



Vickery Creek Middle School 2019-2020

Student Handbook

Principal: Scott Feldkamp

Assistant Principal: Elizabeth Ihle

Assistant Principal: Van Lewsader

Assistant Administrator: Justin Mewborn



2019-20 Middle School Student Handbook District Information

Dr. Jeffrey Bearden, Superintendent
Forsyth County Board of Education
Mr. Wesley McCall (District 1),
Ms. Kristin Morrissey (District 2) Board Chairperson
Mr. Tom Cleveland (District 3)
Ms. Darla Light (District 4)
Ms. Nancy Roche (District 5), Vice Chairperson

Main Phone: 770-887-2461
Transportation Phone: 770-888-1234
Website: www.forsyth.k12.ga.us

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ATTENDANCE:

Regular attendance is essential to success in school. As permitted under the State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, the Georgia Compulsory Education Law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1, and Forsyth County Board of Education policy, students may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school that endangers a student's health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death 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. The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A scheduled medical, dental, or eye examination of the student.
7. Registering to vote or voting.
8. Visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is in military service in the armed forces and has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support post. The student may be excused for a maximum of five (5) days per school year.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly. Students who are in foster care are to be counted present at school when attending court proceedings related to their care and placement.

Non-school related activities and vacations are considered unexcused.

Absences:

The parent/guardian must submit a note, fax or email to the attendance clerk within five (5) school days for an absence to be considered excused. Attendance Fax Number: [770-667-2589](tel:770-667-2589) or Attendance email: vcmsattendance@forsyth.k12.ga.us. The note must include the student's name, the date(s) of absence(s), and the reason for the absence. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to be in communication with the student's teacher(s) and/or office staff when a student is absent, especially when it is for more than one day. The principal may require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

In case of extended illness, hospitalization, or injury, the parent should apply for Hospital Homebound service. Hospital Homebound service should be applied for immediately when absences of ten (10) days or more are anticipated for the student.

Consequences:

If a student has excessive absences, early check-outs, and/or late check-ins, the student and/or the parent may be referred to the School Social Worker, Juvenile Court, State Court, and/or Department of Family and Children Services. A parent/guardian who violates the compulsory attendance law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days,

community service, or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school is considered a violation.

Hospital-Homebound Services:

If a student should need to be absent from school for more than 10 consecutive school days because of serious illness or an accident, arrangements may be made to provide instruction at home. In accordance with state rule 160-4-2.31 Hospital/Homebound Services, students with absences due to psychiatric/emotional disorders, as defined in the latest edition of the Diagnostic, and Statistical Manual (DSM), may be eligible for hospital-homebound instruction. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to request homebound instruction as soon as possible. An application for services supported by a doctor's recommendation will be required. The application and supporting documentation are submitted to the Principal of the school.

Make-up Work:

It is the student's responsibility to turn in make-up work when he/she is absent from school. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to retrieve missed lessons and work from itslearning. The student has five (5) school days to make up work. The teacher has the discretion to grant a longer period to make up work if there are extenuating circumstances. **Assessments or projects that were assigned before the student's absence may be due when the student returns to school.**

Morning Recovery: Students attending a morning help session must report to the cafeteria first. Generally, morning help sessions begin at 8:15 a.m. Once a teacher's name appears on the display screen, students are then allowed to go to that teacher's classroom. Students will not be permitted to leave the cafeteria after 8:30 a.m. for a help session. This is to prevent disruptions to the help session learning environment.

Late Check-in or Early Check-out:

An unexcused late check-in or early check-out is defined as any time a student arrives late to school or leaves school early for a reason other than those defined by the State Board of Education as an excused absence. A combination of three unexcused late check-ins and/or early check-outs will be considered one unexcused absence. Students who miss more than half of the time in any class will be considered absent for that class period. When possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours. **If a student is being checked in or checked out for a doctor's appointment, a parent note, physician's note, or appointment card is required within 5 school days to be considered excused. After the tenth late check-in or early check-out, a physician's note or appointment card is required within 5 school days to be considered excused.**

Check-in: Parents must sign their child in upon late arrival.

Check-out: If it is necessary for a student to check out early due to illness, the student must be assessed by the school nurse and meet assessment criteria for the school to excuse the absence. Students who are frequently absent, tardy, or check out early from school may be required by the school administration to provide medical documentation to validate any absence, tardy or early check-out as excused.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES:

We pride ourselves in taking the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all our students at all times. Any student who is injured during school or at a school event will be assisted by a staff member. The staff member may provide reasonable care as needed or refer your child to the school clinic. Parents will be notified regarding any significant injury. An accident report will be completed by the supervising staff member.

Insurance forms that offer 24-hour or school-day accident coverage for students are available in the main office. The Forsyth County School System cannot reimburse parents for costs incurred due to injuries occurring at school or school sponsored events.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES:

BUS RIDERS: Bus riders arrive at VCMS between 8:30-8:50am and report to the gym. Bus riders will be released to homeroom at 8:45am. Bus riders wanting to purchase a breakfast will be permitted to go to the cafeteria at 8:30 a.m. Bus riders who leave the gym for purposes other than eating breakfast, attending a help session or attending a scheduled club meeting will be subject to consequences for being away from their assigned area of supervision.

CAR RIDERS: Parents may drop-off their child at the main entrance only. In order to have the most effective procedure, please pull forward as far as possible before stopping and allowing your student to exit or enter the vehicle. Students should not enter or exit vehicles beyond the sidewalk.

No student should be dropped off at school before 7:45 AM. At this time, the doors will be unlocked and supervision provided.

In the afternoon, students may be picked up in the front car line or in the adjacent elementary lot. Please enter and exit this lot via the elementary entrance. Do not enter the bus lane. Thank you for your support and cooperation with these procedures to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

ATHLETIC TEAMS:

Tryouts for the following interscholastic team sports are offered for seventh and eighth grade students:

- Football • Football Cheerleading •
- Competition Cheerleading
- Basketball • Basketball Cheerleading • Golf •
- Track

In order to try out for and participate in interscholastic activities, students must be in good standing academically and a current physical examination and insurance waiver must be on file for each participant. Eligibility is determined by state board policy.

BUS INFORMATION:

Forsyth County School's Bus Safety Guidelines are included in the 2019-2020 Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures. All students and parents should read these guidelines so that they are aware of rider expectations. Drivers will enforce the Three Step Student Behavior Management Plan to provide a safe ride to and from school for all students. Food, drinks, electronic devices are not permitted on the bus. Activities which distract the bus drivers will not be tolerated and the bus drivers will complete referral forms for students who behave inappropriately on the bus. School administrators will adhere to county policy regarding such behavior. Possible consequences include seating assignments, parent notification, etc. Major or repeated disruptions may involve suspending a student's privilege to ride the bus for a specified number of school days. If this occurs, it will be the parent's responsibility to provide transportation to and from school for the student.

Students are not allowed to ride a bus other than the bus assigned to them by the transportation department. Please make car transportation arrangements whenever your student(s) needs to be taken to any location other than their regular afternoon bus stop. School administrators will only approve a transportation change in the event of an emergency. Students who board a bus other than their assigned bus or request to get off of the bus at a stop that is not their assigned stop may be returned to school where the parent or designee will pick-up their child. Contact Jan Wilson, VCMS Field Coordinator, at 770-667-2580 x230704 or jewilson@forsyth.k12.ga.us with any questions regarding routes or minor concerns.

CARE OF PERSONAL ITEMS:

As a service, a locker will be provided for each student for a fee of \$5.00. All lockers are individually checked prior to the start of each school year and locker combinations are changed annually. Problems with a locker should be reported immediately to the student's teacher who assigned their locker. Abuse of a locker or using other students' lockers can lead to having locker privileges revoked and will require payment for repairs. Student bookbags, school lockers, desks, and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. The Forsyth County School System reserves the right to use "walk-through" and "hand-held" metal detectors and "drug-sniffing" dogs at any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours off the school campus. Students are notified that these metal detectors will be used at the discretion of school administrator.

PE lockers are provided in the gym locker rooms. Students may rent a combination lock each quarter but cannot bring their own lock from home. Students must adhere to the same policies as outlined above. Failure to do so will result in locker privileges being revoked and/or will require payment for lost combination locks and/or repairs.

The school does not assume responsibility for lost personal items. Valuables and large amounts of money should not to be brought to school. In addition,

cameras, radios, games, toys, trading/playing cards, electronic devices, skateboards, etc. should not be brought to school unless specifically approved by a teacher for a special event/purpose. Items such as those just listed will be confiscated and kept in the front office. The school assumes no responsibility for the “safe keeping” of confiscated items. Confiscated items will be returned to a parent upon signing the discipline referral. A parent may come to the school any time during normal operating hours (8:00am-5:00pm) to claim any of his/her child’s confiscated item(s).

In the event that a parent is unable to visit the school during the regular school day, the item may be claimed by the student on the last two days of the school year. Items not claimed one week after the last day of school will be discarded or donated to a charitable organization. Weapons, tobacco, and other drug products and similar items (or items promoting such products) will not be returned to a parent or student.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS BY PARENTS:

The VCMS staff values the concept of parents as partners in education and understands that each student’s education extends beyond the four walls of the class. Parent and community support and assistance are vital in all facets of the school program. It is therefore essential that parents be informed and involved in their child’s education.

Parents and community members have opportunities for observing students in the academic and extracurricular setting through a number of established activities and events which showcase our students’ academic, athletic, and artistic talents and endeavors. If a parent of a VCMS student or a prospective student wishes to set up a classroom observation, then he will be afforded every opportunity to do so. The following guidelines shall be used in setting up parent visits.

Classroom observation by parents of a VCMS student:

The Parent Should:

- Make the request to the principal at least 1 school day prior to the requested time.
- State the purpose of the visit.
- Sign in at the front office and receive a visitor’s badge prior to being escorted to the class.
- Sign the Confidentiality Agreement.
- Stay no more than one class period, unless previously authorized by the principal.
- Refrain from engaging the attention of the teacher or students through conversation or other means.
- Return to the office for a brief conference with an administrator at the end of the visit.

CLUBS:

Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of clubs that enhance social and emotional development. Clubs will make announcements on the morning news about meeting dates and times.

- **A club brochure will be posted on the school website and to social media for 2019-2020**

COMMUNICATION:

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to regularly check each of their itslearning courses for information such as lessons, assessments, important dates, etc. Within each course, the teacher maintains a Planner where this information can be found. Student grades and attendance are available in ParentPortal, <http://www.campus.forsyth.k12.ga.us>, which is also used for school and district newsletters distribution lists. The district invites you to stay connected by visiting its website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us (which includes language translation options), following on social media (@FCSchoolsGA on Twitter, @FCSchools on Facebook, and @ForsythCoSchoolsGA on Instagram), subscribing on YouTube (@ForsythCountySchools) and to download the updated mobile app, Forsyth County Schools GA.

CONNECTION CLASSES:

Connection classes are designed to reinforce critical reading, writing, mathematics and thinking skills taught within academic classes, as well as help students develop interpersonal skills and investigate career options. Students are rotated through Connections throughout their middle school years. Band and chorus are optional year long programs. The remaining Connection classes are randomly scheduled quarterly classes.

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1)Band | 2) Art | 3) Drama | 4) Math Plus | 5) PE | 6Audio/Visual |
| 7)Chorus | | | | | |
| 8) Computer Literacy | | 9) Technology | 10) Health | 11) STEAM | |
| 12) Junior Leadership | | | | | |

COUNSELING PROGRAMS:

The VCMS counselors assist students in their social, emotional, and academic growth through individual, group, and classroom activities. The guidance curriculum is a planned effort to provide each student with a set of skills and experiences to promote self-understanding, decision-making, problem-solving, communication improvement, and career planning. These programs are developmental, preventative, and proactive. Programs and services may be provided in an individual setting or small groups setting. Topics may include: friendships, problem-solving, class guidance, drug awareness and prevention, grief, divorce, etc. Parents and students are encouraged to schedule appointments. Parents can contact the counseling secretary at extension 230301. Students may complete an appointment slip.

VCMS and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) respects the right to privacy of those with whom they enter counseling relationships. Professional school counselors must keep abreast of and adhere to all laws, policies and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality. This confidentiality must not be abridged by the counselor except when there is clear and present danger to the student and/or other persons.

COURSE OF STUDY:

Forsyth County Middle Schools and VCMS are dedicated to providing structured middle school programs that embrace current research findings on the middle school child. Each grade level is divided into teams of teachers and students who work together to achieve academic and personal goals. Teachers work together to plan instruction and to solve problems. This enables students to understand consistent expectations and to strive to meet clearly understood standards of achievement.

The daily schedule followed by VCMS students includes five (5) daily, academic classes and two connection classes. Academic classes include mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, and either a foreign language, Math plus, Reading or literacy class. There is also POWER Time five days each week to focus on goal setting, academic remediation, personal reading and extra help sessions.

Each teacher and/or team will provide students and parents with information regarding subject area objectives via a course syllabus at the beginning of the year. Students and parents are encouraged to use this information to better understand academic requirements.

DELIVERIES AT SCHOOL:

Students are not allowed to receive deliveries of flowers, balloons, candy or other items while at school. Such deliveries create a disruption to instruction and the learning process. Students will not be allowed to take any delivered items to class or on the bus. Parents will be required to retrieve any delivered items from the front office.

DISCIPLINE:

Our goal at VCMS is educating children. This includes developing students into self-disciplined individuals. When children make mistakes and are not self-disciplined, school officials will investigate the incident and provide appropriate consequences to the involved students. The Forsyth County 2019-2020 Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures brochure outlines expected student behavior and consequences for noncompliance. Every student receives a copy of this brochure at the beginning of the year and, along with the parent, will be required to sign a form confirming that they received this document. Parents and students should be familiar with this document and retain it for future reference. This Code of Conduct applies to any school event, including those off-campus as well as some non-school related activities in which students may choose to engage. It is extremely important that students read, understand, and comply with the guidelines set forth in the Code of Conduct.

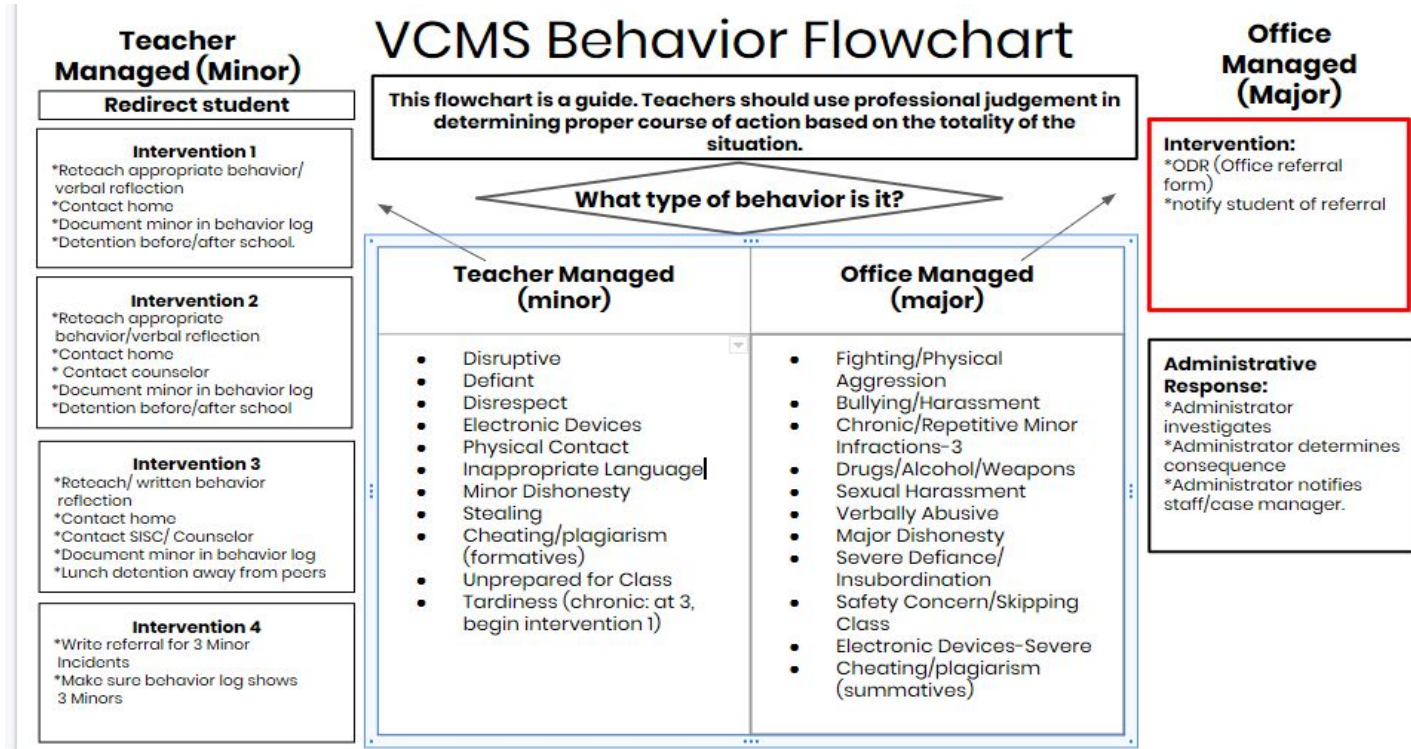
PBIS: VCMS utilizes PBIS. Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is a way for schools to encourage good behavior. With PBIS, schools teach kids about behavior, just as they would teach about other subjects like reading or math. The focus of PBIS is prevention, not punishment.

At VCMS the expectation is for all students to adhere to the following PBIS Matrix:

VICKERY CREEK MIDDLE	CAFETERIA	HALLWAY	RESTROOM	LOCKER ROOM
RESPONSIBLE	<p>Remain seated until dismissed.</p> <p>Remain in designated area.</p>	<p>Proceed to class in a timely and efficient manner.</p>	<p>Wash your hands and leave the restrooms clean.</p> <p>Tell an adult if there is a problem.</p>	<p>Take care of your belongings.</p> <p>Follow the procedures for use of the locker room.</p>
RESPECTFUL	<p>Keep area clean.</p> <p>Seats are for sitting, not saving.</p> <p>Throw my garbage away in the garbage can.</p>	<p>Keep the hallway trash free.</p> <p>Keep hands, feet and objects to self.</p>	<p>Respect the privacy of others at all times.</p>	<p>Keep hands, feet and comments to self.</p>
READY TO SUCCEED	<p>Get all of your food items and utensils on the first trip.</p>	<p>Technology out of sight.</p>	<p>Go to restrooms between classes.</p> <p>Complete the task and return to class.</p>	<p>Dress out and participate every day.</p>
REFLECTIVE	<p>Did I leave my area clean?</p>	<p>Was I mindful of others and my surroundings?</p>	<p>Did I leave the restroom ready for the next person?</p> <p>Did I return to class as quickly as I could?</p>	<p>Do I have good hygiene?</p> <p>Have I treated my peers with respect?</p>

VCMS Behavior Flowchart

The VCMS behavior flowchart works in conjunction with PBIS to encourage positive behavior at VCMS.



DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT REPORTING:

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

Title VI

Nathan Turner (Students)
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

ADA and 504

Sarah Taylor (Students)
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

Title IX

Nathan Turner (Students)
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

Gender Equity

Cindy Salloum (Students)

Community Based Work Programs

Valery Lowe

Equity coordinators may be contacted at the Forsyth County Board of Education and Professional Development Center, 1120 Dahlonega Highway, Cumming, Georgia 30040, 770.887.2461. Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaints procedure under Forsyth County School District Policy GAAA/JAA (Equal Opportunity/Discriminatory Complaints) or under Policy IDFA (Gender Equity in Sports) is located in the school district policy manual that is available at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/boe > policies and procedures.

EQUITY:

FCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex in any of its employment practices, educational programs, child feeding program or any other service or activity. It is the policy of the Forsyth County Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act and all accompanying regulations. Any student, employee, applicant for employment or other person alleging a violation shall promptly notify the principal or the designated school system coordinator.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS:

Forsyth County Schools Complaint Procedures:

Parents, students, staff, private schools, and the general public have the right to file a complaint regarding the following Federal Programs: Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies; Title I, Part B, Subpart 3: Even Start Family Literacy; Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children; Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention; Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk; Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund; Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology; Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement; Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers; Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111: State Assessment Program; Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments Competitive Grant Program; Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income Schools; Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children; Title X, Part C – McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Any and all complaints should be addressed with local school staff and/or administrators. If no resolution is determined, a complaint may be made in writing and signed by the complainant. Therefore, for complaints originating at the local level, a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) until every effort has been made to resolve the issue through local written complaint procedures.

The complaint must include the following:

- (1) A statement that Forsyth County Schools has violated a requirement of a federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program.
- (2) The date on which the violation occurred.
- (3) The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the federal statute or regulation).
- (4) A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information.

- (5) Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency.
- (6) Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position.
- (7) The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Federal Program Director (for program the complaint is filed against)
Forsyth County Schools
1120 Dahlonaga Hwy.
Cumming, GA 30040

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

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

1. Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is their child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or those who are emancipated, their own education records. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to their principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
2. Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parent/guardian or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parent/guardian or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. If you feel a violation of FERPA rights has occurred, visit www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/ferpa to submit a parent complaint form.

FERPA Directory Information Notice:

FCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Name,
- Address,
- Photograph,
- Grade level,
- Date of birth,
- Mailing address,
- Email addresses specifically to school approved yearbook companies, photography companies, and graduation service companies,
- Enrollment status,
- Dates of attendance,
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports,
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams,
- Degrees, honors and awards received,
- Major field of study, and
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended.
- Local Student Identification Number

In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the name, address, and telephone numbers. Parents/guardians have the right to refuse to allow the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If parents/guardians wish to opt-out, they must notify the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

Parents/guardians are also notified that students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event unless a parent/guardian notifies the principal of the school, in writing, to opt-out within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date. The principal will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, parent/guardian submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that their student will not be interviewed in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notice:

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

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

A parent/guardian of a student may, upon request, inspect any survey created by a third party containing one or more of the items listed as (1) through (8) above before the survey is

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

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

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

At the discretion of the principal, schools may disclose student name, grade, mailing and email addresses for purposes of school photography, yearbook and graduation-related services. Parents/guardians may opt-out by notifying the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

GRADING AND REPORTING:

Students in grades 6-8 receive grade reports on a quarterly basis throughout the school year. The interim reports are issued at the nine and 27 week points and the report cards are issued at 18 and 36 weeks. The reports include a numerical average for the grading period as well as a formative and summative grade breakdown. To formulate the average, the grades are weighted 80% summative and 20% formative. If a student is taking an EOC course in middle school (i.e. Physical Science, Algebra I), the EOC assessment grade conversion score, per state rule, has a weight of 20% on the final course grade. In addition, the reports include a three-point rubric defining Work Habits that impact student achievement.

HARASSMENT:

The school district forbids sexual, racial and other harassment of all employees and students while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any student, employee, applicant for employment or other person alleging a violation shall promptly notify the principal or the designated coordinator for the school system.

PARENT NOTICE OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents may request the following information:

1. Whether the student's teacher-
 - Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;

- Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and,
- Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS AND ADDRESS CHANGES:

Proof of residence is required when a student initially enrolls in a school and whenever indication of a change of residence occurs. Change of Address forms are available at the school or at <http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/Page/48193>

In the event of an address change, the Registration Center staff, principal or principal’s designee shall accept the following records as proof of residency:

1. A current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable) *and* a current and valid lease or rental agreement signed by the owner of the residence. Records must include the name and service address of the parent/guardian.

OR

2. A current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable) *and* one of the following documents establishing home ownership – deed, closing statement, mortgage statement, or property tax statement. Records must include the name and service address of the parent/guardian.

OR

3. A Forsyth County Schools Affidavit of Residency, if a parent/guardian is unable to provide the records listed above. The notarized affidavit shall be completed and signed by the parent/guardian, as well as the legal owner or landlord of the property where the student and parent/guardian reside. The affidavit will be in effect until the parent/guardian provides proof of residence as required by the Forsyth County Board of Education. The owner of the property must also provide a current utility bill (gas, electric, water, telephone, or cable) *and* one of the following documents establishing home ownership – deed, closing statement, mortgage statement, or property tax statement. Records must include the name and service address of the parent/guardian.

A school system representative may visit the address given by any parent/guardian to verify residency.

A family that rents a home in Forsyth County, while owning a home in another county or in a different school attendance zone within Forsyth County solely for the purpose of proving residence for their children to attend school in Forsyth County will be considered in violation of this policy. Students who are illegally enrolled shall be immediately withdrawn. Violations of this policy may be pursued in court.

In cases of separation or divorce, the student will be deemed a resident of the parent/guardian who is indicated in legal agreement or the court’s final decree to have physical custody. In cases of joint physical custody by parents, the student will be deemed to be a resident with the parent/guardian with whom the student resides overnight during the majority of the school week.

TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES

Students are expected to follow the Responsible Use Guidelines outlined below including these details.

Unless a teacher indicates that it is appropriate for students to use technology specifically for a BYOT lesson or activity, there should be NO technology use from 9:00 am - Dismissal.

- No technology usage in the hallways/bathrooms in between classes.**
- No technology usage during lunch/cafe.**
- No earbuds/headphones/music.**
- No smart watches.**
- Phones can be checked after being dismissed from their last class of the day.**

RESPONSIBLE USE GUIDELINES FOR FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS' COMMUNITY:

The mission of Forsyth County Schools (FCS) is to prepare and inspire all students to contribute and excel. The district provides ongoing student instruction that develops graduated digital citizenship for using technology as a tool to achieve this mission. Information and Communication Technology is an integral part of FCS' curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways, and it is aligned to the competencies listed in the district's Learner Profile which include: seek knowledge and understanding; think critically and solve problems; listen, communicate and interact effectively; exhibit strong personal qualities; and engage and compete in a global environment.

I understand that using digital devices (whether personal or school owned) and the FCS network is a privilege, and when I use them according to the Responsible Use Guidelines I will keep that privilege.

All members of Forsyth County Schools' community agree to follow the Forsyth County Schools Code of Conduct, school rules and commit to the following responsible use guidelines. I will:

- Use digital devices, networks and software in school for educational purposes and activities.
- Keep my personal information (including home/mobile phone number, mailing address, and user password) and that of others private.
- Show respect for myself and others when using technology including social media.
- Give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work.
- Report inappropriate use of technology immediately.

The Responsible Use Procedure will be reviewed each school year together with students and teachers as part of Digital Citizenship training and will provide a springboard for teaching and learning around topics such as Internet safety, online privacy, digital footprint, and fair use of technology.

SAFETY AND HEALTH:

Campus Crime Stoppers: Students are encouraged to report information about weapons, drugs, threats of violence or other dangerous or harmful situations to the principal, an assistant principal, a teacher or another trusted adult. Anonymous TIPS can also be reported to FCS' Crime Stoppers by one of three ways.

- ANONYMOUS TEXT message to "crimes" (274637) and begin your message with "FCSS."
- ANONYMOUS Web tip at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/crime
- Call the ANONYMOUS tip line at 770-888-3466 ext. 1 or 3.

Anonymous reports can also be made by calling the State of Georgia School Safety Hotline Number, 1-877-SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867). Callers will not be asked to reveal their identity.

Forsyth County Code of Conduct policies and procedures developed during the course of this school year supersede the applicable portions of this student handbook. Such information will be given to each child as it is available.

In addition to the *Code of Conduct*, students shall adhere to school and classroom expectations, guidelines, and procedures. In a simplistic overview, students should be respectful, on-time, prepared, and use time wisely. Students are expected to be their best and do their best. As needed, teachers will implement a pyramid of interventions that includes: warning, parent contact, silent lunch, or teacher detention. If student is referred to an administrator, dispositions will be entered into the students discipline file and may include administrative detention, ISS, OSS, parent conference to initiate and monitor a chronic discipline plan, and tribunal.

Discipline Records:

Forsyth County Schools will facilitate the transfer of discipline records to any public or private school in which a student is enrolled or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll on a full- or part-time basis in the school.

Emergency Evacuation of Campus:

In the event of a crisis situation that requires the evacuation of the school campus, students and staff will be transported to a safe, secured site. As soon as the safety and security of students is assured, traffic control is established and checkout preparations are made, parents/guardians will be notified regarding family reunification procedures.

Emergency Notification to Parents:

Parents/guardians are requested to make arrangements in advance for taking care of their children when schools are closed for emergency reasons. The plans should include arrangements for school closings, delayed openings and early dismissals.

FCS closings will be announced on the local and metro media outlets, the school system website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, social media (www.facebook.com/FCSchools and www.twitter.com/FCSchoolsGA), and on the automated voice service at (770) 887-2461.

Subscribers to Parent Portal and FCS newsletters will also receive an email notifying them on closings or delays. Please note that you should verify the information by checking two sources, especially when relying on social media for information. Fake social media accounts with school and/or the district names and logos violate copyright laws but unfortunately are common. FCS'

official social media accounts have been in existence for many years and therefore have a long list of tweets and followers, while fake accounts have significantly less.

- **School Closing and Delayed Opening Information:** School closings or delays will be announced as described above before 5:30 a.m. If school opening is delayed, please follow the same routine/schedule as normal, but push back the start time by two hours. On delayed days, breakfast is not served, lunch will be served and school will dismiss at the regular time.
- **Early Dismissal Information:** Early dismissals will be announced as described above. In the event of inclement weather, notification will be as soon as the decision is made. In the event of a school crisis, parents/guardians will be notified after the safety and security of students is assured.
- **Online Learning for School Closures:** In the event of a school closure, Forsyth County Schools will recover instructional time lost by utilizing asynchronous (not at the same time) online learning using itslearning. Each teacher will instruct students on where to find school closure activities in their itslearning course, and teachers will have lessons posted in itslearning no later than 9:00am on the day school is closed. Students should begin working on their lessons on the day school is closed when possible. If students have questions about their lessons, they may contact teachers during their posted office hours. Student work is due three school days upon returning to school.

Emergency Response to Life Threatening Asthma or Allergic Reactions:

FCS partners with District II Public Health to implement a program for the emergency response to life threatening asthma or systemic allergic reactions (anaphylaxis). School staff members are trained to assess the clinical signs, call 911 and administer the medications (Benadryl, epinephrine injection, nebulized bronchodilator, or Naloxone). The student must be transported to the nearest emergency room for evaluation and treatment.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Extracurricular activities are defined as any school-sponsored program for which some or all of the activities occur outside the regular school day. Examples include all individual and team sports, cheerleading, clubs, academic bowls, and fund raising activities. This definition does not include field trips, homework, or occasional work required outside the school day for a scheduled class. Extracurricular eligibility is determined by state board policy and applies to competitive school activities that occur after school hours. In order to compete, a student must have passed a minimum of 5 of 7 subjects during the previous semester. Ineligible students cannot try out for a team even if the team will not be in operation until the next school year. **Students who have ISS or OSS may not participate in extracurricular activities on the days of the suspension.**

EVACUATION, LOCKDOWN, AND TORNADO DRILLS:

Plans are in place and practiced throughout the school year to ensure the safety of all students and other building occupants should a fire, weather related or other emergency arise. In the event of a crisis situation that requires the

evacuation of the school campus, students and staff will be transported to a safe, secured site. As soon as the safety and security of students is assured, traffic control is established and checkout preparations are made, parents will be notified about family reunification procedures.

False Public Alarms:

Bomb and other terroristic threats, fire alarms and prank 911 calls will not be tolerated. Consequences may include a parent/guardian conference, immediate suspension, referral to law enforcement, and referral to a disciplinary tribunal hearing. If found guilty by a tribunal, the student is also subject to expulsion, long term suspension and restitution. The tribunal will impose restitution for all expenses incurred for lost instructional time and the restoration of the instructional process. Restitution may include but will not be limited to costs for: salaries, transportation, food and water, care for the handicapped, phone and other communication, laboratory work and any other legitimate expense incurred in the restoration of the normal educational operation of the school and the school system.

Fitness Assessment:

As a component of Physical Education, a variety of fitness assessment activities and techniques will be used to measure different areas of health-related fitness. These may include but are not limited to 1. The PACER run or one mile run for cardiovascular fitness; 2. Push-Ups for upper body strength; 3. Curl-Ups for abdominal strength; 4. Back-Saver Sit and Reach for flexibility. Lifelong fitness and wellness may be promoted through exposure to modern technology tools such as fitness trackers and apps.

Gang Related Activity:

Gang related activity will not be tolerated in FCS. Students engaging in gang related activities will be subject to disciplinary action as defined in the Forsyth County Board of Education Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures. See the definitions of *Gang Member* and *Gang Related Activity* below.

In addition to those definitions, from time to time new types of gang communication methods or activities may be invented. In that event, the Principal is authorized to further define and prohibit those newly developed activities. Gang Member is defined as: A person who is part of an association of three or more people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage, individually or collectively in illegal behavior. Gang Related Activity is defined as: Any act or exhibition, individual or collective, which (1) communicates gang allegiance or affiliation; and / or (2) would be a criminal act if committed by an adult; and (3) is deemed to be gang related by the Principal. Gang related activity includes but is not limited to: communication of gang affiliation through hand sign flashing, wearing of clothing articles in a certain way or color scheme; jewelry, tattoos, gang symbols or graffiti on personal items; vandalism of public or private property, and acts of intimidation, threat, fighting and other forms of violence.

HEALTH EDUCATION:

Sex/AIDS education lessons are included as part of the health curriculum for grades 6-8. FCS currently uses the *Choosing the Best* program for sex/AIDS education lessons. *Choosing the Best* is an abstinence based program that is correlated with the

Georgia Performance Standards. The units of study include: the risks of STDs and HIV/AIDS; teen pregnancy; pressures to be sexually active; sex, love and healthy choices; avoiding unhealthy relationships; and setting boundaries. Health teachers may include human growth and development content within the sex/AIDS education lessons. Parents/guardians may schedule an appointment to review the sex/AIDS education curriculum resources used at their child's school by contacting the lead health teacher of the school. If a parent/guardian does not wish for his/her child to participate in this portion of the course, notification must be made in writing to the health teacher prior to the beginning of the unit. Alternative assignments will be given and assessed for those students opting out of sex/AIDS education lessons.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES:

VCMS students are encouraged to participate in numerous interscholastic activities which challenge them academically and allow them to display their talents. These activities might include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Band Concerts and Festivals
- ▶ Geography Bee
- ▶ Science Fair
- ▶ Chorus
- ▶ Spelling Bee
- ▶ Social Science Fair
- ▶ Art/Essay/Poster Contests
- ▶ Oratorical Contest
- ▶ History Bee

INTRAMURALS:

All VCMS students may participate in intramurals throughout the year with most activities being offered in the morning before school. This program is an extension of the physical education program and may involve competition among classmates for both boys and girls. This program is designed to increase participation of all students in recreational games and sports activities. Activities may include basketball, flag football, volleyball, softball, soccer, snowboarding/skiing, and agility training. All students are eligible for participation upon returning a signed permission slip.

Fitness Assessment:

As a result of Georgia House Bill 229 (also known as the S.H.A.P.E. Act) starting in February 2012, students in grades 1-12 will participate in a state-wide fitness assessment. Middle school students enrolled in physical education classes will have height/weight measured and they will participate in four fitness assessments. At the end of the school year, parents of students assessed on the fitness tests will receive a formal report of their child's fitness assessment performance. The areas of health related fitness include: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition. The following FITNESSGRAM tests will be used to measure the various areas of health-related fitness: 1) *PACER or 1 mile run* (Cardiovascular); 2) *Push-Up* (Upper Body Strength); 3) *Curl-Up* (Abdominal Strength); 4) *Back-Saver Sit and Reach* (Flexibility); 5) *Body Mass Index* (Body Composition).

Hospital-Homebound Services:

If a student should need to be absent from school for more than 10 consecutive school days because of serious illness or an accident, arrangements may be made to provide instruction at home or in an alternative setting. In accordance with state rule 160-4-2.31 Hospital/Homebound Services, students with absences due to psychiatric/emotional disorders, as defined in the latest

edition of the Diagnostic, and Statistical Manual (DSM), may be eligible for hospital-homebound instruction. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to request homebound instruction as soon as possible. An application for services supported by a doctor's recommendation will be required. The application and supporting documentation are submitted to the Principal of the school. Information and guidelines for Hospital Homebound Services can be found at the Georgia Department of Education webpage – gadoe.org.

Infectious Disease:

A child is not to return to school until fever, diarrhea and/or vomiting has stopped **for a full 24 hours**, without the aid of medication. Prescribed antibiotic medications for infectious diseases are to be given for 24 hours prior to return.

Medications:

VCMS has a nurse on campus from **9:00am –4:00pm** each day. Students must have a pass from a teacher to visit the clinic. All visits are documented. The nurse will contact parent if the situation is serious in nature or if the student frequently visits clinic for insignificant reasons.

All medications (prescription and nonprescription) must be brought to school by the parent/guardian. No student will be allowed to bring medications to school. Students may not have medication in their possession, except with a physician's order for emergency situations only. Medications brought in bags or other unmarked containers will not be given. Prescription medication must be in the pharmacy container labeled with the child's name, date, name of medication, name of prescribing physician, time(s) the medication is to be given and name of pharmacy filling the prescription. Please ask the pharmacist to provide two labeled prescription bottles so that parents/guardians have one bottle at home and one at school. Do not send medication to the school that needs to be given only once daily or two/three times a day unless the physician specifically states a time during the school day for the medication to be given. If medication can be given at home, please do so.

Parents/guardians must provide specific instructions (including drugs and related equipment) to the nurse. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of any changes in pertinent data. A "Request for Administration of Medication" form must be completed by the parent/guardian. **New medications will not be given unless a new form is completed.** The bottom portion of the form is to be completed by the physician for **ANY** long-term medication (more than two weeks.) The term "physician" is used as defined in Article 2 of the Medical Practice Act of Georgia. The form may be brought to the school by the parent or faxed by the parent or physician. Due to the risk of Reye's Syndrome in children under the age of 18, the school will require a physician's signature in order to give any aspirin-containing medications including Aspirin, Pepto-Bismol, and Excedrin. Due to the risk of choking, students may not bring cough drops. All medications, herbals, and supplements must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and appear in the U.S. Pharmacopeia.

Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Scoliosis Screening:

Vision, hearing and dental screening will be conducted in grade 8. Scoliosis screening will be conducted in grades 7 & 8.

Sales at School: Students are not permitted to bring outside items to sell at school for personal gain or reasons. This includes food or non food related items.

MEDIA CENTER PROCEDURES

- Students must bring a teacher pass, and have a purpose for coming to the Media Center.
- Students may check out a maximum of two books at a time by using bar code on back of this agenda. If a child loses a book or damages it, he/she must pay for it before checking out another book in its place.
- Students must have a current AUP (ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY) Form documented on Infinite Campus. This form states that the student is aware of and will follow internet usage guidelines.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:

Parent-Teacher-Student conferences are highly encouraged. Consistent, positive contact between the home and school helps to create a climate of trust and enhances student opportunities for academic and personal success. Fall and spring early-release days facilitate the opportunity for large numbers of conferences. Parents may contact a teacher or team to request a phone conference or personal conference, at a mutually agreed upon time, anytime throughout the year.

PROMOTION-RETENTION:

County promotion standards require students to pass four out of five academic classes, including foreign language or literacy class. Connections classes are also considered in promotion/retention reviews. The state of Georgia also requires 8th grade students to pass “State End of Grade Assessment” in math and reading for promotion to high school. Eighth grade students not passing the “State End of Grade Assessment” math and reading sections will be recommended for summer school and required to pass the “State End of Grade Assessment” retest. If student does not meet standards on “State End of Grade Assessment” retest, a committee composed of the student’s teacher(s), a counselor, and an administrator will meet and determine the most appropriate grade placement for each retention candidate.

Possession of Weapon:

It shall be unlawful for any person to carry or possess or have under such person’s control while within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound, other than fireworks. Board policy and state law require that any student determined to have brought a weapon to school will be expelled from school for a minimum of one calendar year, subject to modification on a case-by-case basis as required or authorized by state and federal law.

Progressive Discipline Procedures:

To the extent appropriate to the situation, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official

should be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, while taking into account the totality of the situation, including the student's age, discipline history, and other relevant factors. Schools are not required to start at step one of progressive discipline if the behavior warrants a more severe punishment.

Sex/AIDS Education:

Sex/AIDS education lessons are included as part of the health curriculum for grades 6-8. FCS uses the *Choosing the Best* program for sex/AIDS education lessons. *Choosing the Best* is an abstinence centered program that is correlated with the Georgia Performance Standards. The units of study include: the risks of STDs and HIV/AIDS; teen pregnancy; pressures to be sexually active; sex, love and healthy choices; avoiding unhealthy relationships; and setting boundaries. Health teachers may include human growth and development content within the sex/AIDS education lessons. Parents/guardians may schedule an appointment to review the sex/AIDS education curriculum resources used at their child's school by contacting the lead health teacher of the school. If a parent/guardian does not wish for his/her child to participate in this portion of the course, notification must be made in writing to the health teacher prior to the beginning of the unit. Alternative assignments will be given and assessed for those students opting out of sex/AIDS education lessons.

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL:

Students are not allowed to stay on campus after school hours unless they have permission from a VCMS teacher, coach, or administrator, or are staying for a school-sponsored event.

Students remaining at school are the direct responsibility of the teacher, coach, or administrator granting permission to stay after school. Students should also be aware that proper behavior is expected in order to retain the privilege of attending after-school events. If student behavior warrants removal from the event, no refund will be provided

To retain social and other after-school privileges, students must be picked up promptly. This includes school-sponsored activities such as competitive athletic and scholastic events, practices, club activities, dances, etc. Repeated failure to be picked up on time may result in the loss of after school activities. Similar action will be taken for students who choose to remain on campus but are not attending a specific event.

Students who serve ISS, OSS or are absent are not allowed to attend after-school activities on that day.

Student Searches:

Student cars brought on campus, student book bags, and school lockers, desks and other school property shall be subject to inspection and search by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. FCS reserves the right to use "walk-through" and "hand-held" metal detectors and "drug or weapon sniffing" dogs at school and during any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus. Students are notified that these metal detectors will be used at the discretion of administrators.

Teenage Driver Curfew:

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §40-5-24) prohibits Class D licensed drivers from driving on public roads, streets or highways between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m. It is the responsibility of individual students, to be informed as to the terms and conditions which

currently exist or may be imposed upon driver's licenses issued by the State of Georgia, and to comply with such terms and conditions. It is not the responsibility of the Forsyth County Board of Education, its board members, employees or agents to either inform students of such terms or conditions, or insure compliance with the laws of this State.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

A teacher, principal, counselor, or parent/guardian may recommend students for referral for student support team interventions, 504 plan accommodations, and/or for special education eligibility. If the student support team determines that an evaluation needs to be completed to consider additional services, an initial evaluation for special education services is administered only with written parental consent. After an evaluation is completed, a meeting (including parent/guardians, teachers, administrator and school psychologist) will determine the student's special education eligibility; and if appropriate, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for special education services will be developed.

Section 504:

A teacher, educator, or parent/guardian may refer a student for consideration of a Section 504 Accommodation Plan based on a medical or physical impairment by contacting the school's Section 504 Plan chairperson.

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions,

social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.

9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.

10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.

11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.

12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.

13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.

14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.

15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.

16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Revised by GaDOE 2-13-12

Section 504 Procedural Safeguards:

1. Overview: Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.

2. Hearing Request: The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

- a. The name of the student.
- b. The address of the residence of the student.
- c. The name of the school the student is attending.
- d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
- e. The requested reasons for review.
- f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
- g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the grievant of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

3. Mediation: The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the

grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

4. Hearing Procedures:

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
- b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
- c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
- f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
- g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
- h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
- j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
- k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
- l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
- m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is

shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

5. Decision: The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

6. Review: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship:

Parents/guardians of students who receive special education services in FCS have the option to exercise public and private school choice. Under a State law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents/guardians of students who receive special education may choose to transfer their child to another public school or private school in Georgia. Parents/guardians must be current residents of Georgia and have been residents for one year.

Special Needs Public School Choice Options:

A parent/guardian can request a transfer to another public school within their school system as long as there is available space at that school and the school has a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing individualized education program (IEP). If the parent/guardian chooses this option, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the school. All requests for transfers to another in-system public school must be submitted by February 1st for approval for the upcoming school year.

The parent/guardian may request a transfer to a school in another school system if there is available space and the system and school have a program with the services agreed to in the student's existing individualized education program. **Note:** It is allowable for a school system to have a policy not to accept students that reside out of the school system. If a school system accepts the child, then the parent/guardian shall be responsible for transportation to the school in that system. If a school system approves an out of system transfer request, it can charge a parent/guardian for the costs of educating a student; also known as out of district tuition. **Note:** Funds received through the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program cannot be used to offset the costs of out of district tuition.

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

Special Needs Private School Choice Option:

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

STUDENT MEALS:

Automated Meal Account:

Each school has an automated system that is able to track the payment and purchasing activity of each individual student's account. Meals may be pre-paid for the week, month, or even the year by cash, check, or by using the on-line payment system (see below for details). Prepayment is encouraged because it eliminates the daily handling of money for the child, and reduces the time the student must stand in line waiting, providing them more time to enjoy their meal.

Students may purchase meals and extra foods sold through the School Nutrition Program with funds debited from their meal account. **If parents/guardians wish to limit the use of their child's account to meals only, each school year parents/guardians must send a written note to the school's cafeteria manager stating that their child will not be allowed to purchase extra items off of their meal account. If this restriction is applied to the account, all extra items selected will require cash at the time of purchase.**

Parents/guardians or siblings having lunch with a student may not use the funds on the student meal account to pay for guest meals. Guests may cover their purchases with a check or cash.

Pre-payment by Debit or Credit Card via the Internet:

To prepay for a child's meals online using a valid credit/check card, parents/guardians must use the student identification number and school name to register and place money on their child's account. If parents/guardians do not know their child's student ID, contact the school's front office. To learn more about paying on-line, visit www.mypaymentsplus.com.

Meal Charge Policy:

Students are allowed to charge school meals based on their grade levels. Elementary students may charge up to five meals. Middle and high school students are allowed one meal charge. A la carte items or extra meal portions may not be charged. Students without funds may be offered a snack such as a sandwich or crackers and milk. To assist parents, student account balances can be monitored any time via www.mypaymentsplus.com regardless of the payment method you use. If you notice that your child's account is low on funds, please consider sending cash or check for the day as an on-line payment may not post to your child's account in time for meal service.

Returned Check Policy:

The Food and Nutrition Services Program will accept checks for exact payment of meals or prepayments to the student's debit account. The program will not cash personal checks or give change back when a check is received for payment.

FCS uses a check company to collect checks that are returned unpaid. Without further notice, they will attempt to collect on the check electronically if it is returned unpaid by your bank for any reason. If a check is returned unpaid, the face amount and a state-authorized fee will be collected electronically from the parent's account when the money is available. If a parent writes a check to the district, they are consenting to allow the check recovery company to electronically collect the face amount and the fee if the check is returned unpaid by the banking institution to the recovery company. After the Board of Education, or any entity thereof, has received two (2) checks returned by a financial institution due to insufficient funds or closed accounts, all financial transactions thereafter will be on a cash only basis.

Meal Prices:

Our breakfast meal offers a choice of a breakfast entrée, a milk and up to two choices of fruit. At lunch we offer an entrée, a milk and up to three fruit or vegetable choices at the elementary and middle school. Students may decline the milk but must include at least one serving of fruit or vegetable on their tray. Students may request a cup of water as an alternate beverage choice. Additional beverage selections, including bottled water, are available for purchase.

The meal prices at each school level are listed below. Students may purchase additional portions of the meal at an extra cost. We also provide Smart Snack compliant snacks and treats that can be purchased at an additional cost.

	Breakfast	Lunch
Elementary		
Reduced-priced meal	\$0.30	\$0.40
Full-paid meal	\$1.50	\$2.60
Middle School		
Reduced-priced meal	\$0.30	\$0.40
Full-price meal	\$1.60	\$2.70
High School		
Reduced-priced meal	\$0.30	\$0.40
Full-price meal	\$1.70	\$2.70

Cash payments at register:

Cash is gladly accepted at the cafeteria register for meal and a la carte item purchases, and to add funds on the student’s account; however, cashiers do not have adequate funds to make change for customers with bills larger than \$20. Bills larger than \$20.00 will only be accepted for meal payment if the entire amount is deposited into their meal account.

Free and Reduced Priced Meals Availability:

The Free and Reduced Priced Meal Program is available to assist families during times of financial hardship. **The School Nutrition Program accepts free and reduced meal applications throughout the school year.** Students approved for free or reduced priced meals may eat both **breakfast and lunch** free or at a reduced cost. Parents can rest assured the information supplied on the form is strictly confidential and student identification is protected with the computer software used at the cashier’s station.

- Eligibility for Free or Reduced price meals is **not retroactive**, therefore the parent or guardian is responsible for payment of school meals until the F&R application is approved.
- A current year 2019-20 application must be submitted. Prior year application forms cannot be accepted. The current school year application is available at each school, in the Registration Office at the Hill Center and on the system’s website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us.
- On-line applications make it faster and easier for families to apply for free or reduced priced meals. Visit the food and nutrition website at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/nutrition for further information.
- **OR** you may complete and sign an application and submit it via one of the following methods:
 - scanned and emailed to jsanders@forsyth.k12.ga.us
 - faxed to 770-888-3464

- sent via US mail to: Food & Nutrition Services, 1140 Dahlonega Hwy, Cumming GA 30040
- submitted to any school cafeteria.
- Applications will be processed within 10 school days of receipt at the central office. Eligibility for those approved for free or reduced benefits will be effective within an hour of being processed at the central office. Written notification of eligibility/denial will be sent to the household address via US mail the day the application is processed.
- Eligibility for Free or Reduced price meals is **not retroactive**, therefore the parent or guardian is responsible for payment of school meals until the F&R application is approved.

TRANSPORTATION (BOARD POLICY EDC):

FCS provides school bus transportation for all eligible FCS students based on the student's residence and school of enrollment, and in compliance with federal, state and/or local laws, rules, regulations and/or procedures. The Transportation Department is authorized to develop a framework and procedures that provide transportation services to eligible FCS students. The Forsyth County Board of Education encourages supervision appropriate to the age and/or maturity level(s) of students at bus stops by parents or guardians.

The Code of Conduct applies on the school bus and at the bus stop as each is considered an extension of the school and classroom. As such, behaviors are expected to be safe, orderly and respectful at the stop and on and around the school bus.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to become familiar with transportation practices and procedures specific to our service. You may find those at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/transportation or you may request clarification and/or assistance from the appropriate staff member found at the "Who Should I Call" link on the department web page.