

# FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

**2024-2025**

## **Family Engagement Guide and Student Handbook**

### **District Information**

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## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

In Forsyth County Schools, we value academic integrity and believe in fostering a culture of honesty and intellectual growth. This section establishes guidelines and expectations regarding academic honesty, including the prevention and deterrence of plagiarism and cheating, and the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. By adhering to these expectations, students demonstrate their commitment to ethical academic practices and uphold the principles of fairness, respect, and intellectual integrity. Students who engage in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Examples of Academic Dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work, ideas, or words as one's own, without proper attribution or acknowledgment. This includes but is not limited to
  - 1.1. Copying verbatim text from any source (printed, online, or electronic) without quotation marks and proper citation.
  - 1.2. Paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's work without giving credit to the original source.
  - 1.3. Submitting someone else's work, whether in part or in its entirety, as one's own.
2. Cheating may include but is not limited to
  - 2.1. Using unauthorized aids, such as cheat sheets, hidden notes, or electronic sources during assessments or assignments.
  - 2.2. Collaborating on individual assignments without the express permission of the teacher.
  - 2.3. Fabricating or falsifying data, sources, or citations to support academic work.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools, such as ChatGPT:

Plagiarism remains a serious offense in academic settings, and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assignments does not exempt students from its consequences. AI can serve as a helpful tool for brainstorming ideas, gaining insights, and improving writing skills. However, it is crucial to understand that AI tools should not replace a student's own critical thinking and research. It is essential to always attribute sources correctly and avoid copying or paraphrasing without proper citation. Students should actively engage in ethical practices, critically analyze AI-generated content, and ensure their work reflects their original thoughts and understanding. Academic integrity must be upheld when utilizing AI, as plagiarism undermines the learning process and undermines the development of essential skills.

Although appropriate use of AI tools may be permissible for assignments in certain classrooms, some programs, such as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB), strictly restrict or prohibit usage. Students in AP and IB courses must adhere to the requirements set forth by those governing bodies.

## **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, needing absence from school.
5. Conditions making 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. A visit, up to five school days per year, with a parent or legal guardian who is on leave from or who is being deployed to military service.

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 school's attendance clerk within five (5) school days for an absence to be considered excused. 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 those 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.

**College Visits:**

Juniors and seniors may visit colleges during the school year for no more than 4 days per year. The student must bring documentation from the school indicating that the student visited the school. College visits will be considered field trips if the student provides documentation.

**Consequences:**

If a student has excessive absences, 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.

**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 Canvas. 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.

**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 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.

Elementary/Middle Students Check-in: Parents must sign their child in upon late arrival.

High School Students 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. If a student is 16 years old or older, parents/guardians may submit a note in advance of an early check-out date and time to the school's attendance office. Check-out notes will be verified via a phone call to the parent/guardian as listed in Infinite Campus.

### **COMMUNICATION:**

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to regularly check each of their Canvas 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, state assessment results, and attendance are available in ParentPortal, <http://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) (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.

### **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)  
Derrick Hershey (Personnel)

#### **Title IX**

Nathan Turner (Students)  
Derrick Hershey (Personnel)

#### **ADA and 504**

Kara Hudspeth (Students)  
Derrick Hershey (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 Dahlonga 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.

## **HIGH SCHOOL EXAM EXEMPTION:**

Students may be exempt from the final exam in high school at the end of a course (semester or yearlong) with the exception of required End of Course Assessments if they have a grade of 90 or above.

## **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 the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children; Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction; Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students; Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment; Title IX – McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Programs for Exceptional Students.

Any and all complaints should be addressed to 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), THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA), AND ONLINE LEARNING NOTICE:**

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 decide 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 is the sharing of directory information which is addressed on the next page. A second exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. 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.
  - a) A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor (including student teachers/interns), or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, therapist, or counselor); a company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific school system task (such as a picture company, graduation company, yearbook company, online learning platform, or web-based service provider); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee).
  - b) A legitimate educational interest is defined by a school official’s need to review a student’s educational record to fulfill a duty approved by a Forsyth County School principal and/or county level department supervisor.
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:**

Parents/guardians have the right to 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. A second exception which permits disclosure of student information without parental consent is directory information.

FCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- student's name,
- student's mail address,
- student's parent's phone number,
- student's sex,
- student's homeroom teacher,
- Parent/guardian email addresses specifically to school approved yearbook companies, photography companies, graduation service companies, and the Forsyth County Public Library,
- student's photograph,
- student's grade level,
- student's date of birth,
- student's participation in official clubs and sports,
- weight and height of student if he or she is a member of an athletic team,
- dates of attendance at Forsyth County Schools,
- degrees, honors and awards received during the time enrolled in Forsyth County School System, and
- major field of study, enrollment status, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

An example of a directory information disclosure is to a parent volunteer, PTO parent, or "room parent" who is assisting and needs to view class list information including student names, grade, dates of birth, and homeroom teacher. At times, some directory information may be shared with an edtech company where the requirements for student information sharing are limited to items designated as FCS directory information. Another example is to recognize students for special awards and accomplishments through news media outlets. If it is necessary for the school to disclose student information beyond what is listed above, parent/guardian permission/consent will be obtained.

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 may notify the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.

In addition to FERPA, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the name, address, and telephone numbers of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students. 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 may notify the principal of the school, in writing, within 10 days of the first day of school or of their enrollment date.



## **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notice:**

Families have rights under the PPRA where no student shall be required to participate in activities, or 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.

## **Surveys**

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).

## **Instructional Materials**

A parent/guardian may learn about his or her minor child's course of study, including, but not limited to, parental access to instructional materials intended for use in the classroom, by submitting a written request to the principal of the minor child's school. Instructional materials intended for use in the classroom will be made available for parental review during the first two weeks of each grading period, either online or on site upon a parent's/guardian's request made during the review period.

A parent/guardian may object to instructional materials intended for use in his or her minor child's classroom or recommended by their minor child's teacher. To submit a complaint, the parent/guardian shall contact the principal of his or her minor child's school. The parent/guardian shall complete the appropriate form which the principal will forward to either the Director of Elementary Education or Director of Secondary Education, who will address the submission in accordance with Board Policy IFA.

A parent/guardian may withdraw his or her minor child from the school's prescribed course of study in sex education if the parent provides a written objection to his or her child's participation. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of the sex education course content, and parents will be given the opportunity to opt his or her minor child out of participation by notifying the minor child's teacher in writing. The FCS Sex Education Parent Permission form will be sent to all parents/guardians of 6- 12 students enrolled in health classes.

## **Physical Evaluations**

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.

## **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) Notice:**

COPPA applies to commercial companies and limits their ability to collect personal information from children under 13 years of age. The general requirements of COPPA are as follows:

1. Each website must post a privacy policy.
2. In certain circumstances, websites must send a direct notice to parents about the site information and give parents the opportunity to opt out on behalf of their child.
3. When certain information is collected by a website verifiable parental consent must be obtained before the site collects, uses, or discloses personal information about the child or before allowing a child to open an email account or post a message in a chatroom or bulletin board.
4. Websites must allow parents to review personal information collected from their children.
5. Websites must establish and maintain reasonable procedures to protect the confidentiality, security, and integrity of children's personal information.

In some cases, the school system may consent for children under the age of 13 years old to use online applications. For a list of online providers with whom our partnership requires notice, please [click here](#). 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.

## **Online Learning Notice:**

Parents/guardians have been given the option to have their student participate in on-line instruction. Disclosure of student information in person or on-line is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The written consent of a parent or eligible student (18 years old or older) is required before personally identifiable information contained therein may be disclosed. There is the potential for future Forsyth County Schools (FCS) and/ or statewide virtual learning days. When your student is participating in on-line learning, our staff members would like to continue meeting with their classes using a live group feed on-line platform. This platform would allow students to participate in group lessons as well as to turn off their cameras and microphones when they choose to do so for privacy. FCS staff will continue to support and provide educational access to all students. FCS staff have been advised not to disclose any students' specific program or disability information, and all live group sessions will be general in nature and focused on educational instruction.

## **General Media Notice:**

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. If a parent/guardian wants to decline their student being photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event, the parent/guardian may respond "no" to the Publicity section on the annual permission form. The principal will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, parent/guardian submission of an 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.

## **Marketing Notice:**

The parent of a student shall be notified prior to the commencement of activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose). Such notice shall offer the parent the opportunity to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of such information before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student. To opt out of any of these activities, the parent may inform the principal in writing within 10 days of the notification.

At the discretion of the principal or the school system, schools may disclose student names, grade level, and parent email addresses for purposes of school photography, yearbooks, graduation-related services, and the

Forsyth County Public Library. Parents/guardians may opt out from this marketing notice by selecting “no” on the annual permission form.

**Communication Notice:**

Forsyth County Schools offers two district mediums that are utilized for direct communication between schools, school staff, and parents/guardians. Infinite Campus is the district information system, and it hosts an application known as Parent Portal a.k.a. Campus Parent. Parents/Guardians may opt into Parent Portal by setting up an account and selecting preferences in the app that allow them to receive one-way communication via voice messages, texts, and/or emails. Through Parent Portal, parents/guardians can update their contact information as well as check student academic progress, learn about student closures, and other school events. The second communication option for parents/guardians is an application named Talking Points. This application allows schools, school staff, and parents/guardians to engage in two-way texting communication in the language of their choice. Parents/Guardians may opt into this communication tool by selecting yes on the Communication Release section of the beginning of year parent permission form. For more information about talking points go to <https://talkingpts.org/> for their website and privacy information.

## **GRADING AND REPORTING:**

### **Elementary School**

Students in grades K-5 are graded on a nine-week grading period. Report cards are posted electronically in Parent Portal. Parents may request a hard copy of the report card from their child's teacher or administrator.

#### **Kindergarten - Third Grade:**

Students in Kindergarten through Third Grade will be evaluated using a *standards-based* report card. In standards-based grading, student progress is measured by determining student progress toward achievement of grade level standards. Rather than receiving one grade per content area, your child will receive a breakdown of performance by standard cluster enabling you to more readily identify areas of academic strength and opportunities for improvement. In addition, the reports include a three-point rubric defining work ethic and behaviors that impact student achievement.

#### **4th Grade PLUS and 5th Grade PLUS:**

Students in grades 4 and 5 will receive a report card that includes both a traditional numeric average and a standards-based grade for English/Language Arts and Math. The traditional numeric average will be determined by averaging the summative scores of assessments which are given at the end of each unit of study. The standards-based grades reflect formative scores that measure the progress of student learning during each unit of study. Science and Social Studies will only receive traditional numeric grades. In addition, the reports include a three-point rubric defining work ethic and behaviors that impact student achievement.

#### **4th and 5th Grade PLUS Summative Retest Procedure:**

Students will be given the option of a retest on any summative assessment, if their original test grade is not acceptable to the student, parent, or teacher. There will be one opportunity for a retest and a required commitment by the student to attend reteaching sessions and/or complete assignments designed to ensure mastery of standards. The reteaching sessions and assignments will be determined by the teacher. The expectation is that any student that does not pass the initial summative test will attend reteaching sessions, complete assignments, and then retake the summative assessment.

### **Middle School**

Students in grades 6-8 receive grade reports on a quarterly basis throughout the school year. The interim reports are posted on Parent Portal at 9 and 27 weeks, and the report cards are posted at 18 and 36 weeks. Parents may request a hard copy of the report card from their child's teacher or administrator. 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., 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.

### **High School**

Students in grades 9-12 receive grade reports on a quarterly basis throughout the school year. The interim reports are posted on Parent Portal at 9 and 27 weeks, and the report cards are posted at 18 and 36 weeks. Parents may request a hard copy of the report card from their child's teacher or administrator. The reports include a numerical average for the grading period, the End of Course (EOC) assessment grade conversion score, if applicable, and a rubric for reporting work ethic and student behaviors that impact grades and achievement. The average is calculated 75% summative and 25% formative. The EOC, per state rule, has a weight of 10% on the final course grade. Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, and International Baccalaureate courses carry Quality Points posted on the transcript at the completion of the course.

## **HARASSMENT:**

The school district forbids sexual, racial, and other harassment of all employees and students while at school or impacts 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/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'**

### **COMMUNITY:**

The mission of Forsyth County Schools (FCS) is to prepare and inspire all learners to lead and succeed. 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 pursuing continuous learning, exhibiting strong personal qualities, utilizing creative and critical thinking, engage and contribute, and interact effectively.

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. I also acknowledge that use of any district provided device and any device connected to the FCS network may be monitored for compliance with federal, state, and local laws and policies.

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.
- Protect private and confidential information in a manner supported by the FCS Technology Department.

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:**

**P3 Campus Anonymous Reporting:** Students and parents/guardians 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:

- Download the App
- ANONYMOUS Web tip at <https://www.p3campus.com>
- Call the ANONYMOUS tip line at [770-888-3466](tel: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](tel:1-877-729-7867)).

## **CTAE Student Safety Guidelines**

Career, technical, and agricultural education courses (CTAE) offered in Forsyth County middle and high schools are hands-on, project based, career pathways where students will be developing projects that may require the use of equipment, machinery, chemicals, and other items which, if used incorrectly, can be considered hazardous. Because of that, safety in the classroom is a priority for students, teachers, parents, and anyone else involved in CTAE. Although every attempt is made to ensure a safe learning environment for our students, accidents do occur. Parents and guardians should be aware that in the event your child is injured at school, the district does not carry medical insurance on individual students and will not cover the medical expenses from an accident. Teachers will review the guidelines below with students as part of their safety orientation to the lab setting. Students will not be allowed to participate in the lab setting until these guidelines have been covered, demonstrated, and assessed for understanding.

By acknowledging these guidelines, students must obey these rules to ensure their own safety and that of their fellow students and teachers. Students should fully cooperate with their teacher and fellow students to maintain a safe lab environment. They should also closely follow the oral and written instructions provided by the teacher. Any violation of this safety agreement that results in unsafe conduct in the laboratory or misbehavior would necessitate students being removed from the classroom, detention, receiving a failing grade, and/or further disciplinary action.

### ***GENERAL GUIDELINES***

1. Students must always conduct themselves in a responsible manner in the classroom and lab setting.
2. Students must follow all written and verbal instructions carefully. If he/she does not understand a direction or piece of equipment, ask the teacher before proceeding with task.
3. Students should never work alone in a lab setting. No student may work in the classroom or lab setting without the presence of the teacher.
4. When first entering the classroom and lab, students should not touch any equipment or materials until they are instructed to do so.
5. Students should perform only those tasks authorized by the teacher and carefully follow all instructions, both written and oral. Unauthorized experiments/activities/equipment use is not allowed.
6. Students must be prepared for their work in the career pathway, read all directions thoroughly, or never fool around in the shop. Horseplay, practical jokes, and pranks are dangerous and prohibited.
7. Students must observe good housekeeping practices. Work areas should be kept clean and tidy at all times.
8. Students must be alert and proceed with caution at all times in the classroom and lab area and notify the teacher immediately of any unsafe conditions observed.
9. Labels and equipment instructions must be read carefully before use. Setup and use the equipment as directed by the teacher.
10. Students must keep their hands away from their face, eyes, mouth, and body while using equipment and wash their hands with soap and water after performing all activities.
11. Experiments and equipment must always be teacher monitored. Students should not wander around the room, distract other students, startle other students, or interfere with the procedures of others.
12. Students must know the locations, operating procedures, and identifications of all safety equipment, including first aid kit(s) and fire extinguisher(s). They should know where the fire alarm and the emergency exits are located.
13. Students must know what to do and execute the fire safety plan if there is a fire drill during a class period; containers must be closed, and any electrical equipment in use turned off.

### ***CLOTHING***

14. Anytime equipment is used which has the potential to cause damage to the eyes, students will wear safety goggles.

15. Students must dress properly during all lab activities. Long hair, dangling jewelry, and loose or baggy clothing are a hazard in all lab settings. Long hair must be tied back, and dangling jewelry and baggy clothing must be secured. At times, sleeves, long pants, and solid shoes may be required.

### ***ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES***

16. Students must report any accident (spill, breakage, etc.) or injury (cut, burn, etc.) to the teacher immediately, no matter how minor it may seem.

### ***HANDLING GLASSWARE AND EQUIPMENT***

17. Students should never handle broken glass with bare hands but use a brush and dustpan to clean up broken glass. They should place broken glass in the designated glass disposal container.

18. If students do not understand how to use a piece of equipment, ask the teacher for help.

*Note: If you disagree with the CTAE Student Safety Guidelines, please contact your school's principal within ten days of enrollment.*



**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), FCS social media accounts, 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 Canvas. Each teacher will instruct students on where to find school closure activities in their Canvas course, and teachers will have lessons posted in Canvas no later than 9:00 a.m. 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) or opioid overdose. 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. FCS follows guidance from the Department of Public Health regarding COVID-19 illnesses and exposures.

**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 administered. Prescription medication must be in the original container labelled 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 administered once or twice a day unless the physician specifically states a time during school hours. If medication can be administered 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 administered 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:**

#### **Middle School:**

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 Standards of Excellence. 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 at the school. If parents/guardians do not wish for their child to participate in this portion of the course, they must sign the permission slip in Parent Portal, or submit in writing, within the first three weeks of the quarter. Alternative assignments will be given for those students opting out of sex/AIDS education lessons.

#### **High School:**

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 at the school. If parents/guardians do not wish for their child to participate in this portion of the course, they must sign the permission slip in Parent Portal, or submit in writing, within the first four weeks of the semester. Alternative assignments will be given 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 ensure compliance with the laws of this State.

### **Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Scoliosis Screening:**

#### **Elementary School:**

Vision and hearing screenings are conducted for grades 1, 3, and 5. Dental screenings can be completed at the discretion of the school administration. Kindergarten students will be screened for color blindness. Referral letters are sent home to those students who did not pass the screening. For assistance regarding the referral, contact the school nurse.

#### **Middle School:**

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

## **STUDENT MEALS:**

All breakfast meals offer a choice of a breakfast entrée, a milk and up to two choices of fruit. Lunch choices include an entrée, milk, and up to three fruits or vegetables. High school students may take as many as four fruit or vegetable choices. 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. Meal choices are subject to change due to supply chain issues and the USDA establishing new requirements.

	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>Elementary</b>		
Reduced-priced meal	.30	.40
Full-paid meal	\$1.70	\$3.00
<b>Middle School</b>		
Reduced-priced meal	.30	.40
Full-price meal	\$1.80	\$3.10
<b>High School</b>		
Reduced-priced meal	.30	.40
Full-price meal	\$1.90	\$3.10

### **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.

### **Automated Meal Account:**

Each school has an automated system that can 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. It reduces the time the student must stand in line waiting, providing them with 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 from 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 an elementary student may 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:**

Parents/guardians may prepay online for a child's meals using a valid credit/check card. Parents/guardians will need to know their child's student ID and school name to register for an account and to deposit funds in the account. If the child's ID is unknown, contact the school's front office. To learn more about paying on-line, visit <https://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/page/401>

A processing fee is charged for prepayments by our on-line payment provider. Any processing fee charged by our on-line payment provider cannot be refunded by Food and Nutrition Services.

**Meal Charge Policy:**

Students in elementary school will be allowed to charge up to the equivalent of five meals. Middle and high school students are allowed one meal charge. No ala carte purchases may be charged to the student's meal account if no funds are available on a student's account. A charge notice will be completed and sent home to the parent/guardian through the student and /or by email. To assist parents, student account balances can be monitored any time 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. When the charge limit is reached, a courtesy snack (a cheese sandwich and a milk, for example) will be offered. Parents/guardians should be aware of their child's school policy for unpaid charges. This policy may be found on the School Nutrition page of the school's website. Students who have unpaid meal charges will not be allowed to purchase any ala carte food items until the charges have been satisfied. Students that graduate or withdraw should settle account balances.

**NOTE:** Beginning May 1, students must have funds available on their student account to make purchases. Students that withdraw or graduate should settle negative account balances. Any request to donate funds for student meals, transfer balances or for refunds on student accounts should be directed to Missy Anderson via email at [manderson@forsyth.k12.ga.us](mailto:manderson@forsyth.k12.ga.us).

**Returned Check Policy:**

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

FCS uses a recovery company to collect checks that are returned unpaid. Without further notice, they will attempt to collect 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 consent 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.

### **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 from July 1 through the last school day of the year.** Students approved for free or reduced priced meals may eat one breakfast and one 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.

1. 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. A current year 2024-2025 application must be submitted. Prior year application forms cannot be accepted. The current school year application is available online, at each school, in the Registration Office at the 1140 Building behind the BOE and on the department's website at <https://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/page/399>
2. Online applications make it faster and easier for families to apply for free or reduced priced meals. Visit your school or the Food and Nutrition Services website at [www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/nutrition](http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/nutrition) for further information.
3. **OR** you may complete and sign an application and submit it via one of the following methods:
  - a. sent via US mail to: Food & Nutrition Services, 136 Almon C Hill Drive, Cumming, GA 30040
  - b. submitted to any school cafeteria manager.
4. Applications will be processed within 10 school days of receipt at the Food and Nutrition Department. Written notification of eligibility/denial will be sent to the household address via US mail.

## **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. The Special Education Parent Rights document is located on the school system's special education website.

### **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. The Procedural Safeguards for Section 504 and Parent Right's documents are located on the school system's Section 504 Resources website.

### **Georgia Special Needs Scholarship:**

Parents/guardians of students who receive special education services or accommodations through a Section 504 Plan 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) or Section 504 Plan. 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. **Note:** It is allowable for a school system to have a policy not to accept students that reside outside 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 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**

### **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](http://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.

### **School Bus Expectations**

The bus riding privilege is granted to your child as a service of FCS.

To help us protect them, students are expected to follow the rules set forth in the Code of Conduct and this special School Bus Code of Conduct while a) walking to or from the school bus stop, b) waiting at the school bus stop and c) riding on the school bus. Students are expected to be safe, orderly, and respectful at all times. Failure to act accordingly may result in suspension or expulsion from the bus. Concerns or issues pertaining to our transportation service should be addressed according to our operational procedures found on our website. Detailed information regarding our operational procedures, including how we manage student behavior on the school bus, is available at the FCS website.

**Driver Authority:** The bus driver is authorized to give directions, assign seats, and to prohibit any item from the bus that may threaten the safety or welfare of any person. The driver's actions are subject to review by the Transportation Director.

### **Important School Bus Rules:**

Follow the driver's directions; be respectful to the driver and all passengers. Follow the Code of Conduct at school bus stops and on the school bus. The school bus and stops are extensions of your school and classroom. Audible electronic music playing devices may be transported on a school bus if not prohibited by the student's school, but they may not be used without the permission of the driver and may not be used without headphones. Electronic devices, including cell phones...must be kept in the OFF mode and concealed in a pocket, book bag, purse, or other similar carrying device while loading or unloading the school bus. Additionally, no listening device (earphone(s), earbud(s), etc.) should be in the ear(s) while loading or unloading the school bus.

On school buses, Georgia Law specifically prohibits acts of: (a) \*physical violence, \*physical assault or \*battery; (b) \*bullying; (c) verbal assault; (d) disrespectful conduct toward the bus driver or any other person; (e) using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the driver's operation of the bus; (f) using any electronic device during the operation of the bus, including but not limited to cell phones; audible radios or media devices without headphones; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the bus; and (g) engaging in any other unruly behavior.

Exception: Some items prohibited in another section of the Code of Conduct or in items three and four above, may be permitted on a bus during field trips, athletic trips, etc., if approved in advance by the principal and the teacher/coach in charge (Example: baseball bats may be transported to a baseball game, radio with headphones may be used with permission on a field trip, etc.). \*Ref. O.C.G.A.§16-11-127.1 Detailed information regarding these and other school bus rules is available at <https://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/transportation>.

Some Critical School Bus Operational and Safety Procedures: 1. Transportation service is provided to/from an assigned bus stop ONLY. After school, students who board a bus other than their assigned bus or request to get off the bus at a different stop will be returned to the school where a parent or guardian may pick them up. 2. Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early. Wait in an orderly manner. Stay off the road and twelve feet away from traffic. Do not approach a moving bus. 3. Before crossing a road, follow the directions of the school bus driver. You must understand and follow the "two-finger sweep" crossing procedure. Cross the road twelve feet in front of the bus. Do not cross behind the bus. Use the handrail going up or down the steps. 4. If you drop something while crossing, signal the driver with a waving motion of your arms. Wait for the driver to signal back before picking it up. 5. Sit with your back against the back of the seat and bottom against the bottom of the seat. Stay seated while the bus is in motion. Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus. The driver will signal when it is time for you to get up from your seat. 6. Talking in a quiet voice is permitted. Be silent at railroad crossings. Do not distract the driver. Detailed information regarding these and other operational procedures is available at the FCS website.