

Dixie District Schools

STUDENT CODE of CONDUCT

GRADE 6– 8

Effective: August 2011

PURPOSE/INTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

The primary purpose of education in Dixie County is to maintain, perpetuate and improve our American way of life. The School is the social agency through which this purpose is to be achieved. In order to maintain a “school climate” in which the children and youth of our country can live, learn and flourish, it is vitally necessary for all students to assume responsibility for their behavior while enrolled in the public schools in Dixie County.

Therefore, in order to aid students in making appropriate decisions governing their behavior, a code of conduct identifying the rules and procedures has been established. While these rules are not intended to be “all – inclusive” of all possible behavior, they do implement the philosophy of our system, and are illustrative of the types of behavior that are consistent with the proper maintenance and function of an effective program in our system.

This code of student conduct is to be applied and enforced in addition to other rules which may be in effect at any individual school with due respect for constitutional rights of every student. It should be pointed out that although parents and students have many rights guaranteed by state and federal laws and court decisions, these rights end when and where they begin to interfere with the rights of others. It must also be pointed out that this document does not outline all of the possibilities of misconduct, therefore students and parents need to realize that the school administration has the right to view other students behavior as unacceptable and deal with it accordingly.

Most importantly, students need to know that every right carries with it the responsibility to exercise that right wisely, and that failure to do so may result in loss of privileges. Essentially then, the responsibility for conduct is in the hands of each individual student, and when an action by a student is not in line with an accepted standard, specified consequences shall be applied as outline in this document. The intent, then, of this document is to help provide an instrument, which shall sustain an atmosphere that will enable a student to achieve the goal of a basic education, thus allowing them to be competitive in the adult world.

I. GENERAL POLICIES (PK –12)

A. Due Process (PK-12)

Due Process is another name for fairness of process. Fairness of procedure is due process in the primary sense. Due process is a right guaranteed to all by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.

Policies and procedures for discipline of a disabled student will be provided to the parent or guardian during the initial eligibility staffing.

Individuals must have proper notice and an opportunity to be heard, and the hearing conducted fairly. Students must be informed either orally or in writing, of the rules, which have been violated. The basic ingredients of due process procedures are as follows:

1. Individuals must have prior opportunity to know that their actions would be in violation of established rules and regulations.
2. Individuals must have the opportunity to know the specific charges or complaints being made against them.
3. Individuals must have notice of the charge or complaints being made against them.
4. Individuals must be given a fair and impartial hearing

B. Student Grievance Procedure (PK-12)

A grievance is defined as an alleged violation of the School Board of Dixie County policies on unlawful discrimination or harassment. The grievance process is available to all students and applicants for admission. Throughout the student grievance process the claimant, accused and all others involved in the investigation are guaranteed confidentiality and protection from retaliation. Such grievance may be filed in the following manner:

Step One - If an individual public school student believed that an action by the school, another student, or by a school representative has violated his/her rights under School Board policies, the student shall seek within sixty (60) days of the alleged occurrence a resolution through informal discussion with a teacher, guidance counselor, dean of students or assistant principal of the school who shall in turn mediate on the student's behalf with the individuals alleged to have committed the violation.

Step Two – If the resolution determined by the informal discussion does not resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the aggrieved student, that student will submit a written statement of the grievance to the school principal or the district Equity Coordinator within ten (10) school days after the informal discussion of the alleged occurrence. The statement shall include a description of the specific rule/regulation allegedly violated, the date of the violation, the resolution sought and the signature of the student and parent or guardian.

Step Three – Within ten (10) school days of receipt of the written grievance, the principal or the district Equity Coordinator shall render a written response to the aggrieved student and parent or guardian, which shall uphold, modify, or deny the resolution sought.

Step Four – If the student is not satisfied with the response issued to step three, the student has within ten (10) school days of the response to submit in writing the alleged grievance to the District School Superintendent.

Step Five – Within ten (10) school days, the Superintendent shall issue a written response to the aggrieved student and parent or guardian. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

C. Student Records (PK – 12)

Philosophical Basis:

A well-developed student record file contains information needed for making appropriate educational decisions for the student. Student records are to be treated confidentially and should contain information that is relevant, accurate and appropriate.

Access to Student Records:

In general, a student's records are available to parents of minor students (under age 18) and to students who have reached age 18 or are attending a post secondary education institution (eligible student). In

addition, federal and state statutes allow student records to be made available to certain others that have a bona fide need of information.

Copies of the District's policies regarding student records are available at each school and at the School Board office. These policies will always be in compliance with state and federal regulations concerning student records.

Eligible students and parents of minor students have the right to inspect and review permanent education records of the student. The parent or eligible student may request access to the records through the school principal. The principal will make records available for review within thirty (30) days of such request. Information regarding the cost is also available from the school. A parent or eligible student may challenge information in the records. A parent may refuse to permit the designation of any or all categories of directory information with respect to his child by notifying the principal in writing ten (10) calendar days of the beginning of school. Unless there is specific written request in the cumulative folder, directory information on the student may be released. Parents or eligible students will be provided a list of types of directory information included in student records, upon written request of the office of the Superintendent. Purging, transferring and copying of student's records is done in accordance with federal and state statutes and federal, state and local procedures.

Responsibilities of Student, Parent, and Guardians:

To inform the school of any information that may be useful in making appropriate educational decisions.

To authorize release of pertinent information to those individuals or agencies who are working actively and constructively for the benefit of the student.

Release of records of students 17 years of age or younger who attend an elementary or secondary school requires the signature of the parent or guardian.

Rights of Students, Parents and Guardians:

To inspect, review, and challenge the information contained in records directly relating to the student.

To be protected by legal provisions which prohibit the release of personal identifiable information to other than legally authorized persons without the consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible student. (Eligible students are those 18 years of age or over and/or those attending a post-secondary institution.)

D. Educational Equity Act (PK-12)

The School Board of Dixie County is committed to the principle and practice of equal opportunity and affirmative action. The School Board of Dixie County complies with the letter and spirit of federal, state and local laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and/or harassment based on race, color, religion, political affiliation, national origin, sex, disability, age, marital status, or social and family background. Employment and educational opportunities for students, employees and applicants are provided under the principles, equal opportunity and affirmative action. Dixie District School's designee to coordinate compliance with the Educational Equity Act is:

Faith Hill, Director of Student Services and ESE
Instructional Services Building 2
16077 NE Hwy 19
Cross City, FL 32628
Phone: 352-498-6149
Fax: 352-498-1308

E. Limited English Proficient (PK- 12)

Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who meet program eligibility criteria shall have equal access to all programs. No national origin minority or limited English proficient student shall be subjected to any disciplinary action because of his or her use of a language other than English. Disciplinary actions for LEP students are common to non-LEP students.

F. Textbooks/Library Books (PK – 12)

Textbooks/Library books are property of the School Board of Dixie County and loaned to the students of Dixie County. The students must pay for lost and damaged textbooks and/or library books before other books will be issued. All books should be cared for with extreme care by the students. Periodic book checks will be made to examine the condition of books and to check for lost books. Students are held personally responsible for their books whether lost, stolen, or damaged.

G. Student Lockers/Storage Space (PK-12)

Lockers and/or storage spaces for student use are provided by the School Board of Dixie County. As such, these lockers and storage spaces are the property of the School Board. Any student who accepts the use of a locker/storage space, accepts it with the understanding that it cannot conceal or hide any such item or material that is illegal or against school policy or regulations. Upon accepting the use of the locker/storage space the student does so knowing the locker/storage space is subject to be searched at any time and for any reason that school officials feel that they need to conduct such a search. School personnel are NOT responsible for stolen or misplaced property.

II. GENERAL CONDUCT (PK –12)

A. School Bus Conduct (PK –12)

Rights:

Students living two (2) miles or more from the school have the right to transportation by school bus or other school provided transportation. Students have the right to be informed of the transportation rules, regulations and laws regarding the transportation of the students by school bus.

Transportation Rules:

1. Students must obey the bus driver.
2. Students must have no foreign objects in their mouth.
3. Students must remain in their seats, face forward, keeping hands, feet and other objects to themselves at all times.
4. No objects will be brought on the bus without permission of the bus driver.
5. Students must be at the bus stop five (5) minutes before stop time. They should stand 10 feet off the road in an orderly manner. When crossing the street, they must cross 10 feet in front of the bus. School conduct rules apply while students are at the bus stop.
6. Students must be absolutely quiet when the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
7. Students must board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at their regular stop, except with the permission of parent and principal or his/her designee.
8. Profane language or gestures may not be used on the bus.

Bus Safety Discipline Plan

Offenses would be divided into two levels based on the severity of the incident. Level I offenses would be incidents such as not sitting in seat properly, spitting, loud talking, etc... Level II offenses would be incidents of a more serious severity such as fighting, gross insubordination, weapons, etc...

Level I Offenses

Each bus driver will keep a roster of kids that ride their bus. This form would contain blanks on it for drivers to make notes and mark checks by the student's name.

✓ = **indicates** that bus driver gave student a verbal warning in private. Bus driver should pull student aside and discuss the inappropriate behavior. This conversation should be documented by posting the date the conference took place on the student roster.

✓ ✓ = **Parent notification.** The bus driver will attempt to contact the parent by phone to have a conference regarding the child's inappropriate behavior. If the driver is unable to verbally speak with the parent, written notification can be made. Parent notification should be documented by posting the date contact was made on the student roster.

3rd Offense = Office Referral: Driver must bring in referral along with documentation of steps one and two above. Administrator will have a choice of punishment. Punishment may include warning, time spent in internal, etc...

4th Offense = Office Referral: Minimum of 2 days bus suspension (Grades 6-12). Minimum of 2 days bus suspension or administrator choice of punishment (grades PK-5).

5th Offense = Office Referral: Minimum of 5 days bus suspension.

6th Offense = Office Referral: Minimum of 10 days bus suspension. A certified/Return Receipt letter will be mailed to the parent notifying them that on the next offense expulsion from the bus will be administered.

7th Offense = Office Referral: Expulsion from bus.

**ESE students who are unable to provide private transportation to school may be referred to the special needs bus at any time the administrator deems necessary after the 3rd offense for a level I incident.

***When a student begins on the special needs bus the number of offenses will start over.

Level II Offenses

1st Offense = Office Referral: Minimum of 2 days bus suspension.

2nd Offense = Office Referral: Minimum of 5 days bus suspension.

3rd Offense = Office Referral: Minimum of 10 days bus suspension. A Certified/Return Receipt letter will be mailed to the parent notifying them that on the next offense expulsion from the bus will be administered.

4th Offense = Office Referral: Expulsion from bus.

**ESE students who are unable to provide private transportation to school may be referred to the special needs bus at any time the administrator deems necessary after the 2nd offense for level II incident.

***Level II offenses for students in grades PK-2 punishment will be left to administrative judgment.

****When a student begins on the special needs bus the number of offenses will start over.

*Restitution up to \$2,500.00 for damage to real or personal property.

B. Zero Tolerance for School Related Violent Crime (PK-12)

On September 13, 1994, the Florida State Board of Education adopted a new rule “Zero Tolerance for School Related Violent Crime.” The rule requires each school district to ensure that students or adults found to have committed the following offenses on school property, school sponsored transportation, or during a school sponsored activity shall receive the most severe consequence provided by law and School Board Policy:

1. homicide
2. sexual battery
3. armed robbery
4. aggravated battery
5. battery on school personnel
6. kidnapping
7. arson
8. possession, use, or sale of any firearm

C. Teacher Authority to Remove Students from the Classroom (PK-12)

Pursuant to 232.271,F.S., which took effect on July1, 1996, any teacher has the authority to remove a student from his or her classroom for repeated disruptive behavior or a violent incident.

Teachers who invoke the provisions of this statute must document that a student’s behavior repeatedly interfered with the learning process in the classroom or the student’s behavior was so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it interfered with the effective conduct of the class.

Principals may not return a student to that class when the teacher removed the student under the provisions of this statute, without the permission of that teacher or the direction of the placement review committee, which may determine that returning the student to that class is the best and/or only available alternative for the student.

D. Compulsory School Attendance (PK-12)

Florida Statutes state that school attendance is mandatory between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) unless the student and his or her parent/guardian file a formal intent to terminate school enrollment with the District School Board. Rules and regulations pertaining to those laws as well as those regarding admission of transfers, pupil transfers into and out of the county shall be available to all students and parents. Regular attendance and a cooperative attitude are necessary ingredients in an environment, which promotes learning.

E. Truancy (PK-12)

Any student who accumulates 15 unexcused absences within 90 days will be defined as a habitual truant.

F. Supervision of Students (PK-12)

Pursuant of Florida Statue 232.25 as amended and effective 7/1/96

PUPILS SUBJECT TO CONTROL OF SCHOOL

Each pupil enrolled in a school shall, during the time he or she is being transported to and from school at public expense, during the time he or she is attending school, and during the time he or she is on school premises, be under the control and direction of the principal, or teacher in charge of the school, and under the immediate control and direction of the teacher or other member of the instructional staff or of the bus driver to whom such responsibility may be assigned by the principal. A reasonable time for supervision is 30 minutes before and after an activity is scheduled, with the exception of school provided

transportation which shall be from the time the student is picked up at his or her designated stop and until such time as student is released from his or her bus at the student's designated stop. Casual contact between school district personnel and students on school property shall not result in legal duty to supervise outside of the reasonable times set forth in this document. The duty of supervision does not extend to anyone other than students attending school and students authorized to participate in activities.

G. Grades (6-8)

Students in grades 6-8 are expected to attend school on a regular basis in order to receive the necessary instruction to be promoted. If a student is absent from school it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian's to call the school the day their child missed school and report the absence. Parental contact by telephone or home visit will be attempted after each unexcused absence. VERIFICATION MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFICE BY THE THIRD (3rd) DAY A STUDENT RETURNS FROM BEING ABSENT.

Excused Absences are defined as medical with written verification, Religious Holiday as verification by a religious official, death in the immediate family with a printed funeral announcement, school sponsored activities, or a phone call by the parent/guardian **the day** of the absence.

Unexcused Absence is any absence that is not excused. After a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences in a semester, the school may contact his/her parent/guardian.

When a student accumulates six (6) unexcused absences in a semester, the school will notify the student's parent/guardian. If the student receives cash assistance from the Department of Children and Families, this notification will include a warning that the Department of Children and Families must be contacted by the school, according to the Florida Law, when the child is excessively absent from school. It is Dixie District School's policy to report a child as having excessive absenteeism, which is sufficient to jeopardize academic progress when they have accumulated nine (9) unexcused absences in a semester.

When a student has accumulated nine (9) unexcused absences in a semester, the school will notify the Department of Children and Families (if applicable), as well as complete an Educational Evaluation of the student. Also, a certified letter will be sent to the parents requesting a conference to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan, which will include educational counseling. The committee for attendance will include appropriate school personnel and the parent/guardian. A student who has accumulated 15 unexcused absences within 90 days will be considered truant.

To be given credit for a full day's attendance, the student must be present a minimum of three (3) class periods. Any student taking Algebra I for high school credit must follow all high school guidelines and policies. A student who misses 30 or more days of school may be required to repeat the grade unless he/she has demonstrated mastery of all subject areas that are required for promotion.

III. BEHAVIOR and DISCIPLINE (6-8)

A. Unacceptable Behavior (6-8)

1. Skipping (absent from class without permission).
2. Leaving class without permission.
3. Leaving campus without permission
4. Tardiness to school and/or class
5. Classroom misconduct.
6. Possession of tapes/CD's/beepers/cameras/video games/laser light/ on campus.
7. Co-mingling on campus (non-students mingling with RRMS student on campus during school hours without permission).
8. Displaying any unacceptable behavior of a sexual nature.

9. Inciting fighting to physical contact.
10. Fighting, physical contact.
11. Fire Alarms (involved in tripping or setting off and alarm).
12. Gum or candy is not permitted on campus.
13. Insubordination to a staff member.
14. Profanity/abusive language.
15. Academic Cheating.
16. Violation of the District Internet Use Policy.
17. Dress Code violations.
18. Computer misuse.
19. Fireworks are not permitted on campus

Any of the above unacceptable behaviors will be handled through administrative action by the principal or designee.

B. Additional Unacceptable Behaviors (6-8)

1. Possession, use or sale of tobacco.
2. Possession, use or sale of alcohol.
3. Gross insubordination to any staff members.
4. Vandalism (destruction of school property).
5. Possession of any weapon on campus (pocketknives, razors, firearms, homemade weapon on campus, etc.).
6. Fighting, displaying a weapon.
7. Stealing, extortion.
8. Violation of Internet access guidelines.
9. Physical attack on school related personnel.
10. Bomb threat (students involved in initiating or calling in a bomb threat).
11. Calling 911 from school phones.
12. Gross insubordination to an administrator.
13. Possession of pornographic material on campus.
14. Students charged with a felony – the principal has the authority to suspend a student who is formally charged with a felony for an incident which allegedly occurred on other than public school property, if the incident is shown to have an adverse impact on the educational program, discipline or welfare in the school where the student is enrolled.
15. Possession of gun on campus: due to the Gun Free Schools Act, possession of a gun on campus will result in an immediate suspension and recommendation for expulsion.
16. Possession, use or sale of drugs, drug paraphernalia or pseudo drugs.
17. Willful or malicious destruction of personal or school property.

Any of the above unacceptable behaviors will be handled through administrative action by the principal or designee with one or more of the following consequences

C. Discipline Consequences Include (6-8)

1. Counseling by Administration
2. Parent Notification/Parent conference
3. Campus Work Detail
4. Internal Room
5. Out-of-School Suspension
6. Recommendation for Expulsion
7. Lunch Detention
8. Detention from Physical Education
9. Morning School Detention

10. Suspension/Dismissal from extracurricular activities by Administrator or Sponsor/Coach.
11. Dixie Alternative Center
12. Restitution
13. Law Enforcement Contact
14. After 3 out of School Suspensions the Administrator may recommend expulsion
15. Special Assignments
16. Other Administrative action

D. Trespassing (6-8)

Parents and visitors are welcomed on the school campus with the following understanding.

- Visits to the classroom during school hours must have prior permission of the school administration.
- All visitors (including parents) **MUST** check in the office to obtain a badge before proceeding to the student's areas.

ANYONE ON CAMPUS WITHOUT A BADGE WILL BE CONSIDERED TRESPASSING AND DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.

E. Dress Code (6-8)

Students have the right to be able to learn without being distracted/offended by the clothing or appearance of others. Students have the responsibility to observe basic standards of cleanliness, modesty, good grooming and dress.

DRESS CODE – We take pride in the appearance of our students. The appearance or dress of students shall not be disruptive to the educational process. All students are expected to dress and groom themselves neatly in clothes that are suitable for learning. Dresses, skirts and shorts are to be appropriate length (longer than fingertips when arms are extended). Tank tops may not be worn. Hats, caps, and headgear are not to be on campus during school hours. Shoes must be worn at all times. Undergarments should not be exposed. Any tops or shirt must have a 3” shoulder seam.

Consequences for Dress Code Violations (6-8)

Students will be warned one time of dress code violation. On the second notification for violations of shorts being too short, the student will lose the right to wear shorts for the remainder of the school year. Student and parent will be notified with a letter. Other violations the student will modify or change their clothing. Students who violate the 3” shoulder seam rule will be offered a clean RRMS school shirt to wear for the day or may call a parent/guardian for clothes. If the violation continues other school punishment will be used.