

Code Of Student Conduct

Middle and High School Students



Preparing the Next Generation Today

Sumter County Schools
2680 W. County Road 476
Bushnell, Florida 33513
352/793-2315



A Letter From The Superintendent

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year in the Sumter County Schools! We are committed to providing all students the highest quality education in a safe and secure learning environment. A cornerstone of this effort is the Code of Student Conduct. This booklet includes the Code of Conduct and information about the rules that students are expected to follow, as well as the consequences for unacceptable behavior. The Code also describes the rights of students as well as the responsibilities coupled with those rights. Although the Code of Student Conduct is followed by each school, other matters such as dress code are within the jurisdiction of the school.

This Code applies to students while they are in school, while they are on school buses and at bus stops, and while they are at extracurricular or after school activities where teachers and administrators have supervisory responsibility. The Code has been reviewed and approved by the School Board.

While the Code may seem detailed, one basic rule for students is always true—success in school is usually a matter of making proper choices in critical situations. Knowing the rules and knowing the expectations of student behavior are important first steps. The assistance of parents and school staff is necessary to insure students are aware of what is expected of them.

I encourage you to read this booklet carefully and if you have any question, contact your school administrators or our district office. We will be available to address your questions or concerns.

A safe and disciplined school is one where teachers can teach and students can concentrate on learning. Thank you for your efforts as parents and students, who with school personnel, create an environment where academics flourish and students succeed. We believe this high level of achievement begins with order and respect in the school, supported through fair and consistent enforcement of school rules.

We look forward to a great year in the Sumter County Schools and thank you for your help in providing the best possible education for our young people.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Shirley
Superintendent

School Board

Haydn L. Evans
Christine Norris
David A. Williams
Kenneth P. Jones
Kathie L. Joiner

MISSION STATEMENT

The Sumter County School District,
dedicated to preparing the next generation today,
is to develop responsible, contributing citizens of our local
and global community through a safe, challenging, and
balanced education for all students, supported by continuing
and enhancing partnerships with stakeholders

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- ◆ Everyone can learn.
- ◆ All students are unique with infinite value.
- ◆ The focus of education is the success of each student.
- ◆ Schooling should focus on contemporary and global issues.
- ◆ All stakeholders are accountable for educational outcome.
- ◆ All students must be treated with fairness and respect and given encouragement and recognition for achievement.
- ◆ A challenging, well-balanced curriculum with instruction delivered by highly effective educators is the foundation of a successful education.
- ◆ High standards and clear expectation help foster a culture of achievement.
- ◆ Education is a lifelong process that serves as the foundation of a free society.
- ◆ Education enhances quality of life and empowers people.
- ◆ The uniqueness of each child should be celebrated.

Guiding Principles

- ◆ Create positive climates and focus on prevention
- ◆ Develop clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences to address disruptive student behaviors
- ◆ Ensure fairness, equity, and continuous improvement

1. ATTENDANCE - Students are entitled to a free public education from kindergarten through grade twelve. Students are expected to attend school regularly. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school.
2. RESPECT FOR PERSONS AND PROPERTY - Students have the right to expect courtesy, fairness and respect from the school staff and student body for themselves and their property. Students have the responsibility to exercise courtesy, fairness and respect toward staff and student body for themselves and their property.
3. RULES AND CONDUCT - Students have the right to become familiar with and be represented in the formulation of school rules and regulations that are clearly stated and readily accessible. Students have the responsibility to become familiar with and to observe school rules and regulations.
4. RIGHT TO LEARN - Students have the right to develop their educational potential under competent instructors in an atmosphere conducive to learning. Students have the responsibility to be attentive and to be diligent in all school and school related assignments. Students must come to school with appropriate materials and be prepared to learn.
5. RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH AND PUBLICATION - Students are free to express opinions and ideas. Student expressions, oral or written, must be free from profanity, obscenity, slander or libel, and must avoid the advocacy of disruptive tactics and/or the violation of law or school regulations.
6. RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE - Students have a Constitutional right to assemble. Students have the responsibility to gather in a peaceful manner that safeguards health and safety and does not harm property or persons, or interfere with the activities of others.
7. RIGHT TO PRIVACY - Students have the right to privacy of person and property, as prescribed by law. Students have the responsibility to observe all laws and school rules relating to student privacy.
8. PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES - Students have the right to attend and participate in school-sponsored functions unless prior inappropriate behavior is prohibitive. Students have the responsibility to observe all school rules and regulations in their participation in school programs and activities.
9. RIGHT TO FREE TRANSPORTATION - Students have the right to free transportation in accordance with school board rules. Students have the responsibility to abide by bus rules.

The Sumter County School Board prohibits gang activity, gang paraphernalia and gang related attire in all schools, on school property, and at all school sponsored activities.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT: The Sumter County School Board will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined in Board Rule (5.321), is prohibited.

<http://www.sumter.k12.fl.us/pdf/Bullying-Harassment.pdf>

POSSESSION OF A FIREARM OR WEAPON AS DEFINED IN CHAPTER 790

Simulating a firearm or weapon while playing or wearing clothing or accessories that depict a firearm or weapon or express an opinion regarding a right guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution is not grounds for disciplinary action or referral to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system under this section or s.1006.13.

However, a student may be subject to disciplinary action if simulating a firearm or weapon while playing substantially disrupts student learning, causes bodily harm to another person, or places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm. The severity of consequences imposed upon a student, including referral to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system, must be proportionate to the severity of the infraction and consistent with district school board policies for similar infractions.

HAZING: The Sumter County School Board will not tolerate hazing. Hazing means any action or situation that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student at a school with any of grades 6 through 12 for purposes of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any school-sanctioned organization. It includes, but is not limited to: (a) pressuring, coercing, or forcing a student to participate in illegal or dangerous behavior, or (b) any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, or exposure to the elements.

APPROPRIATE DRESS: The Sumter County School Board will prohibit a student while on the grounds of a public school during the regular school day, from wearing clothing that exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent or vulgar manner or that disrupts the orderly learning environment. Each school will provide a written dress code for students that explains the responsibility of each student with regard to appropriate dress, respect for self and others, and the role that appropriate dress and respect for self and others has on an orderly learning environment.

Any student who violates the dress code policy described is subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- a. For a first offense, a student shall be given a verbal warning and the school principal or designee shall call the student's parent or guardian.
- b. For a second offense, the student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for a period of time not to exceed 5 days and the school principal or designee shall meet with the student's parent or guardian.
- c. For a third or subsequent offense, a student shall receive an in-school suspension pursuant to s. 1003.01(5) for a period not to exceed 3 days, the student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for a period not to exceed 30 days, and the school principal or designee shall call the student's parent or guardian and send the parent or guardian a written letter regarding the student's in-school suspension and ineligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

TEACHER AUTHORITY TO REMOVE STUDENTS FROM THE CLASSROOM: Pursuant to Florida Statutes, any teacher has the authority to "remove" a student from his or her classroom for repeated disruptive behavior or a violent incident. The major provisions of this statute are as follows:

- A. Teachers who invoke the provisions of this statute must document that a student's behavior repeatedly interfered with the learning process in the classroom or the student's behavior was so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it interfered with the effective conduct of the class.
- B. Principals may not return a student to that class when the teacher removed the student without the permission of that teacher or the direction of a placement review committee. The principal must find other placements for the student as indicated by the discipline referral.
- C. Teachers removing more than 25% of their students must participate in professional development activities related to classroom behavior management skills.

LIMITS OF SUPERVISION Supervision by school personnel will be limited to thirty (30) minutes before and thirty (30) minutes after school or school activity. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the following consequences. **First offense will be a verbal warning and the principal's designee will call the parent or guardian. After a second offense the student may not be allowed to attend any after school activities the rest of the school year and special attendance approval may be affected.**

Florida law requires the Department of Juvenile Justice to notify the school district of a student attending its schools who has been adjudicated or pled to certain felony violations and whether the offender is to be prohibited from attending the same school or riding on the same bus whenever the victim or a sibling of the victim is attending the same school or riding the same bus. Upon notice, the school district is required to carry out these provisions.

It is essential that schools be safe and orderly to provide environments that promote learning and high academic achievement. Violence in school, therefore, will not be permitted. This Code of Student Conduct requires that students found to have committed the following offenses on school property, school sponsored transportation, or during a school sponsored activity shall receive the most severe consequences provided for by school board policy.

- a. Homicide
- b. Sexual battery
- c. Armed robbery
- d. Aggravated battery
- e. Battery or aggravated battery on a teacher or other school personnel
- f. Kidnapping or abduction
- g. Arson
- h. Possession, use, or sale of any firearms
- i. Possession, use, or sale of any explosive device

NOTICE: Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C.S. 921 or a firearm as defined in F.S. 790, to any school, school function or any school-sponsored transportation will be expelled with or without continuing educational services, from the student's regular school for a period of not less than one (1) full year and referred for criminal prosecution. Further, any student who is determined to have made a threat or false report, as defined by 790.162 and 790.763 F.S., respectively, involving school or school personnel's property, school transportation, or a school sponsored activity will be expelled, with or without continuing educational services, from the student's regular school for a period of not less than one (1) full year and referred for criminal prosecution.

A. Alternative corrective measures shall be used in lieu of suspension or expulsion, whenever possible. Examples of alternative measures may include, but are not limited to, verbal correction, counseling, parent conference, make-up time, and an alternative education classroom.

B. Suspension is defined as the temporary removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed ten (10) school days. A student may be suspended from school by the principal, or designee, for a period not more than ten (10) school days on any one suspension. The Superintendent may extend suspension in cases where the date of the expulsion hearing will exceed ten (10) school days.

C. Expulsion is defined as the removal of the right and obligation for a student to attend a public school for the remainder of a term or school year. The Sumter County School Board has the sole right to expel a student from the public school system upon the recommendation of the county superintendent of schools, for serious offenses that endanger the welfare of students or cause disruption in any way.

Due Process Procedure for Suspension or Expulsion - A student accused of serious misconduct that, in the opinion of the principal, requires suspension or expulsion from school, shall be afforded the following due process procedure.

- STEP 1.** The student must be told by the principal, or designee, the reason(s) for consideration of suspension.
- STEP 2.** The student must be given the opportunity to present his/her side of the matter, either verbally or in writing, and must have the opportunity to present witnesses to the incident.
- STEP 3.** The student and parent must receive a written report of the suspension, with a copy forwarded to the superintendent.
- STEP 4.** The student and parent have the right to a hearing with the principal, upon request of the parent, to discuss the discipline imposed. All such requests must be made within three (3) school days of the sending of the notice of suspension.
- STEP 5.** The parent may request an administrative review by a committee appointed by the superintendent, after the conference with the principal outlined in STEP 4.

The sole purpose of this review is to decide if the student was given due process at the school. All such requests must be in writing and must be submitted within three (3) school days after the conference with the principal outlined in STEP 4.

D. National origin minority or limited English proficient students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their use of a language other than English.

E. The unlawful possession and use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any substances when used as an hallucinogenic substance is wrong and harmful. At a minimum, the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of such by students on school premises, or, as part of any of the schools' activities, is prohibited. Responses, as included herein, up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution, will be imposed on students who are in violation of this infraction.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE: Students are expected to comply with school regulations both during school hours and at school-sponsored activities. In all disciplinary actions, due process shall be observed. Reasons for disciplinary action include the following, with corresponding type of appropriate disciplinary response for that group of infractions:

LEVEL I INFRACTIONS

Acts of Misconduct
Cheating
Disregard for Rules
Disruptive Behavior
Failure to Bring Proper Materials
Failure to Do Assigned School Work
Inappropriate Dress
Lying
Possession or Unauthorized Use of Laser Pointer

LEVEL I RESPONSES

Contact Parents
Warning and Counseling
Temporary Removal from Class
Withdrawal of Privileges
Assignment of In-School Suspension/ Alternative Educational Setting
Detention
Agreement with Student
Referral to Student Services
After School Work Detail

LEVEL II INFRACTIONS

Acts of Disrespect to Staff
Bullying or Coercive Behavior
Technology Misuse
Skipping Class/School
Gambling
Failure to Report to Detention
Inappropriate Display of Affection
Inappropriate Language/Gesture/Profanity
Leaving Assigned Area Without Permission
Cheating
Minor Acts of Vandalism
Name Calling, Teasing or Other Demeaning Behavior
Providing False or Misleading Information
Racial Harassment
Sexual Harassment
Stealing (under \$300)
Threatening Behavior or Language
Throwing Objects
Use of Cell Phone
Use of or Possession of Tobacco products
Wrestling, Pushing, Shoving, etc.
Minor Acts of Vandalism
Tardiness (repeated)
Repeated Infractions of Level I

LEVEL II RESPONSES

Contact Parents
Behavior Agreement
Assignment of In-School Suspension/ Alternative Educational Setting
Work Detail
Detention
Assignment of Saturday School
Referral to Student Services
Referral to School Resource Officer
Confiscation of Unauthorized Materials
Return of Property, Payment or Restitution of Damages
Temporary Removal from Class
Out of School Suspension
Appropriate Response from Level I

LEVEL III INFRACTIONS

Breaking and Entering
Bullying or Coercive Behavior
Extortion
Fighting (Secondary)
Gross Disrespect to School Staff
Gross Insubordination
Inciting, Leading a Major Student Disorder
Major Acts of Vandalism (over \$300, but less than \$1,000)
Obscene Language
Possession of an Object that could be construed as a Weapon
Possession_of, Under the Influence of, Use, or Sale of Alcohol
Serious Technology Misuse
Serious Continued Threat
Serious Racial Harassment
Serious Sexual Harassment
Stealing (over \$300, but less than \$1,000)
Trespassing
Physical Attack
Hazing
Repeated Level II Offenses

LEVEL III RESPONSES

Mandatory Parent Contact
Out-of-School Suspension
Appropriate Responses from Level I or II
Placement in an Alternative Educational Program

Three Level III infractions in a semester or five during the school year may result in recommendation for an expulsion from the Sumter School District or placement in an alternative educational setting.

LEVEL IV INFRACTIONS*

Aggravated Battery
Armed Robbery
Arson, Attempted Arson
Battery or Aggravated Battery on Teacher or Other School Personnel
Bomb Threat
False Accusations Against Staff
that Damages Reputation/Career
Homicide, Murder, Manslaughter
Disruption on Campus – Major (Involved in affray)
Kidnapping, Abduction
Possession, Use, or Sale of any Explosive Device
Possession, Use, or Sale of Firearm on Campus
Possession, Use of, or Threat with a Weapon
Possession of, Under the Influence of, or Use of Any Drug, Narcotic, Controlled Substance
or Any Substance When Used for Chemical Intoxication Other Than Alcohol;
Rape, Attempted Rape, Sexual Battery
Sale or Distribution of Drugs, Controlled Substance excluding Alcohol
Severe Acts of Vandalism (over \$1000.00)
Severe or Repeated Bullying
Sexual Misconduct
Stealing (over \$1,000)
Severe Harassment
Sexual Assault (Threat of)

***Any of the offenses above that pose a threat to school, student or personnel safety may be reported to the proper authorities.**

LEVEL IV RESPONSES

10-day Out-of-School Suspension pending placement consideration
10-day Out-of-School Suspension pending expulsion hearing
Placement in an Alternative Educational Program
Referral to Resource Officer or Proper Authority

***SPECIAL NOTE: Dependent upon the severity of the misuse of computers, Internet, or software, any infraction will be classified at the appropriate level.**

Use of a wireless communication device in commission of a criminal act by a student on School property or in attendance at a school function, will be classified at the appropriate infraction level.

BUS DISCIPLINE
Middle and High Schools

Student behavior on buses must be good in order for our students to be transported safely. Drivers will be trained in assertive discipline for use in working with students who exhibit unsatisfactory behavior. Using that model, the following responses will be made by the building administrator for infractions reported by the driver.

FIRST OFFENSE:	Warning and counseling (more severe action will be taken in cases of endangering the safety of others, insubordination, or vandalism).
SECOND OFFENSE:	3-day suspension of bus riding privileges and parent conference.
THIRD OFFENSE:	5-day suspension of bus riding privileges.
FOURTH OFFENSE:	10-day suspension of bus riding privileges.
FIFTH OFFENSE:	10-day suspension of bus riding privileges.
SIXTH OFFENSE:	10-day suspension of bus riding privileges.

AND/OR

Recommendation to the School Board that bus riding privileges be suspended for the remainder of the year.

Student misconduct on the bus which constitutes a Level III or Level IV infraction of the Sumter County Code of Student Conduct may result in appropriate Level III or Level IV responses as outlined in the conduct policy.

In cases where corrective action involves suspension from the bus, parents have the responsibility to transport their children to and from school. Students who are suspended from a bus may not ride any district school bus and suspensions remain in effect if students transfer from one district school to another.

PreK and Kindergarten students will not be left at a bus stop if a parent/guardian or designated adult from the student's emergency pick up list is not present. A babysitter 12 years of age or older may be used as a pick-up designee if the parent has issued a letter to the school stating that the babysitter is allowed to make the pick-up. If these arrangements are not made and if there is no person present to pick-up the child from the bus stop then the student will be taken back to the school. The first offense will be a warning to the parent/guardian. The second offense (return to school with the child) will be a suspension from the bus for 3 days and a warning that the next offense will be a suspension from the bus for the remainder of the semester. Upon the 3rd offense the child will not be allowed to ride the bus for the rest of the semester.