



Area Cooperative Educational Services

Parent - Student Handbook

2025 - 2026

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Preface

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) 2025-26 Parent-Student Handbook

This handbook was developed to provide parents/guardians and students with a summary of important ACES policies and procedures. This handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive and does not contain all of ACES policies. The ACES policy manual is available online at www.aces.org/our-agency/publications/policy-manual/policy-manual and at each school. All ACES policies are in compliance with the United States Constitution, Connecticut, federal and local policies. Material contained in this Handbook may be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this Handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. The 2025-2026 Parent – Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that this handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents/ guardians through newsletters, web pages, and other communications. Please contact your school principal or the ACES administrative office should you have any questions or would like additional information. Consult the district's website (www.aces.org) or the individual school's website for any significant changes.

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expressions, age or disability in providing education services. Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law. Rebecca Cuevas is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of district services, programs, or activities. ACES recognizes and accepts the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of the school system's commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching students awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society.

The school will not tolerate student behavior which insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental condition or ethnic group.

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents/guardians regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. Consult the district's website or the individual school's website for any significant changes.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents/guardians. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as "you" but rather as "the student," "students," or "children." Likewise, the term "the student's parent" may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents/guardians need to be familiar with the District's Student Code of Conduct and school safety and security plans which are intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning. The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year.

Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents.

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)

370 James Street

New Haven, CT 06513

Phone: 203.498.6800 / Fax: 203.498.6890 / www.aces.org

ACES Mission Statement

ACES is dedicated to transforming and enhancing lives through education, innovation, and leadership.

ACES Vision

To create an equitable and socially just world one life at a time.

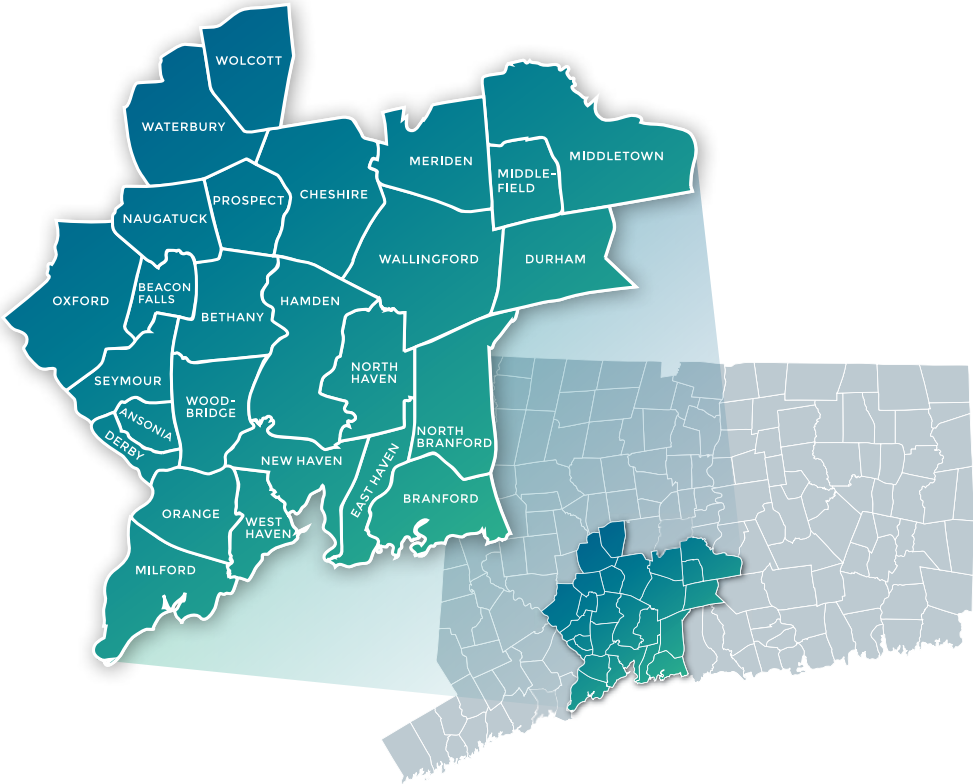
ACES Organizational Beliefs

We believe that...

- each individual has inherent worth
- all individuals can learn
- high expectations and effort are essential for higher achievement
- quality education provides the foundation for the success of the individual and the community
- diversity strengthens an organization
- individuals are accountable for their actions
- everyone has a responsibility to each other and to contribute to the common good
- honesty and respect are essential for building trusting relationships
- a positive attitude enhances performance
- collaboration enhances productivity and generates creativity
- families are essential partners in education
- the willingness to change is necessary for individuals to grow and organizations to thrive

ACES Districts

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Ansonia | North Haven |
| Bethany | Orange |
| Branford | Oxford |
| Cheshire | Regional District #5 |
| Derby | Regional District #13 |
| East Haven | Regional District #16 |
| Hamden | Seymour |
| Meriden | Wallingford |
| Middletown | Waterbury |
| Milford | West Haven |
| Naugatuck | Wolcott |
| New Haven | Woodbridge |
| North Branford | |



Central Administration

370 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
203.498.6800 / www.aces.org

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|---|--|--|
| Executive Director Thomas M. Danehy, Ed.D. 203.498.6817 | Deputy Executive Director Timothy Howes 203.498.6838 | Assistant Executive Director of Operations & Facilities William Rice 203.498.6868 |
| Assistant Superintendent for Schools & Programs Michelle Coogan 203.407.4408 | ACES Up Timothy Howes 203.498.6838 | Clinical Services Carrie Hartman 203.484.6862 |
| Early Head Start Heather Granja 860.234.1344 | Fiscal Management Cassandra Nonossi Kristopher Zabrensky 203.498.6812 | Human Capital Development Rebecca Cuevas 203.498.6823 |
| Internal Pupil Services Theresa Ott Virginelli 860.710.2767 | ACES Security Anthony Gennaro 203.498.6804 | Marketing & Communications Elaine Sein 203.498.6816 |
| Network Services Lon Harrigan 203.287.6850 | Professional Development & School Improvement Michelle Gohagan 203.407.4408 | External Pupil Services Kevin Keating 203.498.6849 |
| Regional Special Education Transportation Olga Sanchez 203.498.6841 | Speech & Language Services Timothy Howes 203.498.6838 | Technology & Operations Todd Solli 203.498.6800 |
| Transportation Rosemarie Arma 203.234.2406 | Trauma Support Services Cynthia Ratchelous 203.407.4408 | World Languages Kevin Keating 203.498.6845 |

ACES Schools

| | | |
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| ACES at Ansonia Middle School Heather Gish, Principal 115 Howard Street Ansonia, CT 06401 203.736.5070 | The Bridge at ACES Dr. Lisa Simone (LCSW), Principal William Shanley, Assistant Principal Jack Kitching, Assistant Principal 261 Skiff Street Hamden, CT 06517 203.507.5545 | Brightwell Academy Dr. Lisa Simone (LCSW),Principal William Shanley, Assistant Principal 261 Skiff Street Hamden, CT 06517 203.507.5545 |
| Center for Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disorders Jennifer Santarcangelo, Interim Principal 26 Old Post Road Northford, CT 06472 203.484.9501 | ACES Chase Academy Frank LaBanca, Principal Vicki Rose, Assistant Principal Dina Secchiaroli, Assistant Principal 565 Chase Parkway Waterbury, CT 06708 203.639.8403 | Educational Center for the Arts Stefanie Savo, Principal Amy Christman, Assistant Principal 55 Audubon Street New Haven, CT 06510 203.777.5451 |
| Preschool and Childcare Center Lucy Fonseca, Assistant Director of ACES International Education 124 South Pomperaug Avenue Woodbury, CT 06798 203.266.4392 New Location: 7 Berkshire Rd. Sandy Hook, CT 06482 | ACES at Mead Elementary School Heather Gish, Principal 75 Ford Street Ansonia, CT 06401 203.736.5090, ext. 4229 | Mill Road School Kerri Gilmore, Principal Steve Cook, Assistant Principal 295 Mill Road North Haven, CT 06473 203.281.6949 |
| REGIONS Hamden Dr. Lisa Simone (LCSW),Principal Jack Kitching, Assistant Principal 995 Sherman Avenue Hamden, CT 06514 203.507.5545 | REGIONS Hartford Dr. Lisa Simone (LCSW), Principal Jack Kitching, Assistant Principal 123 Washington Street Hartford, CT 06514 203.507.5545 | Village School Virginia Tagliatela, Principal Kristen Peck, Assistant Principal James Nichols, Assistant Principal 31 Temple Street North Haven, CT 06473 203.234.7611 |
| Whitney Academy Juliellen Rodriguez, Principal Chamaine Dobbs, Assistant Principal Eric Paradis, Assistant Principal 130-A Leeder Hill Drive Hamden, CT 06517 203.281.3577 | Whitney High School North Bryan Markiewicz, Principal Kristin Harvey, Assistant Principal 130-B Leeder Hill Drive Hamden, CT 06517 203.407.4500 | Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School Dr. Zakiyyah Baker, Principal Megan Conaster, Assistant Principal 88 Bassett Road North Haven, CT 06473 203.281.9668 |

Academic Information

School Day, Grades K-12

The ACES school year provides at least 180 days of school for all grades and provides a minimum of 900 hours of actual school work for full-day programs and 450 hours for half-day programs.

Admission/Placement

Parents/guardians of preschool students who will be five (5) years of age by September 1 of any school year or earlier are expected to register their child for kindergarten. Parents/guardians of kindergarten- aged children who plan on holding their child back from entering kindergarten must contact their school's principal to complete a "Kindergarten Opt-Out Form".

A student seeking enrollment in the (SCHOOL) for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school district, out-of-state attendance, private school attendance or admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program should contact the principal. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the district will be placed at his/her current grade level pending evaluation and observation of the student after such assessment and consultation with the parents, the principal will determine the grade placement of the child. Nonresidents may attend school on a tuition basis provided space is available. Nonresident students from other school districts within the state, (districts in the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and New London regions) who apply pursuant to Board of Education regulations, may enroll in particular programs or schools within the district on a space available basis, without payment of tuition, as part of the inter-district public school attendance program called Open Choice. The Regional Educational Service Centers will determine which school districts are close enough to make transportation feasible. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent to such child's withdrawal from school. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may exercise the option by personally appearing at the school district office to sign a withdrawal form. This form will include an attestation from the school's guidance counselor or a school administrator that the district has provided the parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and in the community. A student who has attained the age of seventeen and who has voluntarily terminated enrollment in the district's schools and subsequently seeks admission may be denied readmission for up to ninety school days from the date of such termination unless such student seeks readmission to the District not later than ten school days after such termination in which school accommodation will be provided not later than three school days after such student seeks readmission. A student, nineteen years of age or older may be placed in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program if he/she cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one. Students who are classified as homeless under federal law and do not have a fixed residence will be admitted pursuant to federal law.

Completion of immunization and health assessments are required prior to a child's attendance in school, but are not prerequisites for enrolling a child who resides in the District and is of appropriate age to attend school.

In order to determine a child's eligibility for ESL or bilingual programs, parents/guardians of all new students enrolling for the first term and all re-enrolling students who have not previously attended public school in Connecticut must complete a Home Language Survey. The student, after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

Parents of students attending District schools have the option to enroll their child(ren) in a magnet school with which the District is a nonparticipating district, if the magnet school has unused student capacity. The District will pay any tuition charge. (Does not include tuition for a preschool magnet program.)

Advertising

ACES maintains careful controls on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those directly related to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students. District-prescribed standards shall be met.

Age of Majority

In all school matters requiring the approval or presence of a parent or guardian, the eighteen-year old student will be allowed to represent him/herself and sign all appropriate forms under his/her responsibility. However, the school reserves the right to contact parents regarding student issues. These include, but are not limited to, school attendance, school withdrawals, permission for psychological or academic testing, early dismissals, changes in courses, representation at PPTs, appeals, hearings, and access to or release of records.

Assessments and Grading

Through instructional performance objectives, ACES maintains student standards which promote educational achievement and excellence. Issuance of regular student grades promotes continuous student evaluation and informs students, parents, and counselors of student progress and encourages improvement in student performance, if improvement is needed. ACES will make all test results available as soon as possible after receiving the results from the State Department of Education.

ACES is in favor of weighted grading for honors and advanced placement courses. The grading system reflects their position.

Confidentiality and Maintenance of Student Records

The Local Educational Agency (LEA) representing the home district or sending district for any student enrolled in an ACES program maintains ownership of and holds ultimate responsibility for the official record of such student.

Records are to be considered on loan to ACES during the student's period of enrollment. As long as the student remains in an ACES program, ACES will maintain records and provide for the filing, protection, confidentiality review and, when appropriate, destruction of such records. Once a student exits from an ACES program, all records for that student, including educational reports generated by ACES, will be returned to the LEA.

In accordance with Federal and State regulations parents of students currently in attendance, as well as eligible students currently in attendance, will be annually notified of their rights with respect to access, disclosure and requests to amend, inspect and review student records. An ACES school official shall be present at all such inspections and reviews. The primary responsibility of this official shall be to provide parents with interpretations of the meaning of the records.

All ACES personnel who collect or use personally identifiable information regarding students will be annually informed of the confidential nature of such information, and of ACES procedures with respect to the rights of students and parents as they relate to the confidentiality of records and information.

ACES will maintain a record of the student's name, program, date of entrance and date of withdrawal from ACES. This information will be sent to and maintained by the Executive Director or designee for fifty (50) years according to law and maintained within the Central Office of ACES. (Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes; Sec.110-15b Access of parent or guardians to student's records; Sec.10-209 Records not to be public; Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended).

Homework

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals. Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

In order for homework to be an effective support for learning, the homework policy requires a partnership among the school system represented by the teacher, the student and their parents. Without this partnership in support of learning, students will not achieve their full potential.

Promotion, Acceleration and Retention

The decision to promote a student to the next grade level is based on successful completion of the curriculum, attendance and performance on assessments. A student shall not be promoted based upon age or any other social reason not related to academic performance. ACES may require students whose academic performance jeopardizes their promotion or graduation to attend after-school, summer school or other programs the district offers designed to help them. ACES administration shall determine remedial assistance for a student who is not promoted.

Student Support Services

Beginning with the graduating class of 2023, student support and remedial services will be provided to students beginning in grade seven (2017-2018 school year). Such services provide an alternate means for the student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements. These support and remedial services allow students to retake courses in summer school or through an online course. Students are also permitted to enroll in a class offered at a community or state college. Alternate forms of the required end-of-year examinations will also be provided. Alternate assessments for those eligible students, in the five core courses, is another option.

Acceptable Use Policy

It is the policy of Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) that network technology services are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner in accordance with the mission and policies of ACES. Users of network technology services must acknowledge their understanding of the general policy and guidelines as a condition of using the network. Use of network technology services is a privilege, not a right. Failure to adhere to the policy and administrative procedures may result in suspension or revocation of network access. Willful or intentional misuse could lead to disciplinary action, including suspension or termination, or criminal penalties under applicable state and federal law.

Access to the Internet is provided by ACES for the purpose of benefiting the school community, the educational and business responsibilities of ACES, and enriching the educational experience for all students. In order to better facilitate the safe use of the Internet by students at ACES, technological measures will be taken to attempt to restrict access by minors to materials that may be harmful to minors and incompatible with the educational mission of ACES, as well as to promote the internal security of the network. ACES takes appropriate measures to educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.

All student users must read and sign the Acceptable Use Agreement prior to being permitted to access the Internet through the network provided by ACES. All staff are expected to be familiar and comply with the ACES Acceptable Use Policy. ACES Acceptable Use Policy Forms can be found on ACES website, www.aces.org/our-agency/publications/forms/acceptable-use-policy-forms.

Anti-Racism

ACES rejects all forms of racism as destructive to the mission, vision, values and goals of this school system. All forms of racism must be eliminated from ACES. Children must find school a safe and welcoming place, where they are able to achieve success, irrespective of their racial or ethnic background. Racism will not be tolerated in any form. The goal is to enable all students to thrive in a socially cohesive community within a positive, multi-cultural society.

Asbestos Management Plan

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. ACES has plans on file showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to ensure a safe school environment. All buildings will be periodically inspected and cared for under ACES Asbestos Management Plan. A management plan including the inspection report is available in each school's Central Office for review and inspection during normal office hours. Questions can be directed to ACES Director of Technology & Operations at (203) 498-6800.

Attendance Policy / Early Dismissal

Connecticut State Law requires parents/guardians to ensure their children attend school regularly during the hours and terms the school is in session. Learning experiences that occur in the classroom are considered to be meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Time lost from class tends to be irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction, emergency or unusual situations.

ACES requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child. A student should not be absent from school without the parent's or guardian's knowledge and consent. Verification of absence should be written by parent or guardian.

An absence shall be considered "excused" when a child does not attend school due to illness, injury, death in the immediate family, religious obligation, an emergency, or other exceptional circumstances. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child's parent or guardian. All other absences with or without written explanation shall be considered unexcused.

A child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a "chronically absent child." The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team.

Leaving School Grounds/Release of Students From School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator on the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office. No student may be released in the custody of any individual, not the parent or guardian of the student, unless the individual's name appears on the list maintained by the school's principal as authorized to obtain the release of students.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian. The Board of Education does not condone/approve students leaving a school campus in third-party ride sharing vehicles; especially such service (Uber, Lyft) whose own policies explicitly prohibit minors from using them unless accompanied by an adult.

Request for Early Dismissal

Request for release of a student during the school day must be handled by the administration to ensure maximum provisions for the safety and welfare of the student. Parents/guardians or designee requesting dismissal before the normal end of the school day for students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 must make a written request. The designated adult of students in grades Pre-K-8 must come into the school office to pick the student up and sign the student out. Early dismissal should be requested only in emergency or unusual situations.

For additional ACES policy information regarding Attendance / Early Dismissal, please refer to ACES Policy Manual, Chapter 5000. This information is available on ACES website: www.aces.org/our-agency/publications/policy-manual/chapter-5000.

Truancy

Truancy is defined by statute as absence(s) from school without the knowledge or approval of parents/ guardians and/or school officials. A student age five to eighteen** inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant. Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

Information about truancy will also be posted in the annual district report cards required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Behavior Management

ACES is committed to providing appropriate individualized educational services for students who exhibit a variety of special needs within the school, home, job site and community. The provision of such services often requires the use of behavior management procedures. Behavior management procedures employ a highly structured, data-based approach for teaching new behavior as well as the reduction of non-desired behaviors. Strategies used for the employment of behavior management techniques are guided by ethical/procedural safeguards which recognize the rights of the student, parent/guardian and community. Behavior management procedures are based on the principles of applied behavior analysis, including the least restrictive/intrusive practice, most effective practice, and positive reinforcement.

Use of Physical/Mechanical Restraint or Seclusion

Any student in an ACES program exhibiting behaviors that result in immediate, or imminent, danger to the person, or to others, shall be subject to restraint and or seclusion in accordance with ACES policies and the rules set down in Public Act 15-141 and Public Act 18-51.

The use of any form of restraint, other than those techniques taught through participation in the ACES Systematic Safety Intervention Strategy Training (ASSIST), is prohibited. In all situations, even those that become physically violent, it is the intent of ACES to provide the best possible care, welfare, safety and security for students, staff and property. Whenever possible, attempts will be made to prevent or defuse potentially assaultive or dangerous behavior through the use of early intervention strategies. ASSIST consists of "non-harmful restraint techniques to safely control an individual until the student can regain control of their own behavior". Safe, approved physical restraint can be used to prevent immediate or imminent injury to the student or others, after all other verbal and nonverbal strategies have been attempted.

Bullying Policy

ACES believes that all students have the right to a secure and safe environment and to be free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore, it shall be the policy of ACES that bullying of a student is prohibited. Bullying is defined as any overt act by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Bullying which occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as the use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed to another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such students;
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)

Other definitions include but are not limited to:

- A. **"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- B. **"Electronic communication"** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system;
- C. **"Hostile environment"** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate:
- D. **"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;
- E. **"Prevention and intervention strategy"** may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.
- F. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students' parents' and guardians' and school employees' experiences of school life, including, but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

In order for teaching and learning to occur there must be a positive climate in which students are appreciative and accepting of individual differences and behave responsibly toward others.

Students are encouraged to report bullying, discrimination or harassment to any faculty member or administrator and may request anonymity.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
 2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
 3. Threats and intimidation
 4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
 5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school
 6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school ("cyberbullying")
 7. Targeting of a student based on the student's actual or perceived "differentiating" characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental physical, developmental, or sensory disability.
- Student who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by ACES, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by ACES, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,
 - Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
 - Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspensions, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement official.

Each ACES school has a school climate plan that addresses bullying. These comprehensive plans:

1. Permit anonymous reports of bullying by students to teachers and administrators and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians; Requires teachers and other school staff to notify school administrators in writing of bullying acts they witness and students' reports they receive;
2. Require school administrators to investigate parents' written reports and review students' anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
3. Require each school to maintain a publicly available a list of the number of verified bullying acts that occurred there, and within available appropriations, report such number to the Department of Education annually and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
4. Requires each school to have prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, for school staff to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
5. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying and invite them to attend at least one meeting. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;
6. Require the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetuated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
7. Require students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying;
8. Require the identification of appropriate school personnel, which may include, but shall not be limited to, pupil services personnel, responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint;
9. Are included in the ACES staff development program for certified staff;
10. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of students who commit verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;

11. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such acts were directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
13. Require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

ACES expects prompt and reasonable investigation of alleged acts of bullying. The principal of each school or his/her designee is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying. This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

Annual Bullying Notice

Bullying behavior by any student in the ACES schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. "Bullying" means any overt act by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts committed more than once against any student during the school year

Students may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators. In addition, parents may also file written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

Informal/Verbal complaints of Bullying by Students

Students may make complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbally reporting to a teacher, administrator, or other professional employee such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, nurse, social worker or school therapist. Student complaints of bullying should specify the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including the time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A teacher, or other professional employee, or administrator who receives a student complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided by the student. The written report by the teacher, other professional employee and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal (or other responsible program administrator) for review and action.

Formal/Written Complaints of Bullying

Students and/or their parents or guardians may also file formal written complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports should specify the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any teacher or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review and action.

Anonymous Complaints of Bullying

Students who make complaints of bullying to a teacher and/or administrator may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the teacher(s) or administrator(s) who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the principal or his/her designee shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Bus Conduct

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

Bus Safety and Policies

The primary responsibility of the ACES Transportation Department is to transport students in a safe and efficient manner. The paramount emphasis is always on safety. State of Connecticut Statutes, ACES Governing Board policies and administrative guidelines reflect that commitment.

The ACES driver has been instructed to report any student who interferes with the safe operation of the vehicle. This report should be made to the principal and Director of Transportation in writing. The complaint will be addressed by administration.

Relative to ACES magnet schools, partnership districts often (in some cases exclusively) transport their district students to the magnet schools. The bus drivers who drive for the partner towns must also report in writing any student who interferes with the safe operation of the bus to the principal.

A student with special needs who attends an ACES program for students with special needs must abide by the same rules as applied to all students attending ACES schools. A behavioral plan will be developed to address such behavior concerns on the bus. Parents will be notified of infractions, which may result in a warning of indefinite suspension from the bus, dependent on the severity and frequency of occurrence. School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

Complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Director of Transportation and Principal. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

The misuse of cell phones, pagers, laser pointers or other electronic devices is not permitted during school hours or on school transportation.

ACES strives to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment while providing students with opportunities for reasonable access to cell phones and other electronic devices. This policy also recognizes the use of electronic devices for educational purposes with administrative permission or with teacher approval within the classroom. The possession and use of electronic devices at ACES is a privilege and a responsibility, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in the loss of privileges.

Students are solely responsible for any electronic devices brought to school. Do not leave them unattended. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen devices.

Mobile devices such as cell phones, may be used for information access and/or text-based communication during lunch in the cafeteria, study halls, during passing time and before and after school.

The devices are not allowed in classes, unless their use is part of the teacher's lesson plan. Teachers have discretion concerning how the devices may be used for learning.

No recording, video or audio, or photographs may be taken in school unless it is part of a lesson and all appropriate privacy protections, such as contained in FERPA, are honored.

The sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on cellphones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the school setting.

Channels of Communications

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation. In most cases this is the teacher. The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher, (2) principal, (3) superintendent, (4) board of education.

Child Abuse, Neglect, Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment/Intimidation

All ACES employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches, paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, licensed nurses, and other school or agency staff are obliged by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger or serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives training in their use, as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault, harassment or intimidation by a school or agency employee is a responsibility that is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or sexual assault, harassment or intimidation a report will be made. The school and agency will work with the parents/ guardians and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation or necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse (Reference: P.A. 15-205, An Act Protecting School Children).

ACES prohibits sexual harassment or intimidation of its employees or students whether by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, by individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the board, or by students. Sexual harassment/intimidation in the workplace by employees will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Students engaged in sexual harassment/intimidation will also be subject to disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment/intimidation is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to, insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct; threats or suggestions that an employee's or student's submission to or rejection of unwelcome conduct will in any way influence an employment or educational decision regarding that employee or student or conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with an employee's work performance, or student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment, such as the display in the workplace or school of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Harassment Statement

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any disability they may have. The District prohibits harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or the principal. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to the principal or teacher. The allegations will be investigated and addressed and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary.

Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

Sexual Harassment

ACES wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical, includes, but is not limited to the following: unwanted/unwelcomed physical contact, sexual remarks, comments/jokes about body parts. Any student who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse, or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint. The administration will take action to investigate the allegations.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator, Rebecca Cuevas.

Conduct

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. They must accept responsibility for misbehavior and engage with school staff to identify how a different choice of action could result in a better outcome. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location. Parents/guardians must acknowledge the receipt of the Student Code of Conduct and consequences to students to violate district disciplinary policy. Parents/guardians should also let the district know, within ten (10) days of receipt of the handbook, if they object to the release of "directory information" on the child(ren). You may wish to bind in a statement to be torn out, signed, dated, and returned.

Data Privacy

ACES follows federal and state education privacy laws and adheres to privacy and security policies. When we use an online service provider to process or store data, that provider must adhere to federal and state privacy laws including current security protocols and technology.

Protecting personal information in secure and responsible ways is at the heart of our efforts to provide a richer, dynamic, and personalized learning experience for all learners at ACES. Please visit our student data privacy web portal for more information and a current list of applications used at ACES: www.aces.org/administration/curriculum-programs/educationaltechnology/data-privacy-practices/.

Defibrillators in Schools (AEDs)/Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Each school will have one (1) automatic external defibrillator (AED). The schools each have an emergency response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life threatening emergencies.

Discipline Policies

Actions Leading to Suspension or Expulsion

Students may be suspended or expelled for conduct that endangers persons or property, or whose conduct, on or off school grounds, is seriously disruptive of the educational process or violates a publicized policy of the ACES Governing Board. Conduct that may lead to suspension or a recommendation for expulsion includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fighting, physical assault or attempted physical assault;
- Making threatening statements to or about any student or staff member;
- Continued and/or willful disobedience of the school and/or district rules;
- Defiance of the authority of a teacher, administrator or any other persons having authority over the student;
- Taking or attempting to take property or other possessions from another person by means of force, threat, fear, theft, or intimidation;
- Smoking in or on school property;
- Using or being in possession of any electronic cigarette or vaping paraphernalia;
- Gambling in or on school property;
- Leaving a school building or school grounds without authorization;
- School or class truancy;
- Incitement of the truancy of other students;
- Possessing or using any type of firearm, firearm facsimile, explosive, weapon, deadly weapon, or knife, or any other dangerous instrument, which means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury;
- Unauthorized possession, offering for sale, use or distribution in the school or on school grounds, or at any school sponsored activity or in school provided transportation of drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, or alcoholic beverages;
- Participation in an unauthorized occupancy of any part of any school, building or other property owned or controlled by ACES or failure to leave such school, building or property when directed to do so;
- Inciting and/or participating in a student walkout;
- The use of abusive, obscene and/or profane language or gestures or social or ethnic epithets;
- Turning in a false alarm or bomb threat;
- Conduct of any pupil while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or an ACES policy;
- Possessing or using a remotely activated paging device or cell phone;
- Possessing and/or using a laser pointer;
- Violation of any local, state or federal law.

Suspensions

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student or his/her parents.

Actions Leading to a Mandatory Expulsion

The following conduct shall result in a recommendation for expulsion;

- Possession of a Deadly Weapon or Firearm
- Bringing a “weapon” to school
- Sale and Distribution of a Controlled Substance

Out of School Misconduct

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of a publicized ACES policy, even if such misconduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. In compliance with judicial decisions, the ACES considers conduct which is “severely disruptive of the educational process” to mean conduct that “markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operations of a school” in addition to such conduct also being in violation of publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, phoning in a bomb threat, or making a threat off school grounds, to kill or hurt a teacher or student. Such discipline may result whether the incident was initiated in the school or on school grounds, if after the occurrence there was a reasonable likelihood that return of the student would contribute to a disruptive effect on the school education or its process, markedly interrupting or severely impeding the day-to-day operation of a school.

Distance Learning

The District plans to provide distance learning options in the event schools must be closed due to an emergency health situation. Schools will operate remotely while continuing to provide meaningful instruction to students through the use of a variety of instructional resources. To provide equitable instruction to all students, the District will ensure that all students have access to instructional materials and electronic devices. Distance learning is only an option for students who have met the established criteria set by the school or program. There must be agreement and evidence that distance learning will not be detrimental to the student’s academic/social-emotional well-being or violate a student’s rights under IDEA.

Dress Code

ACES requires students to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation and which is conducive to teaching and learning. Restrictions on freedom of student dress may be applied whenever the mode of dress in question:

- Is unsafe for the student or those around the student;
- Is disruptive to school operations and the education process in general; and
- Is contrary to law.

No restrictions on freedom of dress and adornment will be imposed which:

- Reflect discrimination as to civil rights;
- Enforce particular religious tenets; and
- Do not fall within the direct or implied powers of ACES and the Governing Board.

Drug- and Alcohol-Free Schools

ACES aims to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free school district, and requires schools to take positive action through education, counseling, parental involvement, and medical and police referral in handling incidents in the schools involving possession, sale, and/or use of behavior affecting substances. These substances shall include but not be limited to alcohol and controlled substances as defined in the Penal Code of the State of Connecticut.

Personal privacy rights of students shall be protected as provided by law. School properties may be inspected by school authorities to maintain health and safety. Searches to locate drugs, narcotics, liquor, weapons, poisons, and missing properties are matters relating to health and safety and may be regarded as reasonable grounds for searches by school personnel.

Use, possession, sale or distribution of drugs, drug paraphernalia and/or alcoholic beverages is prohibited at any time in school vehicles, on school premises or at any school-sponsored activity. If a student is under the influence of a drug or alcohol, or engaged in the illegal activity of possessing or selling drugs and/or alcohol, his/her parent(s) will be contacted, he/she will be suspended from school, referred to the appropriate treatment agency, and possibly considered for expulsion. In cases of the illegal activity of possessing or selling drugs or alcohol, students will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Possession by the Principal as Agent

The principal in each school, as authorized agent of ACES is personally responsible for holding contraband materials, including controlled drugs, and for delivering them to the proper public authorities. A receipt should be furnished to the owner (or previous possessor), if known and one should be demanded from the police officer who takes possession of the contraband materials.

Power to Inspect, Search and Question

The students should be informed, through notice in the student handbook where such exists, and through suitable announcement at the beginning of each school year, and as deemed necessary during the year, that desks and lockers remain the property of ACES, and may be inspected by delegated agents of the administration if the administration has reason to suspect that materials injurious to the best interests of the school are kept on school property.

ACES is responsible for the welfare of each student under its control. Interviewing of students by law enforcement officials will be done only in the presence of the principal or his/her designee. Every effort should be made to include the parent or guardian of a student in any interview which carries an implication of possible guilt or the furnishing of information leading to an indictment. The student's right to request and be represented by an attorney must not be abridged. The principal or his/her designee will maintain an informal record of the interview, showing the time, place, persons present and a summary of the discussion and findings.

Responsibilities of Teachers and other Personnel

Communication by a student to a teacher, of the student's involvement in the use of controlled drugs, may be kept confidential by the teacher, as long as the student is not under the influence of a drug or drugs on school property or at a school-sponsored event. However, the teacher should not make this decision in isolation. The teacher must consult with the school counselor, psychologist, or nurse to determine if confidentiality is a prudent decision. The teacher must endeavor to lead the student to seek treatment from an appropriate person or agency. Pupil Personnel staff, nurses or the principal may be consulted for assistance with this and provide information regarding available referral sources. The teacher working with the student should inform the principal that such a situation exists, but need not identify the student.

If a teacher suspects that a student is under the influence of drugs, she/he will notify the school nurse, or in his/her absence, the principal. If in the judgment of the nurse or principal the student is under the influence of drugs, the customary procedures for illness or accident will be followed.

If a teacher or any other staff member suspects that a student has in his/her possession a controlled drug, she/he will so inform the principal. If the principal concurs in this judgment, she/he will immediately notify the parent or guardian and the police of his/her suspicions.

If a student is found by a teacher or any other staff member to have in his/her possession a substance suspected of being a controlled drug, the teacher or staff member will so inform the principal. If the principal concurs in this judgment, she/he will confiscate the substance, immediately call the police, and notify the parent or guardian of the student of his/her actions.

Emergency Closings / Late Openings

In the event school is closed because of bad weather or another emergency, announcements will be made on WTNH, WVIT, WFSB, and WTIC. Emergency closings will also be posted on the ACES website, www.aces.org, as well as on ACES and ACES schools' Facebook pages. ACES will also notify families by phone and email via ParentSquare.

English Language Learners (ELL)

Parents of English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services, which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

Equity and Diversity

Students deserve a respectful learning environment in which their cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. The school learning and work environment is enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives, and the very presence of diverse participants.

ACES schools recognize and accept the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of the school system's commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching students awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society. The school will not tolerate student behavior which insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental condition or ethnic group.

Fire Drills / Crisis Response Drills

In each school operated by ACES, there shall be a fire (emergency egress and relocation) drill held at least once per month in which all students, teachers, and other employees shall be required to leave the school building. In the event of inclement weather, the drill will be rescheduled to be completed prior to the end of each month. A minimum of three crisis response drills will be conducted during each school year or once every three months. These drills can be scheduled in place of every third monthly fire drill.

Green Cleaning Programs

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain the school has been implemented. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment. Parents may request ACES information pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/ guardian or student may contact for more information. For additional information, visit: www.aces.org/our-agency/publications/forms/green-cleaning-information-for-school-administrators-staff-and-parents

Hate Speech

ACES denounces the use of words or images to harass individuals or groups based on gender, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity. Hate speech is not tolerated in ACES schools and such speech, threat speech and harassment is prohibited. All speech that denigrates, disrespects, or misrepresents "types of people" must be challenged.

Health and Safety

Health Assessments and Immunizations

Connecticut General Statutes (Secs. 10-204a and 10-206) require that each student

- Receive appropriate immunizations
- Complete health assessment by a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a physician assistant, prior to entering kindergarten, 7th, and 10th grades.

Students may be withheld from starting these grades if the proper health assessment and immunization record is not provided to the school nurse before the start of the school year.

Sports: Any student participating in an intramural or interscholastic sports program must have a pre-participation health assessment, completed annually, within one year prior to the first try-outs or training session for the sport or sports

Additionally, ACES recommends that students have a comprehensive physical exam (Well Child Visit) by their Primary Care Provider (PCP) or Medical Home every year.

Exemptions: Medical exemption for immunization requires a qualified health care provider to complete the appropriate Department of Public Health form stating that there is a medical contraindication for that vaccine based on the student's health condition.

Religious exemption for mandatory vaccination requirements for schools is no longer accepted in CT. Exception: a child enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 on or before April 28, 2021, with a legally recognized religious exemption already on file. (CT HB 6423)

Health Insurance: If you need help obtaining health insurance or identifying a health care provider for your child, please contact the school nurse or social worker for assistance. ACES is committed to promoting effective and timely access to health care for all children and adolescents.

Vision, Audiometric and Postural Screenings

ACES will provide vision, hearing, and postural screening in accordance with P.A. 15-215, for any student who has not had those screenings done by their PCP within the previous year. Notices will be sent home prior to the scheduled screenings and parents/ guardians will have the opportunity to decline the designated screening in school. Parents/guardians will also be given notification if the results of a screening indicate the need for a more complete evaluation by a health care provider, or if the school staff are unable to complete the screening.

Medication

Parents/guardians are requested to give medications (antibiotics, over the counter medications, etc.) at home and on a schedule other than during school hours if possible. If it is necessary that a medication be given during school hours, the following procedures must be followed:

If a student requires any medication, including over-the-counter at school please help us ensure safe administration, by following these guidelines:

1. Parent/guardian or other responsible adult shall deliver medication to school nurse in original, current container. Deliver no more than a three-month (60- school days) supply at a time. Quantity shall not exceed quantity denoted on label.
2. Any medication shall be accompanied by a written *School Medication Authorization*, which shall include:
 - Signed authorization from student's parent/guardian for medication to be administered in school.
 - Signed, written permission from the parent/guardian for the exchange of information between the prescriber and the school nurse necessary to ensure the safe administration of such medication.
 - Signature, license number, and contact information for authorized prescriber
3. Parent/guardian will notify nurse (by phone, Parent Square, or email) when sending medications, including refills, to school. Notification will include name and dose of medication, quantity sent, and who is delivering it.
4. A student may carry and self-administer medication under certain circumstances:
 - Written *School Medication Authorization* that also includes authorization and verification that student is competent to safely carry and administer medication, signed by healthcare provider, parent/guardian, and school nurse.
 - A student with asthma or allergy may self-carry inhaler or epinephrine cartridge, if the above qualifications are met, with the exception that school nurse verification of competency is not required, but always preferred.

References: CT General Statutes 101-212a-1 through 10 / ACES Medication Administration Policy 5141.21.

Psychotropic Drug Use

School personnel is prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, ACES is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school; be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education; or receive special education.

Chronic Health Conditions

The following chronic health conditions require emergency action plans which include detailed Medication Authorization.

- Asthma – Asthma Action Plan
- Epilepsy – Seizure Action Plan
- Potential anaphylactic allergies – Emergency Allergy Plan
- Diabetes – Diabetes Medication and Management Plan

ACES Life - Threatening Allergy Prevention and Management Plan

ACES follows a food allergy prevention and management plan that promotes each school to be considered “Nut Safe”. In order to provide the safest environment for students with known or unknown food allergies, we recommend the following:

- Minimize the amount of peanut and nut foods brought into school
- Remind students to not share any foods with other students anytime, or eat on the bus
- Students who eat peanut or nuts should wash their hands afterwards to prevent accidental exposure to other students
- Do not send food into school with the intention that it be shared with classmates for any type of celebration. ACES promotes the use of creative, non-food options to celebrate birthdays and special occasions.
- Inform school nurse if your child has any known or suspected allergy.

Teasing or bullying students with food allergies is strictly prohibited.

Illnesses and Injuries

- Students should stay home when sick with any of these symptoms: Fever (100 degrees F or more), body aches and chills, new onset of cough, repeated vomiting or diarrhea, or other symptoms that prevent them from participating in learning activities. Students may return to school when both are true for 24 hours:
 1. Symptoms are improving overall and
 2. They have no fever (temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) without fever-reducing medication (like ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- Proper hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of germs. Children should wash hands before eating and after playing outdoors, using the bathroom, coughing, sneezing, blowing their noses, or touching someone else with a cold or cough.
- ACES encourages the annual influenza (“flu”) vaccine for all students, unless they have a medical contraindication.
- We encourage parents/guardians to communicate with the school nurse by written note, phone call, or email any health concern or request for treatment. School nurses are also available to assist parents/guardians with coordinating or obtaining health care with community providers.
- If the student is unable to participate in physical education class due to an injury, or requires the use of crutches or a wheelchair that has not been previously approved, a health care provider’s note indicating the type of injury, length of restriction, and any specific instructions is required.

Hospitalization or Serious Illness

In order to assist the school nurse(s) to safely care for your child after a health event, please communicate with your school nurse before your child returns to school. If your child is hospitalized for any reason, has a serious illness, or requires casting, stitches, or surgery, please provide the school nurse with a statement from their health care provider including diagnosis, treatments, medications, activity restrictions and any prescribed medical assistive devices. Documentation may be faxed, emailed, sent by Parent Square, or dropped off directly to the school prior to your child’s return.

Student Medical Care at School

ACES school personnel are responsible for the immediate care necessary for a student whose illness or injury occurs on the school premises during school hours or in school-sponsored and supervised activities.

ACES schools require that parents/guardians provide updated Medical Emergency and Contact Information each year for each student. If a student's illness or injury requires immediate care, the approved Medical Emergency Procedure will be implemented. The parent/guardian or identified emergency contact person will be called by telephone by the nurse, the building principal, or other personnel designated by the principal, and advised of the student's condition.

When immediate medical care is indicated, and when parents / guardians or the identified emergency contact person cannot be reached, the approved Medical Emergency Procedure will be implemented. The nurse, principal or other personnel designated by the principal will continue phoning the parent/guardian or identified emergency contact person until notification has been accomplished.

Suspected Abuse/Neglect/At Risk Reporting

Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101, as amended by Public Act 02-138 and 11-93, requires certain school employees who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed in imminent risk of serious harm to report these suspicions in compliance with applicable state statutes. ACES employees are mandated reporters and are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm. (Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a)

Youth Suicide Prevention and Youth Suicide Attempts

ACES is aware that suicide and other self-destructive behaviors have become critical problems for children and youth, families, school personnel and the community. ACES is also aware that students experiencing stress or depression are less available for learning. Students engaging in self-destructive behaviors are jeopardizing their health and well-being as well as their academic achievement.

ACES recognizes its responsibility to develop policy and procedures for dealing with youth suicide prevention and youth suicide attempts. In response to this concern it shall be the policy of ACES to establish programs and procedures regarding youth suicide prevention and intervention for teachers, administrators, staff and students. All school personnel will be required to act in accordance with ACES policy and procedures and timelines whenever there is any suspicion that a student may be at risk for suicide. Policy and procedure will be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they are current with best practice and address the needs of students, staff, families and the community in dealing with the issue of youth suicide prevention.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The local liaison for homeless children is Director of Pupil Services. The District has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youths are defined as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence". Homeless children have the right to attend the school of origin "to the extent feasible," unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student's parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Any homeless child or youth denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or will be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. A written explanation of the reasons for denial of school accommodations in a manner and form understandable to such homeless child or youth, or parent/guardian, will be provided. Information will also be provided regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of accommodations. The homeless child or youth is entitled to continue in attendance during all available appeals.

A homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, shall have full access to his/her educational and medical records in the Board's possession.

Indoor Air Quality

The Board of Education provides for a uniform inspection and evaluation program of indoor air quality complying with the Environmental Protection Agency's Tools for Indoor Air Quality for Schools Program. The results of the evaluation will be made available for public inspection at a regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting and also posted on the District's website.

ACES will report biennially to the Commissioner of Education on the condition of its facilities, its long range facilities program, its air quality program, and green cleaning program. The Board will utilize standard reporting forms to conduct and report on both IAQ and HVAC inspections and will provide the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) the completed forms for each school. The forms and/or reports will be made available on the Board of Education's website.

Lock Down Procedure

In the event of a critical emergency, all school personnel, including students, will follow the "Lock Down Procedures". Students will be informed of specific actions they should take when a Lock Down Procedure is put into effect. Lock down drills, like fire drills, will occur periodically during the school year.

Magnet Schools

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for students placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program. Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an interdistrict magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

Menstrual Products Available in Student Bathrooms

The district will provide free menstrual products in student restrooms. Such restrooms will be accessible to students in grades three through twelve, in each school under the jurisdiction of the board. The provision of these products will be done in a manner that does not stigmatize any student seeking menstrual products, pursuant to guidelines that need to be established by the Commissioner of Public Health and posted on the DPH's website. The Board may accept donations of menstrual products and grants from any source for the purpose of purchasing such products, and may partner with a nonprofit or community-based organization.

Migrant Students

ACES has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

Nondiscrimination in the Instructional Program

ACES pledges to avoid discriminatory actions and seeks to foster good human and educational relations which will help to attain:

- Equal rights and opportunities for students and staff members in the school community.
- Equal opportunity for all students to participate in the total school program of the schools.
- Continual study and development of curricula toward improving human relations and understanding and appreciating cultural differences.
- Training opportunities for improving staff ability and responsiveness to educational and social needs.
- Opportunities in educational programs which are broadly available to all students.

- An appropriate learning environment for students which includes (1) adequate instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology, (2) equitable allocation of resources among district schools and (3) a safe school setting. Each student, at the time s/he becomes eligible for participation, will be advised of his/her right to an equal opportunity to participate in school programs without discrimination of any kind.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no otherwise qualified individual with handicaps shall, solely by reason of such handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program of the ACES Governing Board.

All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

The right of a student to participate fully in classroom instruction and extracurricular activities shall not be abridged or impaired because of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, pregnancy, parenthood, marriage, or for any reason not related to his/her individual capabilities. ACES staff will meet with parents/guardians after a child has been assessed for possible placement in special education and before a PPT meets to discuss the PPT process and parental/guardian concerns about the student.

Rebecca Cuevas, ACES Director of Human Capital Development is the designated ACES compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

On-Campus Recruitment

Students at the middle and high school level will be informed of the availability of (1) vocational, technical and technological education and training of technical high schools and (2) agricultural sciences and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers. Full access for the recruitment of students by technical high schools, regional agricultural science and technology education centers, magnet schools, and charter schools will be provided. Military recruiters and institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings unless the student's parent/guardians submits a written request that such information not be released without their prior written consent.

Parent Conferences

Parents/guardians are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents/Guardians and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

Parent Involvement/Communications

ACES recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school, family and sending school district during the entire period the child spends in school. To support the goal of ACES to educate all students effectively, the school, the parents and the sending districts must work as knowledgeable partners. Parents share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children; however diverse the parents and their children are in culture, language and need. ACES in collaboration with parents and our districts shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent involvement and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.

Participation in the National School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk Programs

ACES participates in the National School Program, School Lunch Program and School Milk Program. The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. ACES is fortunate to be able to participate in The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP is a provision from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. All ACES schools participate in the CEP program which entitles all students to free breakfast and lunch with no application necessary.

Pest Management Plan

ACES has implemented an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan to comply with the recommendations from the Connecticut Environmental Protection Agency. Only certified pesticide applicators are used in school for any non-emergency pesticide use in school.

buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years.

Photographs

From time-to-time during the school year, school personnel and/or the media take photographs. If a parent/guardian does not want their child to be photographed for school use, school website, social media or print/broadcast media or other promotional or instructional purposes, the school office must be alerted in writing.

Physical Exercise

All students in elementary school shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment. School employees may not prevent a student in elementary school from participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline.

Pledge of Allegiance Policy

Students will be offered the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at least once during each school day. Participation in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance will be voluntary. Students may refuse to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any reason including religious, political, philosophical, or personal reasons. If a student chooses not to participate, he/she may stand or sit in silence.

Relations with Non-Custodial Parents

The custodial parent has the responsibility to keep the school office informed as to the address of residence, in a manner determined by the school, and how he/she may be contacted at all times. Any legal documents which restrict the rights of the non-custodial parent must be provided by the custodial parent. Unless otherwise indicated by a verified note from the parent or by a legal document provided by a parent, only the custodial parent has the right to remove the student from school property. If school personnel anticipate possible student abduction, law enforcement personnel are to be notified immediately, and the student will remain on school property pending the arrival of law enforcement officials. Non-custodial parents and parents with shared custody not normally receiving materials from the school may annually request this service. Unless there are specific court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent upon written request, may view the student's educational, medical or similar records maintained in student's cumulative record, receive school progress reports, visit the child briefly at school and have an opportunity to confer with the student's teacher(s).

Safe Schools

ACES is committed to the prevention of violence against people or property in the schools or at school activities, whether by students, staff or others. While committed to the protection of each person's constitutional rights, including due process rights, the ACES does not condone lawlessness. Any individual committing violent acts in or on school property will be disciplined according to applicable ACES policy and regulations.

School Ceremonies and Observances

ACES recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as but not limited to, Martin Luther King Day, Juneteenth, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and Presidents Day are encouraged. ACES reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

School Closures or Cancellations of Classes in an Emergency Situation

In the event of the need to close schools and cancel classes for an extended period of time, as a result of a directive from the Governor's office and/or the federal government, ACES may implement a program of instruction using computers and distance learning. Transportation to schools and school after-school activities will not be available. In addition, students receiving free breakfast and/or lunch programs will continue to receive them. Pickup points or a means of delivery will be announced via the district's emergency notification system and through information posted on district and school websites.

School Security and Safety

Each school will develop and implement a school security and safety plan based upon the standards issued by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Each school, as required by law, shall establish a school security and safety committee, which will assist in the development and administration of the school's security and safety plan. Each school will conduct a security and vulnerability assessment every two years.

ACES has developed and maintains an emergency disaster preparedness and response plan for implementation as needed ("School Security and Safety Plan"). The plan is based upon the standards promulgated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Development and implementation of the plan includes collaboration with local and state emergency responders including law enforcement, fire department, emergency rescue squads and local public health administrators. The plan, representing an all hazards approach, utilizes the four recognized phases of crisis management: (1) mitigation/ prevention, (2) preparedness, (3) response, (4) recovery.

Inquiries can be directed to the ACES Security Division at SAFETY@aces.org.

Search and Seizure

The right to inspect desks, lockers and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. An authorized school administrator may search a student's locker or desk under the following conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in school.

This document serves as advance notice that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities.

Student vehicles parked on school grounds may be searched if there is reasonable cause to search. The District may use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used on lockers and vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. Drug-sniffing dogs will not be used to sniff students. A locker, a vehicle, or an item in the classroom to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

Student / Client Smoking

Students, in accordance with state law, are prohibited from smoking in school buildings or on school buses. ACES recognizes that smoking represents a health and safety hazard which can have serious consequences for the smoker and non-smoker. Because of the Board's grave concern for the safety of the system—both people and property and in order to protect the students/clients from an environment that may be harmful to them and because of possible harm to personal well-being, the Board hereby prohibits smoking by all students/clients in all buildings and vehicles owned or leased by ACES. For the purposes of this policy “smoking” will mean all uses of smoking materials and tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff and/or any “vaping type devices” such as e-cigs, vapes, e-hookahs, vape pens, mods, tanks or electronic nicotine delivery systems (“ENDS”). There shall be no smoking or other use of tobacco products on school property during regular school hours or during the course of any trip or school activity sponsored by or under the supervision of the ACES Governing Board or its authorized agents.

Substance Abuse

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, ACES prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:*

In addition to the prohibition pertaining to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and inhalants, the Board of Education prohibits the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and food supplements, including Creatine, by students involved in school-related athletics or any co-curricular or extracurricular school activity or program, other than use for a valid medical purpose as documented by a physician.

Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), regardless of whether it constitutes a controlled substance under federal laws.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students.

However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. A staff member who is contacted by a student regarding a drug or alcohol problem may elect to keep that information confidential and not disclose it to any other person in accordance with state law. However, the student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians.

Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

Title I Comparability of Services

All ACES schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement

Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental and family engagement involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs and opportunities for parents and family members to participate in the education of their children.

Visitors

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit ACES schools. All visitors must first report to the principal's office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the principals approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

All doors that open to the outside of any school must remain locked in order to preserve the safety and security of students and staff. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or uncivil discourse will not be permitted. Visits cannot interfere with the educational program of the school nor interrupt teaching activities.

Withdrawal From School

If a student needs to withdraw from school during the school year, the student's parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form and obtain all necessary signatures. All books, materials, athletic equipment and other equipment loaned by the school must be returned or paid for by the student or his/her parents/guardians.

Website Resources

Forms

To access forms, visit www.aces.org or request copies from your school.

Policies

For more information on ACES policies, visit www.aces.org/our-agency/publications/forms or speak with your building principal.



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