Towns County School System to be able to continue to make its computer network and Internet access available, all students must take responsibility for appropriate and lawful use of this access. Students must understand that one student's misuse of the network and Internet access may jeopardize the ability of all students to enjoy such access. While the school's teachers and other staff will make reasonable efforts to supervise student use of network and Internet access, they must have student cooperation in exercising and promoting responsible use of this access.

Below are the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Guidelines of the Towns County School System and the Data Acquisition Site that provides Internet access to the school district. Upon reading the guidelines and signing and returning the Student's Agreement as the students have been directed, each student will be given the opportunity to enjoy Internet access at school and is agreeing to follow the guidelines. If a student is under 18 years of age, he or she also must have his or her parents or guardians read the guidelines and sign the agreement. The Towns County School System will not provide access to any student who, if 18 or older, fails to sign and submit the agreement to the school as directed or, if under 18, does not return the agreement as directed with the signatures of the student and his/her parents or guardians.

Listed below are the provisions of your agreement regarding computer network and Internet use. If you have any questions about these provisions, you should contact the **Technology Director; Larry Shook and/or the Principal of the school in which your child attends**. If any user violates the guidelines, the student's access will be denied, if not already provided, or withdrawn and he or she may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

I. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

By signing this agreement, you are agreeing not only to follow the rules in these guidelines, but are agreeing to refrain from any other misuse of the network that is not included in the guidelines, but has the effect of harming another or his or her property.

II. TERM OF PERMITTED USE

A student who submits to the school, as directed, a properly signed agreement and follows the guidelines to which she or he has agreed will have computer network and Internet access during the **course of the student's enrollment in the school**.

III. ACCEPTABLE USES

- A. Education Purposes Only. The Towns County School System is providing access to its computer networks and the Internet for *only* educational purposes. If you have any doubt

about whether a contemplated activity is educational, you may consult with **Technology Director; Larry Shook and/or the Principal of the school in which your child attends** to help you decide if a use is appropriate.

B. Unacceptable Uses of Network. Among the uses that are considered unacceptable and which constitute a violation of the guidelines are the following:

1. Uses that violate the law or encourage others to violate the law. Do not transmit offensive or harassing messages; offer or sale or use any substance the possession or use of which is prohibited by the school system student code of conduct; view, transmit or download pornographic materials or materials that encourage others to violate the law; intrude into the networks or computers of others; and download or transmit confidential, trade secret information, or copyrighted materials. Even if materials on the networks are not marked with the copyright symbol, you should assume that all materials are protected unless there is explicit permission on the materials to use them.
2. Uses that cause harm to others or damage to their property. For example, do not engage in defamation (harming another's reputation by lies); employ another's password or some other user identifier that misleads message recipients into believing that someone other than you is communicating or otherwise using his/her access to the network or the Internet; upload a worm, virus, "trojan horse," "time bomb," or other harmful form of programming or vandalism; participate in "hacking" activities or any form of unauthorized access to other computers, networks, or information systems.
3. Uses that jeopardize the security of student access and of the computer network or other networks on the Internet. For example, do not disclose or share your password with others; do not impersonate another user.
4. Uses that are commercial transactions. Students and other users may not sell or buy anything over the Internet. You should not give others private information about you or others, including credit card numbers and social security numbers.

C. Netiquette. All users must abide by rules of network etiquette, which include the following:

1. Be polite. Use appropriate language. No swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening language.
2. Avoid language and uses which may be offensive to other users. Do not use access to make, distribute, or redistribute jokes, stories, or other material which is based upon slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.
3. Do not assume that a sender of e-mail is giving his or her permission for you to forward or redistribute the message to third parties or to give his/her e-mail address to third parties. This should only be done with permission or when you know that the individual would have no objection.

- 4 Be considerate when sending attachments with e-mail (where this is permitted). Be sure that the file is not too large to be accommodated by the recipient's system and is in a format which the recipient can open.

IV. INTERNET SAFETY

- A. General Warning: Individual Responsibility of Parents and Users. All users and their parents/guardians are advised that access to the electronic network may include the potential for access to materials inappropriate for school-aged students. Every user must take responsibility for his or her use of the computer network or Internet and stay away from these sites. Parents of minors are the best guide to materials to shun. If a student finds that other users are visiting offensive or harmful sites, he or she should report such use to **Technology Director; Larry Shook, and/or the principal of the school in which your child attends.**
- B. Personal Safety. Be safe. In using the computer network and Internet, do not reveal personal information such as your home address or telephone number. Do not use your real last name or any other information which might allow a person to locate you without first obtaining the permission of a supervising teacher. Do not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you "meet" on the computer network or Internet without your parent's permission (if you are under 18). Regardless of your age, you should never agree to meet a person you have only communicated with on the Internet in a secluded place or in a private setting.
- C. "Hacking" and Other Illegal Activities. It is a violation of these guidelines to use the school's computer network or the Internet to gain unauthorized access to other computers or computer systems, or to attempt to gain such unauthorized access. Any use which violates state or federal law relating to copyright, trade secrets, the distribution of obscene or pornographic materials, or which violates any other applicable law or municipal ordinance, is strictly prohibited.
- D. Confidentiality of Student Information. Personally identifiable information concerning students may not be disclosed or used in any way on the Internet without the permission of a parent or guardian or, if the student is 18 or over, the permission of the student himself/herself. Users should never give out private or confidential information about themselves or others on the Internet such as home addresses, home telephone numbers, or particularly credit card numbers or Social Security numbers.
- E. Active Restriction Measures. The school, either by itself or in combination with the Data Acquisition Site providing Internet access, will utilize filtering software or other technologies to prevent students from accessing visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors. The school will also monitor the online activities of students, through direct observation and/or technological means, to ensure that students are not accessing such depictions or any other material which is inappropriate for minors.

V. PRIVACY

Network and Internet access is provided as a tool for your education. The Towns County School System reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of Towns County School System and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

VI. FAILURE TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES

The user's use of the computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. A user who violates these guidelines shall, at a minimum, have his or her access to the computer network or Internet terminated, which Towns County School System may refuse to reinstate for the remainder of the student's enrollment in the school system. A user violates these guidelines by his or her own action or by assisting another user in violating these guidelines or by concealing another user's involvement in such activities. Further, if passwords are assigned, a user violates this agreement if he or she permits another to use his or her account or password to access the computer network and Internet, including any user whose access has been denied or terminated. The Towns County School System may also take other disciplinary action in any of the above-mentioned circumstances.

VII. ASSURANCES

The Towns County School System cannot provide an absolute assurance that students will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials or sending or receiving objectionable communications. However, the district will ensure that all practicable precautions will be taken to keep students safe from illegal and/or inappropriate material. The district shall not be responsible for any claims, losses, damages or costs (including attorney's fees) of any kind suffered, directly or indirectly, by any user or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) arising out of the user's use of its computer networks or the Internet under these guidelines.

MEDIA CENTER

The purpose of the Media Center is to serve the students, faculty and staff as a resource center, supporting and enriching the curriculum with a variety of materials and providing the opportunity for reading and research.

Students may check out materials from the Media Center at any time during its operating hours.

Students must have a hall pass to visit the Media Center. They must sign in when entering the center. The staff will sign and record each student's departure time on the hall pass as the student leaves to return to class.

Books at all grade levels are checked out for 1-2 weeks. Notices are given to teachers informing them of students with overdue books. Students are expected to pay full replacement price plus \$2.00 processing fees for books that are lost or not returned to the Media Center.

Students are expected to be quiet while in the Media Center, to be respectful to the staff, to take care of property and materials, to return materials on time, and to pay for damaged or lost items. Standard behavior expectations are enforced.

CLUB INFORMATION

School sponsored clubs (excluding competitive interscholastic activities or events) are those under the sponsorship, direction and control of the school that organize and meet for common goals, objectives, and purposes. State law requires that parents have the right to withhold permission for their students to participate in any school sponsored club or organization designated by them. You, as the parent/guardian, have the right to withhold in writing your permission for your student's participation in any club or organization. If a club is added during the school year, you will be provided information on the club and your written permission will be required prior to your student's participation.

V. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of emergency drills or an actual emergency, students are to follow the instructions of the teacher. Emergency procedures are posted in every room. Students should familiarize themselves with these procedures.

FIRE DRILLS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES - REQUIRING EVACUATION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Evacuation of the building will proceed in an orderly fashion. Students must remain together with their class so that teachers can report any missing students to the principal.

TORNADO DRILLS AND OTHER SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS

Tornado Watch: Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms are possible.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been detected in the area. Take shelter immediately.

In the event of a tornado or tornado drill, everyone is to proceed to the assigned area as posted in classrooms and be seated along an inside wall in an orderly fashion. Areas near glass windows and doors and large open spaces like the media center, lunchroom, gymnasium, construction shop and technology center should be avoided.

TERRORIST/SNIPER

On the sound of the alarm or announcement of "CODE RED," all personnel and students, should immediately return to the classroom. If this happens during a break, lunch, before school etc., students should move to the next scheduled room assignment in an orderly fashion. Once all students are in the classroom the doors will be locked and students will take positions out of the line of sight from any windows or doors.

SNOW AND OTHER EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

When there are snowy or icy conditions, the following radio and television stations will announce school closings:

TV - WAGA-FOX 5 WSB-Ch.2 WXIA- Ch.11 WGCL-Ch.46
Radio- WNGM WKRK

School closing information may also be obtained by calling 896-4131 or 896-5082 or by connecting to the school's web site at www.towns.k12.ga.us. We will also attempt to contact all student home telephone numbers through our automated system. Students should know what to do and where to go in the event of an early dismissal. Parents should discuss this with their children.

ACCEPTABLE USE AND INTERNET SAFETY GUIDELINES

STUDENT’S AND PARENT/GUARDIAN’S AGREEMENT

Every student, regardless of age, must read and sign below:

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the terms of the foregoing Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Guidelines. Should I commit any violation or in any way misuse my access to the Towns County School System’s computer network and the Internet, I understand and agree that my access privilege may be revoked and school disciplinary action may be taken against me.

Student name (PRINT CLEARLY)

Student signature

Date

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read, understand and agree that my child or ward shall comply with the terms of the Towns County School System’s Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Guidelines for the student’s access to the school system’s computer network and the Internet.

Parent/Guardian name(s) (PRINT CLEARLY)

Parent/Guardian signature(s)

Date

Please remove and return to the homeroom teacher.

**TOWNS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL
1600 HWY. 76 EAST
HIAWASSEE, GA 30546
HANDBOOK RECEIPT FORM**

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2011-2012 Towns County Middle School Student-Parent Handbook. It is important that you are aware of the rules, regulations, procedures and services at Towns County Middle School.

Please indicate your permission and/or acknowledgement of reading this handbook by placing a check on the line next to each statement. Please sign, date, and return the form to your child's homeroom teacher. The remainder of the handbook is yours to keep and use as a reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask a teacher, counselor or principal. Thank you for your continued cooperation and assistance.

Mr. Darren Berrong
Principal

_____ I have read and understand the State Compulsory Attendance Law and the School Attendance Protocol.

_____ I have read the handbook and I am aware of the rules, regulations and services.

Parents may request that their student not participate in a particular school club or organization. If you wish to decline permission for your student to participate in a particular club or organization, please complete the form below.

My student MAY NOT participate in the following school club(s) and/or organization(s):

My students name, work or photograph MAY NOT be electronically displayed or published by the Towns County School System. _____

Print Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student's Name _____

Student's Signature _____

Please remove and return to the homeroom teacher.

**TOWNS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL
1400 HWY. 76 EAST
HIAWASSEE, GA 30546
DRUG SCREENING PROGRAM FORM**

I have read the Towns County Schools Drug Screening Policy and Procedures. I understand that in order for my child to participate in extracurricular activities, my child must participate in the program. I give my consent for my child to participate in the Towns County Schools Drug Screening Program.

PRINT Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

I have read the Towns County Schools Drug Screening Policy and Procedures. I understand that in order to participate in extracurricular activities, I must participate in the program.

PRINT Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please remove and return to the homeroom teacher.

TO: Parents
FROM: Gena Oliver RN
School Health Clinic
DATE: August 5, 2011
SUBJECT: School Health Information

In preparation for the 2011-2012 school year, it is important to have accurate health information in order to best serve your child. The actual School Health Form is on the back of this page. It is crucial that it is filled out completely. Accurate phone numbers allow the clinic to be able to contact you in case your child is ill or in case of an emergency.

If your child needs to take any special medication while at school, you will need to come to the clinic to sign a special form and give specific information. **Students may not transport medication to school.** Medicine must be in the original labeled container (no baggies, foil etc.). **Pharmacy can duplicate prescription bottle, request one for school and home.**

BE SURE TO FILL OUT BOTH SIDES OF THIS FORM AND RETURN TO THE HOMEROOM TEACHER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

Below is a check list of over-the-counter medications that we may provide for your student during the school day if needed. This will save time and prevent phone calls to you. The goal of the clinic is to take the best possible care of your student.

Please indicate **Yes or No** for the following medications:

TYLENOL _____

IBUPROFEN (MOTRIN) _____

BENADRYL _____

NEOSPORIN _____

CALADRYL _____

TUMS _____

ORAGEL (TOOTH PAIN) _____

BURN CREAM (ALOE, LIDOCAINE) _____

COUGH DROPS _____

Parent Signature

Date

School Health Information Card

School: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher/HR: _____

Student: _____, _____ M F DOB: _____
Last Name First Name Circle One

Student #: _____

Address: _____

HEALTH HISTORY (ANSWER YES OR NO)

Allergies: (Specify) _____

Physical Handicaps: _____ Diabetes: _____

Asthma: _____

Seizure Disorder: _____

Does your student have other physical or mental health issues which may be of concern at school? List:

Does your student have any condition that would limit physical education activities? List :

Does your student take any prescribed medications routinely? List:

Date of last tetanus shot? _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Father/Guardian: _____ Phone(Home) _____ Pager _____
Phone (Work) _____ Cell _____

Mother/Guardian: _____ Phone (Home) _____ Pager _____
Phone (Work) _____ Cell _____

If parents cannot be reached, list two nearby persons who will assume care of your student.

Name: _____ Relationship _____ Phone _____

Name: _____ Relationship _____ Phone _____

Student's Healthcare Provider _____ Phone _____

School clinic personnel have my permission to contact my student's physician for further medical information. In case of serious illness/injury, the school will telephone Emergency Medical Services (911) for immediate transportation to the closest hospital. The parent/legal guardian authorize the transport of and treatment by the hospital emergency staff for my student,

Student's Name

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

