



## **Academies of Creative Education**

FORSYTH ACADEMY ▪ FORSYTH VIRTUAL ACADEMY ▪ GATEWAY ACADEMY

# **Forsyth Academy Student Handbook 2018-19**

**1130 Dahlonega Highway  
Cumming, GA 30040  
Phone: 770-781-3141  
Fax: 770-888-1193**

## **Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Jeff Bearden

### **Board of Education**

Ann Crow (District 1)

Kristin Morrissey (District 2) Chairperson

Tom Cleveland (District 3)

Darla Light (District 4)

Nancy Roche (District 5) Vice-Chairperson

### **Forsyth Academy Administrative Staff**

Drew Hayes – Principal

Erin Zitka – Assistant Principal

Kim Barnes – Assistant Principal

Gail Freund – Social Worker

Dr. Mark Williams – Counselor

### **School Mission Statement**

*“TO PROVIDE AN ENGAGING, RELEVANT, AND RIGOROUS CURRICULUM,  
SUPPORTED BY POSITIVE INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIPS, IN AN EFFORT TO ENSURE  
THAT STUDENTS REACH THEIR FULL ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL POTENTIAL AND ARE  
PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY”*

## ACADEMICS

As a non-traditional program extension of the base high schools, Forsyth Academy is another route to graduation for those students seeking an educational opportunity outside the traditional high school setting or students wanting to accelerate and graduate early. Students are allowed to work at an accelerated pace using online, computer-based curriculum supplemented with offline projects and assignments to ensure that all Georgia Performance and Common Core Standards are met and that the curriculum is rigorous and relevant. Students will be able to catch up academically or move ahead at an accelerated pace. The Academy uses APEX, Edgenuity, and itsLearning as the primary hosts for curriculum and delivery of instruction. These sites allow students to not only work at an accelerated pace at school but also allow for access at home to facilitate the needs of students. More information can be accessed at <http://forsyth.itslearning.com> or [www.apexvs.com](http://www.apexvs.com) or [www.edgenuity.com](http://www.edgenuity.com)

**Honor Code:** Any student caught cheating on an assignment or test will be required to complete an alternate or additional assignment covering the same material or may be required to start the unit or course over. In the event of a cheating incident, parents will be contacted for a conference. Students may also receive a grade of zero on the assignment. Cheating includes but is not limited to: using another student's notes or assignments, writing down or copying in any manner test questions, using any on-line source such as Internet Explorer, etc. prohibited by the teacher.

**Class Credit:** Course credits are awarded when a student shows mastery of the curriculum in a given course. The assignments for each course are aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards. Successful completion (80% mastery or better) of each assignment indicates that the student has mastered the curriculum associated with the course and assessment. Most courses have a final exam requirement or End of Course (EOC) assessment that must be completed in order to receive credit for the course. EOC courses include 9<sup>th</sup> Literature, American Literature, Physical Science, Biology, Algebra I, Geometry, U.S. History, and Economics. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered in many academic areas. Please contact the Forsyth Academy counselor for a complete list. Once a student has completed all assignments and taken applicable assessments or exams, a Course Credit Card will be given to the student. This card should be given to the counselor for verification of credit.

**Dual Enrollment/MOWR:** Forsyth Academy encourages dual enrollment or MOWR with postsecondary institutions. The purpose of dual enrollment is to allow students to begin a postsecondary program in their chosen career or academic field while they are still in high school. Students can potentially earn credit at both the high school and college levels at the same time. Dual enrollment or MOWR will be considered on an individual student basis. Contact the Forsyth Academy counselor for more information.

**Student Class Loads:** Students attending Forsyth Academy generally are enrolled in a minimum of four (4) classes or periods per day. Classes meet in the morning (8:00 – 12:00) or in the afternoon (12:30 – 4:30) Monday – Thursday. Depending on attendance during the week, students may be required to attend class on Friday mornings to make up class time or to stay on pace for course completion.

**Cooperative Enrollment:** Forsyth Academy is a program extension of the high schools in Forsyth County. Students attending Forsyth Academy are still on roll at their base high school and can, with administrative approval, take classes at the base high school and at Forsyth Academy at the same time. Cooperative enrollment is usually approved for CTAE classes, elective classes, or academic classes not offered at Forsyth Academy. Cooperative enrollment is considered on an individual student basis and is subject to space and classes available at both the base high school and Forsyth Academy.

**Full Time Enrollment:** Students enrolling as full-time Forsyth Academy students will take all their classes through Forsyth Academy and will not attend any classes at the base high school. Depending on academic needs, full-time students at Forsyth Academy usually take four classes per day. Classes at Forsyth Academy are offered in the morning (8:00 – 12:00) or in the afternoon (12:30 – 4:30) and are subject to availability and class loads. The student/teacher ratio is 15/1 which allows for more individual student attention and focus. Forsyth Academy offers two CTAE pathways (Entrepreneurship and Marketing & Management) for students who have not completed a pathway at the base high school. Students are assigned a teacher advisor who monitors student course loads and progress toward graduation. Upon completion of required courses at Forsyth Academy, students may choose to walk at the base school graduation.

**Continuing Enrollment:** Students who show strong academic progress, have regular attendance, and have no discipline issues can return to Forsyth Academy the following year without submitting a new application. Students not meeting these requirements are subject to removal and will be sent back to the base high school.

**GHSA Eligibility:** Students attending Forsyth Academy can participate in extracurricular activities at the base high school if they meet all regulations of GHSA (Georgia High School Association). Students should contact the individual coach or base school Athletic Director to determine eligibility status and course loads required to meet GHSA rules.

**Grades and Summary Reports:** Student summary reports are issued every six weeks during the year. The summary reports include a numerical average for the grading period, the End of Course (EOC) test score (if applicable), work ethic impacting grades and achievement, attendance, and comments from the teacher on student progress. Summary reports will be given to the student so that they may share it with their parents or guardians. Grades are also available through Parent Portal. Due to the nature of the program, parents are encouraged to look at the amount of progress that the student is making in each class. Simply looking at an average is not necessarily a good indicator of success. When a student begins a course, they receive a pacing guide which outlines what the teacher considers acceptable progress in the class. Students that do not show acceptable progress at an appropriate pace may be removed from the Academy.

**Note Taking:** Students are required to take hand-written notes on all subject matter presented on APEX, itsLearning, textbooks, or other materials. These notes should not be shared with other students. At the end of each unit, these notes must be presented to the teacher prior to a student taking a test.

**APEX/Edgenuity / its Learning Usage:** APEX, Edgenuity, and itsLearning are part of the computer-based curriculum platform used at Forsyth Academy. APEX, Edgenuity, and itsLearning are accessible to students at home as well as at school. Notes and quizzes may be taken at home, but all tests must be taken on Forsyth Academy campus in each respective teacher's classroom. When working in APEX, Edgenuity, or itsLearning, no other windows should be open.

**Off-task Behavior:** Students who are exhibiting off-task behavior during class may be sent directly to the Principal or school counselor. Continued off-task behavior may result in the student being required to attend make-up sessions or may result in the student being removed from the Academy. Off-task behaviors include, but are not limited to: surfing the web, too much social interaction, sleeping, over use of personal listening device, etc.

**Schedules:** Students will receive individual schedules prior to the first day of school or semester. Each schedule includes current classes taken at Forsyth Academy. If approved by the administration, schedules may be adjusted during the semester to accommodate mentoring, interdisciplinary projects, Service-Learning projects, student needs, and dual enrollment.

**Test Taking:** The following are rules regarding taking an online test:

1. All tests must be taken while in the presence of a teacher.
2. The classroom teacher must be notified prior to beginning any test. This includes pre and post tests in the prescribed curriculum and any test in aligned curriculum.
3. There will be a time limit established for each test. This time limit will be determined by the classroom teacher.
4. All other windows must be closed while taking a test. This includes, but is not limited to media player, internet explorer, etc.
5. Tests must be completed in a single session unless approved by the teacher.
6. All lessons in aligned curriculum must be completed prior to attempting a test.
7. Notes or other documents may be required to be presented by the teacher prior to the student being allowed to take a test. This decision is at each teacher's discretion.
8. Any student who solicits help from another student or is using the internet to search questions during a test will be considered to have cheated on that test. The only communication allowed during a test will be with the teacher. Any student that offers or receives help during a test will be in violation of the code of conduct.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular, consistent student attendance is essential to making academic progress at Forsyth Academy. Students usually have four classes each day Monday – Thursday and students are expected to attend all classes each week. If attendance/absences become an issue, a conference with the student and parent will be held and an Attendance Agreement will be put in place to address the issues related to attendance. Continued attendance issues may result in the student losing course credit and/or being withdrawn from Forsyth Academy. Students absent during the week may be required to attend Friday mornings to make up time missed during the week.

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 the 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 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.

Students are expected to make up any absence within the week it occurs. Students are scheduled in either morning classes (8:00 – 12:00) or afternoon classes (12:30 – 4:30) Monday – Thursday each week. If an absence occurs (excused or unexcused) students should come in on Friday morning from 8:00 – 12:00 to make up the time and work missed during the absence. Individual teachers will work with students on making up time and work due to absences.

**Absences:** It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to contact the school office by 10:00 a.m. to report the student's absence. Students must **submit a note, or parents must fax or email the attendance office within five (5) school days for the student's absence to be considered excused.** Attendance Fax Number: 770-888-1193 or Attendance email: debhudson@forsyth.k12.ga.us The note must include the student's name, the date(s) of absence(s), and the reason for the absence. 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.

**Certificates of Attendance:** Students wishing to obtain a Certificate of Attendance must provide a written request to the attendance secretary in the front office. Please allow three (3) days for processing and completion of the Certificate.

**Checking in Late to School:** Students who are late to class or school must report to the front office to sign in and get pass to class. If a student arrives more than 30 minutes late for any given class, the student will be considered absent from that class for attendance purposes. Students late to individual classes should be sent by the teacher to the front office for a late pass.

**Checking Out From School:** Students who need to leave school prior to the end of their scheduled day must present a valid written note from their parent or guardian stating the reason for the early dismissal. The attendance secretary or administrator will contact parents to verify the note and reason for early dismissal. 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 checking out early from school may be required to provide medical documentation to validate absences, tardies, or request for early check out as excused.

**College Visits:** Juniors and seniors may visit colleges during the school year for no more than four days per year. The student must bring documentation from the school indicating that the student visited the school. College visitations will be considered field trips as long as the student provides documentation.

**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.

**Early Arrival:** Students arriving early may be dropped off directly in front of Forsyth Academy no earlier than 7:45 AM for morning classes and 12:15 PM for afternoon classes. Forsyth Academy staff is not available for student supervision earlier than these designated times. Afternoon students should leave promptly at 4:30.

**Dual Enrollment/Cooperative Enrollment at Base High School/MOWR:** Students who are dual enrolled with Lanier Tech or NGU or have elective classes at the base high school during their scheduled day should sign out when they leave campus and sign back in when they return for the remainder of classes. This is important for attendance documentation and records.

**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. 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 five 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 five school days to be considered excused.

Check-in: Students must sign in through the attendance office when they arrive at school after the first period bell.

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. Parents may submit a note to excuse an early check-out due to illness. 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.

**Tardy/Late from Lunch:** Forsyth Academy students may leave during lunch and return for afternoon classes if their schedule has morning and afternoon classes. Lunch is from 12:00 – 12:30 and students may leave campus if they have their own transportation. Students are not allowed to have someone pick them up or ride with another student. Students who choose to leave campus for lunch are responsible for being on time to class for their afternoon classes. Afternoon classes begin promptly at 12:30 each day. If a student is tardy from lunch, they should see the secretary for a pass to class.

## **AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The Principal is the leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. Principals are granted authority to enforce this Code of Conduct. In cases of disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the Principal is authorized to undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the students and the school, provided such action does not violate law, or a school board policy or procedure.

## 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 enewsletters distribution lists. The district invites you to stay connected by visiting its website, [www.forsyth.k12.ga.us](http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us), following on social media (@FCSchoolsGA on Twitter, @FCSchools on Facebook, and @ForsythCoSchoolsGA on Instagram), and to download the updated mobile app, Forsyth County Schools GA.

## COUNSELING

The counseling department at Forsyth Academy provides full counseling services for students. This includes individual counseling, group counseling, graduation requirements, elective course selections, Career Pathway options, scholarship opportunities, college applications, and much more. Please contact our counselor to make an appointment.

## DISCIPLINE

Please refer to the Forsyth County Schools Code of Conduct (6-12) handout for rules and regulations concerning disciplinary procedures for the 2017-18 school year. The Code of Conduct information will be provided to each student during orientation. The Forsyth County School System 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.

## 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)

### **Title IX**

Nathan Turner (Students)  
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

### **Community Based Work Programs**

Valery Lowe

### **ADA and 504**

Sarah Taylor (Students);  
Cindy Salloum (Personnel)

### **Gender Equity**

Cindy Salloum (Students)

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](http://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.

**Harassment:** The school district forbids sexual, racial, and other harassment of all employees and students while at school, in the work place, 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.

## 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: 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Dahlonega 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](http://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
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended.

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:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
- 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 ten days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

## **GRADING AND REPORTING**

Students at Forsyth Academy receive summary grade reports every six weeks throughout the school year. The summary reports include a numerical average for the grading period, the End of Course (“EOC”) test score (if applicable), work ethic impacting grades and achievement, attendance, and comments from the teacher on student progress. The numerical average is calculated 75% summative grades and 25% formative grades. The EOC for high school students, per state rule,

has a weight of 20% on the final course grade. Advanced Placement courses for high school students carry Quality Points on the transcript at the completion of the course.

## **GRADUATION**

Students enrolled at Forsyth Academy (whether Full Time or Cooperative) remain on the roll at the respective base high school and can choose to participate in the graduation ceremony at the base high school. Students eligible for graduation must contact the graduation coordinator at their base high no later than April 1 of each year in order to participate in the graduation ceremony for that year. Graduation coordinator contact information can be found on the website of each high school. Forsyth Academy does not conduct a graduation ceremony. All base school graduation fees apply to Forsyth Academy students.

## **HARASSMENT**

The school district forbids sexual, racial, and other harassment of all employees and students while at school, in the work place, 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.

## **LUNCH/BREAKS**

Students are usually scheduled in either morning classes (8:00 – 12:00) or afternoon classes (12:30 – 4:30). On occasion, in order to schedule required classes for graduation, a student's class schedule may be such that they have morning and afternoon classes with the lunch time in between. During the lunch time (12:00 - 12:30), students may choose to stay on campus to eat a lunch that is brought from home or may choose to leave campus to get lunch elsewhere. Forsyth Academy does not provide a lunch program for students. If the student chooses to leave campus, it is his/her responsibility to return on time for their next scheduled class. If the student chooses to stay on campus during lunch, they are subject to all policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. The faculty and staff of the Forsyth Academy cannot be held responsible for supervising students anytime that they are not attending a scheduled class at the Academy.

## **MEDICATIONS**

All medications must be kept in the nurse's office. This includes any prescription medicine or over the counter medicine. In the event that a student needs to take the medication, the student should report to the front office to receive the appropriate medication from a staff member. A medication distribution form must be completed by the parent. All medications (prescription and nonprescription) must be brought to school by the parent/ guardian and given to the school nurse. 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

## 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
  - 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.

If parents/guardians wish to request information concerning their child’s teacher’s qualification, contact the Human Resources Department at 770.887.2461 [Section 1111(h)(6)]

## PARKING

Students who will be transporting themselves to the Academy **must** apply for a parking permit. Parking permits will be issued once the student completes and submits all appropriate forms to the administrative assistant. The parking permit **must** be displayed at all times. Students should park in the assigned parking lot and as close to the Academy building as possible. The main parking area will be the gravel lot that is in the back of the building. Student parking fee is \$50.00 and must be paid to receive a parking permit. Parking fees are nonrefundable. **Students are not allowed to return to their car during the day without permission from the office.**

## PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

**Advisory Program:** Students will be assigned an advisor when they enroll with Forsyth Academy. The advisor will meet with the student periodically to discuss progress in his/her classes. Advisors will also communicate with the parent/guardian of the student to inform them of progress. The purpose of the advisory program is to give the student at least one meaningful adult contact within the school. The advisor will work with the student on planning for their high school career but also will help them begin to set goals for the future and prepare them for post-secondary options.

**Internships/Apprenticeships:** Any student wishing to be involved in an Internship or Apprenticeship program should contact the administration or counselor. When opportunities exist, the Academy will help establish a Job Internship in the career field of interest. This program may allow the student to earn at least one credit.

**Dual Enrollment/MOWR:** Forsyth Academy encourages Dual Enrollment or MOWR. The purpose is to allow students to begin a postsecondary program in their chosen career field while they are still in high school. This allows students to earn credit at both the high school and college levels. Students at Forsyth Academy will be encouraged to participate in the program when the school staff considers the student “academically sound” and ready to take a college class. The staff reserves the right to not allow a student to participate in dual enrollment if they feel that the student will not be successful. There may be an application fee associated with enrollment into the college and students may be responsible for purchasing textbooks or other required supplies. For more information, contact the school counselor.

## **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/Page48193>

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/legal guardian, as well as the legal owner or landlord of the property where the student and parent/legal guardian reside. The affidavit will be in effect until the parent/legal 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 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 with whom the student resides overnight during the majority of the school week.

## RESPONSIBLE USE GUIDELINES FOR FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

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 includes: 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.

*\* Developed based on Responsible Use Procedures of Canyon County Schools and the Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division.*

## 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](http://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.

**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](http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us), social media ([www.facebook.com/FCSchools](https://www.facebook.com/FCSchools) and [www.twitter.com/FCSchoolsGA](https://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.

**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.

**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](http://gadoe.org).

**Infectious Disease:** A child is not to return to school until fever, diarrhea and/or vomiting have 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:** 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.

**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 curriculum for the high school health course. Forsyth County 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 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 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.

**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.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones are not allowed in the classroom. Students should leave cell phones in their cars or at home each day. Failure to follow the cell phone procedures will result in disciplinary action. Repeated events may result in dismissal from Forsyth Academy.

**Possession of Weapon:** It shall be unlawful for any person to carry to or to 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 (O.C.G.A. §16-11-127.1). Board policy and state law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.1) 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.

**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. The Forsyth County School System 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.

**Sexual Harassment:** The school district forbids sexual, racial, and other harassment of all employees and students while at school, in the work place, 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.

**Smoking/Tobacco:** Forsyth Academy is a tobacco free facility. Smoking is **not** allowed anywhere on the campus of Forsyth Academy. Electronic smoking devices are considered tobacco products in the Forsyth County Code of Conduct. This is in compliance with the state of Georgia law. Any student found in violation of this law will be subject to the policy and procedures as outlined in the FCSS Discipline Code of Conduct.

**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 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:** The Student Support Team (SST) is the mechanism in FCS for identifying disabled students who are eligible for an individual accommodation plan under Section 504. A teacher, educator, or parent/guardian may refer a student to the Student Support Team to consider the appropriateness and eligibility of a student for a 504 individual accommodation plan. For questions regarding 504 eligibility/accommodation, or 504 procedural safeguards, contact the school level SST chair.

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

- The name of the student
- The address of the residence of the student
- The name of the school the student is attending
- The decision that is the subject of the hearing
- The requested reasons for review
- The proposed remedy sought by the grievant
- 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. **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. **Hearing Procedures:**

- 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.
- 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.
- The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
- The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

**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. **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (IEP).

**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>

## TRANSPORTATION

Forsyth County School System and the Forsyth Academy **do not provide transportation** to Forsyth Academy. Students and parents are responsible for arranging a reliable means of transportation that will ensure a student's timely and regular attendance at school. Student parking permits are required for students to drive and park at Forsyth Academy. Parking permits are \$50 per year. Parking fees are nonrefundable.

## VISITORS

Parents of Forsyth Academy students are welcome to visit the school. All visitors **MUST** report to the school office upon arrival to obtain a visitor's pass. **STUDENTS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS AND FRIENDS OF ACADEMY STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO VISIT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.**

**All rules and regulations in the handbook are subject to change and/or revision without prior written notification. All rules and regulations cannot be covered in the space of this handbook. Students can be held accountable for any rules or regulations not specifically covered in this handbook that might impede the educational process of this school.**



**Academies of Creative Education**

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