

# **STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **RIDGEDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**School Year 2026-2027**

Board of Education:  
Cathy Hamilton, President  
Mandy Roberts, Vice President  
Eric Park  
Ed Roush  
Misty Hayden

Administrative Office:  
Dr. Erika Bower, Superintendent  
Tacy Courtwright, Treasurer



## Ridgedale Local Schools 2026-27

July						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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30	31					

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November						
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December						
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27	28	29	30	31		

Legend	
	First/Last Day
	Staff PD-No School
	No School
	Interims/End of Quarter
	Conferences-No School
	Evening Conferences

August 2026	
14/17	Teacher Work Day
17	Open House 4-6pm*
18	Students' First Day of School
21	First Day Kindergarten A-M
24	First Day Kindergarten N-Z
	First Day Preschool

September 2026	
7	Labor Day-No School
17	Q1 Interim
18	Staff PD - No School

October 2026	
14	Q1 Ends
15	Conferences 11am-7pm
	No School for Students
16	COTA Day-No School
21	Conferences 4-6:30pm

November 2026	
19	Q2 Interims
25	Conference Exchange Day-
	No School
26	Thanksgiving Break-
	No School

December 2026	
18	Q2 Ends
21-31	Winter Break-No School

January 2027	
1	New Years Day - No School
4	Staff PD - No School
5	School Resumes
18	MLK Day-No School

February 2027	
11	Q3 Interims
12	Staff PD - No School
15	Presidents' Day-No School

March 2027	
8	Conferences 11am-7pm
	-No School for Students
10	Conferences 4-6:30pm
12	End of Q3
26-29	Spring Break-No School
30	Staff PD - No School

April 2027	
15	Q4 Interims
16	Staff PD - No School

May 2027	
16	Graduation
20	Students' Last Day of School
	End of Q4
21	Teacher Work Day
31	Memorial Day-No School

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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31						

February						
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March						
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28	29	30	31			

April						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

May						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

	Student Days	Staff Days
Q1	40	44
Q2	42	43
Q3	45	48
Q4	45	48
Total	172	183

### Student Make Up Days (if needed)

5/21, 5/24, 5/25, 5/26, 2/27

### Staff Make Up Days (if needed)

5/24, 5/25, 5/26, 5/27, 2/28

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<b>NOTE:</b>	This Student/Parent Handbook is based in significant part on policies adopted by the Board of Education and Administrative Guidelines developed by the Superintendent. Those Board Policies and Administrative Guidelines are incorporated by reference into the provisions of this Handbook. The Policies and Administrative Guidelines are periodically updated in response to changes in the law and other circumstances. Therefore, there may have been changes to the documents reviewed in this Handbook. If you have questions or would like more information about a specific issue or document, contact your school principal or access the document on the District's website: <a href="http://ridgedale.k12.oh.us">ridgedale.k12.oh.us</a> by clicking on Menu, Administration, By-Laws And Policies and finding the specific policy or administrative guideline in the Table of Contents for that section.
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**Student/Parent Handbook**  
for  
**RIDGEDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

*Welcome to Ridgedale Elementary School. The staff and I are pleased to have you as a student and will do our best to help make your experience here as enjoyable and successful as you wish to make it. To help provide a safe and productive learning environment for students, staff, parents and visitors, the Board of Education publishes this updated Student/Parent Handbook annually to explain students' rights, responsibilities and consequences for misbehavior.*

*Parents are encouraged to take a few minutes to review and discuss the information in this Handbook with their school-age children. Teachers will also review this Handbook with students at the beginning of the school year.*

*Thank you for taking the time to become familiar with the important information in this Handbook. If you have any questions, please contact the principal.*

Angie Bricely, Principal 740-383-2020 ext 111 [abricely@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:abricely@ridgedaleschools.org)  
Michelle Warwick, Counselor 740-383-2020 ext 108 [mwarwick@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:mwarwick@ridgedaleschools.org)  
Trissa Schimpf, Home to School Liaison, 740-740-2020, ext. 110, [tschimpf@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:tschimpf@ridgedaleschools.org)  
Rachel Outcalt, Secretary 740-383-2020 ext 109 [routcalt@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:routcalt@ridgedaleschools.org)  
Erika Bower, Superintendent 740-383-2020 ext 101 [ebower@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:ebower@ridgedaleschools.org)

Adopted by the Board of Education on 6/25/2026  
Student Code of Conduct (including Student Discipline Code) adopted by the Board of Education on 6/25/2026.

## FOREWORD

This Student Handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that you and your parents may have during the school year. This handbook summarizes and references many of the official policies and administrative guidelines of the Board of Education and the District. To the extent that the handbook is ambiguous or conflicts with these policies and guidelines shall control. This handbook is effective immediately and supersedes any prior student handbook.

Because the handbook also contains information about student rights and responsibilities, each student is responsible for knowing its contents. Please take time to become familiar with this handbook and keep it available for you and your parents to use. It can be a valuable reference during the school year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstanding when questions arise. Should you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, contact your Principal who you will find listed in the Staff Directory section of the handbook.

This Handbook does not equate to an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student, but only reflects the current status of the Board's policies and the School's rules of May 19, 2025. If any of the policies or administrative guidelines referenced herein are revised after May 19, 2025, the language in the most current policy or administrative guideline prevails.

Copies of current Board policies and administrative guidelines are available from the building principal and on the District's website.

## MISSION OF THE SCHOOL

Ridgedale Local Schools exists to empower youth to meet their fullest potential through individualized, student-focused education to best prepare them as productive citizens in the community.

## EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of this District to provide an equal education opportunity for all students. The right of a student to be admitted to school and to participate fully in curricular, extracurricular, student services, recreational, or other programs or activities shall not be abridged or impaired based on the traits of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, Protected Classes) or any other characteristic protected by Federal or state civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as "Protected Characteristics") or other protected characteristics as well as place of residence within District boundaries, or social or economic background. (See Board Policy 2260 - Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity).

Any person who believes that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, Protected Classes) while at school or a school activity should immediately contact the School District's Compliance Officer (s):

Erika Bower  
 Superintendent  
 740.382.6065 ext. 101  
 3103 Hillman Ford Road  
 Morral, Ohio 43337  
[ebower@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:ebower@ridgedaleschools.org)

Tacy Courtwright  
 Treasurer  
 740.382.6065 ext. 102  
 3103 Hillman Ford Road  
 Morral, Ohio 43337  
[tcourtright@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:tcourtright@ridgedaleschools.org)

## SCHOOL DAY

School is in session from 8:00am-3:00pm.  
 Car drop off begins at 7:43am in front of the Elementary school building.  
 Student pick up begins at 3:00pm in front of the Elementary school building.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The School's rules and procedures are designed to allow students to be educated in a safe and orderly environment. Students can expect their rights to freedom of expression and association and to fair treatment as long as they respect those rights for their fellow students and staff. All students are expected to follow staff members' directions and to obey all school rules. Disciplinary procedures are designed to ensure due process before a student is removed because of the student's behavior.

Parents have the right to know how their child is succeeding in school and will be provided information on a regular basis and, as needed, when concerns arise. Many times, it will be the student's responsibility to deliver that information. If necessary, mail or hand delivery may be used to ensure contact. Parents are encouraged to build a two-way link with their child's teachers and support staff by informing the staff of suggestions or concerns that may help their child better accomplish the child's educational goals.

Students must arrive at school on time, prepared to learn and participate. If, for some reason, this is not possible, the parent/guardian must call the school office at 740-383-2020 ext 109 or email [routcalt@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:routcalt@ridgedaleschools.org) before 9:00am.

## STUDENT WELL BEING

Student safety is the responsibility of both students and staff. Staff members are familiar with emergency procedures such as evacuation procedures, fire and tornado drills, safety drills in the event of a terrorist or other violent attack, and accident reporting procedures. If a student is aware of any dangerous situation or accident, s/he must notify a staff person immediately.

State law requires that all students have an emergency medical authorization completed and signed by a parent or guardian on file in the School office.

Students with specific health care needs should deliver written notice about such needs, along with physician documentation, to the School office.

## INJURY AND ILLNESS

All injuries must be reported to a teacher or the office. If the injuries are minor, the student will be treated and may return to class. If medical attention is required, the office will follow the School's emergency procedures and attempt to make contact with the student's parents.

A student who becomes ill during the school day should request permission to go to the nurse's office. The school nurse or an appropriate adult in the office will determine whether the student should remain in school or go home. No student will be released from school without proper parental permission.

## **TITLE I – PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW**

In accordance with the requirement of Federal law, for each school receiving Title I funds, the Superintendent shall make sure that all parents of students in that school are notified that they may request, and the Board will provide the following information on the student's classroom teachers:

- A. Whether the teacher(s) have met the State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas they are teaching.
- B. Whether the teacher(s) is teaching under any emergency or provisional status in which the State requirements have been waived.
- C. The undergraduate major of the teacher(s) and the area of study and any certificates for any graduate degrees earned.
- D. The qualifications of any paraprofessionals providing services to their child(ren).
- E. In addition, the parents shall be provided:
  - 1. Information on the level of achievement of their child(ren) on the required State academic assessments.
  - 2. Timely notice if the student is assigned to a teacher who is not "highly qualified" as required, or if the student is taught for more than four (4) weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

## **SECTION I - GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **ENROLLING IN THE SCHOOL**

In general, State law requires students to enroll in the school district in which their parent or legal guardian resides unless enrolling under the District's open enrollment policy.

New students under the age of 18 must be enrolled by their parent or legal guardian. When enrolling, parents must provide copies of the following:

- A. a birth certificate or similar document
- B. court papers allocating parental rights and responsibilities, or custody (if appropriate)
- C. proof of residency
- D. proof of immunizations

Under certain circumstances, temporary enrollment may be permitted. In such cases, parents will be notified about documentation required to establish permanent enrollment.

Students enrolling from another school must have an official transcript from their previous school in order to have credits transferred. Kristy Garver, Administrative Secretary, will assist in obtaining the transcript, if not presented at the time of enrollment.

Students enrolling in the District following any period of home education will be placed in the appropriate grade level, without discrimination or prejudice.

Homeless students who meet the Federal definition of homeless may enroll and will be under the District Liaison Homeless Children with regard to enrollment procedures.

Students who meet the Federal definition of children and youth in foster care may enroll and will be under the direction of the Local Point of Contact with regard to enrollment procedures.

Foreign students and foreign-exchange students (from recognized and approved student programs) are eligible for admission on the same basis as other non-resident students.

New students eighteen (18) years of age or older are not required to be accompanied by a parent when enrolling. When residing with a parent, these students are encouraged to include the parents in the enrollment process. When conducting themselves in school, adult students have the responsibilities of both student and parent.

In addition, if a new student resides in the District with a grandparent and is the subject of a: (1) power of attorney designating the grandparent as the attorney-of-fact; or (2) a caretaker authorization affidavit executed by the grandparent that provides the grandparent with authority over the care, physical custody, and control of the child, including the ability to enroll the child in school, consent in all school related matters, and discuss with the District the child's educational progress, the student's grandparent may enroll the child in school on a tuition-free basis. However, in addition to the above referenced documents that are typically required for enrollment, the grandparent must provide the District with a duly executed and notarized copy of a power of attorney or caretaker authorization affidavit.

A student suspended or expelled by another public school in Ohio may be temporarily denied admission to the District's schools during the period of suspension or expulsion even if that student would otherwise be entitled to attend school in the District. Likewise, a student expelled or otherwise removed for disciplinary purposes from a public school in another state and the period of expulsion or removal has not expired may be temporarily denied admission to the District's schools during the period of expulsion or removal or until the expiration of the period of expulsion or removal which the student would have received in the District had the student committed the offense while enrolled in the District. Prior to denying admission, however, the Superintendent shall offer the student an opportunity for a hearing to review the circumstances of the suspension or expulsion and any other factors the Superintendent determines to be relevant.

If a student has been recently discharged or released from the custody of the Department of Youth Services (DYS) and is seeking admittance or re-admittance into the District, the student will not be admitted until the following records, which are required to be released by DYS to the Superintendent, have been received:

- A. an updated copy of the student's transcript;
- B. a report of the student's behavior while in DYS custody;
- C. the student's current IEP, if one has been developed for the child; and
- D. a summary of the instructional record of the child's behavior.

## **SCHEDULING AND ASSIGNMENT**

The Principal will assign each student to the appropriate classroom and program. Any questions or concerns about the assignment should be discussed with the Principal.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

No student may leave school prior to dismissal time without a parent or guardian either submitting a signed written request or coming to the School Office personally to request the release. No student will be released to a person other than a custodial parent(s) or guardian without a written permission note signed by the custodial parent or guardian.

#### WITHDRAWAL/TRANSFER FROM SCHOOL

No student under the age of eighteen (18) is allowed to withdraw from school without the written consent of his/her parents and in compliance with State law. A student who otherwise withdraws from school shall be reported to the juvenile judge of the county and to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles for suspension of their driver's license, if they are under the age of eighteen (18).

Parents must notify the Principal about plans to transfer their child to another school. School records, including disciplinary records of suspension and expulsion, will be transferred to the new school within five (5) days of the parents' notice or request. (See Board Policy 8330 - Student Records).

#### IMMUNIZATIONS

In order to safeguard the school community from the spread of certain communicable diseases and in recognition that prevention is a means of combating the spread of disease, the District requires all students to be immunized (or in the process of being immunized) against poliomyelitis, measles (aka rubeola), diphtheria, rubella (German measles), pertussis, tetanus, mumps, and other diseases legally designated in accordance with state statutes, unless specifically exempt for medical or other reasons. The Board further requires that students enrolled in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) be immunized against meningococcal disease. For the safety of all students, the school principal may remove a student from school or establish a deadline for meeting State requirements if a student does not have the necessary immunizations or authorized exemption. In the event of a chicken pox epidemic, the Superintendent may temporarily deny admission to a student otherwise exempted from the chicken pox immunization requirement. Any questions about immunizations or exemptions should be directed to the school nurse at 740-383-2020 ext 115.

#### EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

A complete Emergency Medical Authorization Form must be on file with the School in order for a student to participate in any activity off school grounds, including field trips, spectator trips, athletic and other extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities. The Emergency Medical Authorization form is provided at the time of enrollment and at the beginning of each school year on FinalForms.

#### USE OF MEDICATIONS

Before any prescribed medication or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, the Board shall require the written prescription and instructions from the child's physician accompanied by the written authorization of the parent. Both must authorize any self-medication by the student.

In those circumstances where a students must take prescribed medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- A. Parents should determine with the counsel of their child's prescriber whether the medication schedule can be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- B. The appropriate form must be filed with the elementary building principal before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during school hours or to use an inhaler to self-administer asthma medication. Such forms must be filed annually and as necessary for any change in the medication.
- C. All medications must be registered with the Nurse's Office and must be delivered to school in the original containers in which they were dispensed by the prescribing physician or licensed pharmacist, labeled with the date, the student's name, and the exact dosage to be administered.
- D. Medication that is brought to the office will be properly secured. Except as noted below, medication must be delivered to the Office by the student's parent or guardian or by another responsible adult at the parent or guardian's request. Except as noted below, students may not bring medication to school. Students may carry emergency medications for allergies and/or reactions, or asthma inhalers during school hours provided the student has written permission from a parent or physician and has submitted the proper forms. In the case of epinephrine autoinjectors ("epi pens"), in addition to written permission and submission of proper forms, the parent or student must provide a back up dose to the school nurse. Students are strictly prohibited from transferring emergency medication, epi pens, or inhalers to any other student for their use or possession. Medication may be conveyed to school directly by the parent or transported by transportation personnel (bus driver and/or bus aide) at parental request. This should be arranged in advance. If, for supportable reasons, the Principal wishes to discontinue the privilege of a student self-administering a medication, except for the possession and use of asthma inhalers, the parent(s) shall be notified of the decision in sufficient time for an alternative means of administration to be established.
- E. Any unused medication unclaimed by the parent will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is no longer to be administered or at the end of a school year.
- F. The parents shall have sole responsibility to instruct their child to take the medication at the scheduled time.
- G. The nurse will maintain a log noting the date and the time of day that administration is required. This log will be maintained along with the prescriber's written request and the parent's written release.

### **Nonprescribed (Over-the-Counter) Medications**

No staff member will dispense nonprescribed, over-the-counter (OTC) medication to any student without prior parent authorization. Parents may authorize administration of a nonprescribed medication on FinalForms. Physician authorization is not required in such cases.

If a student is found using or possessing a nonprescribed medication without parent authorization, the student will be brought to the School office while the student's parents are contacted for authorization. The medication will be confiscated until written authorization is received.

Any student who distributes medication of any kind or who is found in possession of unauthorized medication is in violation of the School's Code of Conduct and will be disciplined in accordance with the drug-use provision of the Code.

Students may possess a drug prescribed to the student to prevent the onset of a seizure or to alleviate the symptoms of a seizure, provided that the student has prior written approval from the student's physician, and if the student is a minor, the written approval of the student's parent or guardian (Form 5330 F - Authorization for the Possession and Use of Seizure Medications). Copies of the written approvals must be provided to the Principal and any school nurse assigned to the building.

Students shall be permitted to possess and self-administer over-the-counter topical sunscreen products while on school property or at a school-sponsored event.

A student may possess and use a metered dose inhaler or a dry powder inhaler to alleviate asthmatic symptoms or before exercise to prevent the onset of asthmatic symptoms, at school or at any activity, event, or program sponsored by or in which the student's school is a participant if the appropriate form is completed and on file in the nurses office.

A student who is authorized to possess and use a metered dose or dry powder inhaler may not transfer possession of any inhaler or other medication to any other student.

### **CONTROL OF CASUAL-CONTACT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Because a school has a high concentration of people, it is necessary to take specific measures when the health or safety of the group is at risk. The School's professional staff may remove or isolate a student who has been ill or has been exposed to a communicable disease or highly-transient pest, such as lice.

Specific communicable diseases include diphtheria, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, mumps, measles, rubella, and other conditions indicated by the Local and State Health Departments.

Any removal will be limited to the contagious period as specified in the School's administrative guidelines.

### **CONTROL OF NONCASUAL-CONTACT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The School District has an obligation to protect staff and students from non casual contact communicable diseases. When a noncasual-contact communicable disease is suspected, the student's health will be reviewed by a panel of resource people, including the County Health Department. The School will protect the privacy of the person affected and those in contact with the affected person. Students and staff will be permitted to remain in school unless there is definitive evidence to warrant exclusion.

Noncasual-contact communicable diseases include sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, ARC-AIDS Related Complex, HIV, Hepatitis B, and other diseases that may be specified by the State Board of Health.

As required by Federal law, parents will be requested to have their child's blood checked for HIV and HBV when the child bleeds at school and students or staff members are exposed to the blood. Any testing is subject to laws protecting confidentiality.

### **CONTROL OF BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS**

The School District seeks to provide a safe educational environment for students and take appropriate measures to protect those students who may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens in the school environment and/or during their participation in school-related activities. While the risks of students being exposed to blood-borne pathogens may be low, students must assume that all body fluids are potentially infectious and must take precaution to follow universal procedures in order to reduce such risks and minimize and/or prevent the potential for accidental infection.

Students may be exposed to blood-borne pathogens in situations, including, but not limited to the following:

- Engaging in activities with other students in the school environment (e.g., physical education class) where physical injuries or other actions that can cause bleeding or exposure to saliva and other body fluids may occur.
- Working with equipment in the school environment that can cause cuts or similar injuries that produce bleeding.
- Participating in extracurricular activities (i.e., athletic activities) where physical injuries or other actions that can cause bleeding may occur.

Whenever a student has contact with blood or other potentially infectious material, s/he must immediately notify his/her teacher, who will contact the School Nurse and assist the student in completing the requisite documents (e.g. Form 8453.02 F1 - Exposure Report).

The parents of a student who is exposed will be contacted immediately regarding the exposure and encouraged to have the student's blood tested for Hepatitis B and HIV either by his/her physician or Marion Public Health. The student's parents are encouraged to consult with the student's physician concerning any necessary post-exposure treatment.

The student's parent will also be asked to provide a copy of the test results and any post-exposure treatment for maintenance in the student's educational record in accordance with the Federal and State laws concerning confidentiality.

The parents of the student who caused the exposure will also be contacted immediately and advised to have the student's blood tested for Hepatitis B and HIV virus either in cooperation with his/her physician or Marion Public Health.

The student's parents will be asked to provide a copy of the test results for maintenance in the student's educational record in accordance with Federal and State laws concerning confidentiality.

The student's parents will be encouraged to allow the District to release their child's name to the exposed student's parents, in the event serious health issues are presented as a result of the exposure.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) prohibit discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. This protection applies not just to students, but to all individuals who have access to the District's programs and facilities.

The laws define a person with a disability as anyone who:

- A. Has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;

- B. Has a record of such an impairment; or
- C. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

The District has specific responsibilities under these two laws, which include identifying, reviewing and, if the child is determined to be eligible, affording access to appropriate educational accommodation.

Additionally, in accordance with State and Federal mandates, the District seeks out, assesses and appropriately services students with disabilities. Staff members use a comprehensive child study process to systematically screen, assess and, if appropriate, place students in special education and related services. Students are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the "least restrictive environment."

A student can access special education and related services through the proper evaluation procedures. Parent involvement in this procedure is important and required by Federal (IDEIA), A.D.A. Section 504 and State law. Contact Angie Murphy at 740-383-2020 or [amurphy@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:amurphy@ridgedaleschools.org) to inquire about evaluation procedures, programs, and services.

The District is committed to identifying, evaluating, and providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students within its jurisdiction who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities.

#### HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students will be provided with a free and appropriate public education in the same manner as other students served by the District. Homeless students are eligible to receive transportation services, participate in educational programs for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, participate in gifted and talented programs, and receive meals under school nutrition programs. Homeless students will not be denied enrollment based on lack of proof of residency. For additional information contact Angie Murphy, the liaison for Homeless Students, at 740-383-2020 or [amurphy@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:amurphy@ridgedaleschools.org).

#### CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Students who meet the Federal definition of "in foster care", including those who are awaiting foster care placement, will be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the same manner as all other students of the District. For additional information see Policy 5111.03 - Children and Youth in Foster Care.

#### PROTECTION AND PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS

The School District maintains many student records including both directory information and confidential information.

Directory information includes: student personally identifiable information (PII) but is not limited to: the student's name, the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or student's family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the District reasonably believes knows the identify of the student to whom the education record relates.

Directory information can be provided upon request to any individual, other than a for-profit organization, even without the written consent of a parent. Parents may refuse to allow the Board to disclose any or all “directory information” upon written notification to the Board. For further information about the items included within the category of directory information and instructions on how to prohibit its release, you may consult the Board’s annual *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) notice which can be found on the website.

Other than directory information, access to all other students' records is protected by FERPA and Ohio Law. Except in limited circumstances as specifically defined in State and Federal law, the School District is prohibited from releasing confidential education records to any outside individual or organization without the prior written consent of the parents, or the adult student, as well as those individuals who have matriculated and entered a postsecondary educational institution at any age. The Board will provide access or release directory information to armed forces recruiters unless the parent or student requests that prior written consent be obtained. See FORM 8330 F13.

Confidential records include test scores, psychological reports, behavioral data, disciplinary records, and communications with family and outside providers.

Students and parents have the right to review and receive copies of all educational records. Costs for copies of records may be charged to the parent. To review student records, please provide a written notice identifying requested student records to Rachel Outcalt. You will be given an appointment with the appropriate person to answer any questions and to review the requested student records.

Parents and adult students have the right to amend a student record when they believe that any of the information contained in the record is inaccurate, misleading or violates the student’s privacy. A parent or adult student must request the amendment of a student record in writing and if the request is denied, the parent or adult student will be informed of their right to a hearing on the matter.

Consistent with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), no student shall be required, as a part of the school program or the District’s curriculum, without prior written consent of the student (if an adult, or an emancipated minor) or, if an unemancipated minor, the student’s parents, to submit to or participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- A. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parents;
- B. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
- C. sex behavior or attitudes;
- D. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
- E. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- F. legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- G. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parents; or
- H. income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such a program).

Consistent with the PPRA and Board policy, parents may inspect any materials used in conjunction with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation. Please contact the building secretary to inspect such materials.

Further, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey or evaluation created by a third party before the survey/evaluation is administered or distributed by the school to the student. The parent will have access to the survey/evaluation within a reasonable period of time after the request is received by the principal.

The Superintendent will notify parents of students in the District, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when the following activities are scheduled or expected to be scheduled:

- A. activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose; and
- B. the administration of any survey by a third party that contains one (1) or more of the items described in A through H above.

The Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education administers both FERPA and PPRA. Parents and/or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington D.C. 20202-4605  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco)

Informal inquiries may be sent to the Family Policy Compliance Office via the following email addresses: [FERPA@ED.gov](mailto:FERPA@ED.gov); and [PPRA@ED.gov](mailto:PPRA@ED.gov)

### **Disposal of Records of Students with Disabilities (or Disabled Students)**

If a student is identified as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Custodian of Records (COR) shall:

- A. maintain the student's education records, which includes those records identified in this guideline and information and/or data relevant to the identification, evaluation, and/or placement of students in accordance with the IDEIA, Section 504, or other applicable State law and regulations, for five (5) years after termination of special education programs, services, and/or graduation; and
- B. only destroy such education records after notifying the parents/eligible students that the information is no longer needed to provide educational services and will be destroyed.

The COR should remind them that the records may be needed by the student or the parents for Social Security benefits or other purposes (see Form 8330 F8).

The applicable school record on a disabled student shall be retained permanently in the same manner as the school record for a non-disabled student.

### **Responsibility**

The COR shall be the building director who may delegate certain responsibilities to the school secretary. The COR is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of directory information, if the parents or eligible student have so requested, and other personally identifiable information in the education records. The COR is responsible for the implementation of this Board's policies and procedures regarding confidentiality, including informing all personnel in this District who collect, maintain, use or otherwise have access to student records of this Board's policies and procedures on confidentiality.

The District's Records Officer (DRO) shall prepare an annual notice to parents/eligible students that informs them of their rights to (see Form 8330 F9):

- A. inspect and review the student's education records;
- B. request amendment to the records if the parent or eligible student believes the information to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
- C. limit the disclosure of personally identifiable information defined as directory information within Policy 8330 or to such other disclosures not required by law;
- D. request a hearing if the Board refuses to amend records believed by the parent or eligible student to be misleading or inaccurate and to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if the parent/eligible student is dissatisfied with the results of the hearing;
- E. obtain a copy of the Board's policy on student records.

The notice may be in the form of a section of the District's newsletter and/or the student handbooks (see Form 8330 F9).

#### STUDENT FEES AND FINES

Students will be provided necessary textbooks for courses of instruction without cost. In accordance with State law, Ridgedale charges specific fees for the following activities and materials used in the course of instruction: 5th grade band book.

Charges may also be imposed for loss, damage or destruction of school apparatus, equipment, musical instruments, library materials, textbooks, chromebooks and for damage to school buildings or property. Students using school property and equipment can be fined for excessive wear and abuse of the property and equipment.

Classroom fees may be waived in situations where there is financial hardship.

Students can avoid late fines by promptly returning borrowed materials.

Failure to pay fines, fees, or charges may result in the withholding of grades and credits.

#### STUDENT FUND-RAISING

Students participating in school-sponsored groups and activities may solicit funds from other students, staff members, and members of the community in accordance with school guidelines. The following general rules apply to all fund-raisers:

Crowdfunding activities are governed by Policy and Administrative Guideline 6605.

Students involved in the fund-raiser must not interfere with students participating in other activities when soliciting funds.

Students may not participate in a fund-raising activity for a group in which they are not members without the approval of the students' counselor.

Students may not participate in fund-raising activities off school property without proper supervision by approved staff or other adults.

Students may not engage in house-to-house canvassing for any fundraising activity.

Students may not participate in a fund-raising activity conducted by a parent group, booster club, or community organization on school property without the approval of the Principal.

Students may not sell any item or service in school without the prior approval of the Principal. Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

## STUDENT VALUABLES/ITEMS

Students should not bring personal items to school. Items such as jewelry, expensive clothing, electronic equipment, and the like, are tempting targets for theft and extortion. The School is not liable for any loss or damage to personal valuables/items. Personal items/valuables are not permitted in classrooms, on the playground, or in the building.

## MEAL SERVICE

The Board believes the development of healthy behaviors and habits with regard to eating cannot be accomplished by the District alone. It will be necessary for the school staff, in addition to parents and the public at large, to be involved in a community-wide effort to promote, support, and model such healthy behaviors and habits. Parents interested in being involved should contact Mrs. Tilley, Food Services Director.

The School participates in the National School Lunch Program and makes lunches available to students for a fee of \$2.75. Extra entree items are available for \$1.50 for grades 2-5. Students may also bring their own lunch to school to be eaten in the School's cafeteria. No student may leave school premises during the lunch period.

For information regarding meal charging procedures, see Policy 8500 and AG 8500D.

Applications for the School's Free and Reduced-Priced Meal program are available in the office and can also be found on our website [ridgedale.k12.oh.us](http://ridgedale.k12.oh.us) under Menu, Parent Links, Free and Reduced Application. If a student does not receive an application form and believes s/he is eligible, contact the office at 740-383-2020 ext 109.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

- A. All visitors must report to the office when they arrive at school and sign in and out of the building on the sign in/sign out computer.
- B. All visitors are given and required to wear a building pass while they are in the building.
- C. Staff are expected to question people in the building whom they do not recognize and who are not wearing a building pass, and to question people who are "hanging around" the building after hours.
- D. Students and staff are expected to immediately report to a teacher or administrator any suspicious behavior or situation that makes them uncomfortable.

- E. All exterior doors are to be locked during the school day, there should never be a door propped open during school hours.
- F. Portions of the building that will not be needed after the regular school days are closed off.
- G. All District employees are to wear photo-identification badges while in District schools and offices or on District property.

Staff, students, and visitors who intentionally circumvent, interfere with, or disable security measures, systems, and/or devices may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment for an employee, suspension, or expulsion from work or school for a student, and may also face criminal charges.

#### **FIRE, TORNADO, AND SAFETY DRILLS**

The School complies with all fire safety laws and will conduct fire drills in accordance with State law. The School conducts tornado drills during the tornado season following procedures prescribed by the State. The School conducts fire drills each month. Teachers will provide specific instructions on how to proceed in the case of fire or tornado and will oversee the safe, prompt, and orderly evacuation of the building in such cases.

Safety drills will be conducted once per school year. Teachers will provide specific instruction on the appropriate procedures to follow in situations where students must be secured in their building rather than evacuated. These situations can include a terrorist threat, a person in possession of a deadly weapon on school property, or other acts of violence.

#### **EMERGENCY CLOSING AND DELAYS**

If the School must be closed or the opening delayed because of inclement weather or other conditions, the School will provide notice of such closing or delay by sending an All Call, text, and email to student contacts.

Information concerning school closings or delays can also be found on the School's web page at [ridgedale.k12.oh.us](http://ridgedale.k12.oh.us).

Parents/guardians will be notified of school closings or delays via a pre-recorded telephone message delivered to the phone number on file.

Parents and students are responsible for knowing about emergency closings and delays.

#### **PREPAREDNESS FOR TOXIC AND ASBESTOS HAZARDS**

The School is concerned for the safety of students and attempts to comply with all Federal and State Laws and Regulations to protect students from hazards that may result from industrial accidents beyond the control of school officials or from the presence of asbestos materials used in previous construction. A copy of the School District's *Preparedness for Toxic Hazard and Asbestos Hazard Policy* and asbestos management plan is available for inspection at the Board office upon request.

## VISITORS

Visitors, particularly parents, are welcome at the School. Visitors must report to the office upon entering the School to sign in and obtain a pass. Any visitor found in the building without signing in or wearing a pass shall be reported to the Principal. If a person wishes to confer with a member of the staff, s/he should call for an appointment prior to coming to the School in order to schedule a mutually convenient meeting time.

Students may not bring visitors to school without prior written permission from the Principal.

## USE OF THE LIBRARY

The library is available to students during their assigned library time. Students may check out 1-3 books depending on the students grade level. Books may be checked out for a period of two (2) weeks. To check out any other materials, contact the librarian at ext 317.

Monthly notices will be sent home with students who have overdue books. If books are damaged or lost there may be a fee to replace the damaged or lost item.

## USE OF SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Students must receive teacher permission before using any equipment or materials in the classroom. Students must seek permission from the Principal prior to using any other school equipment or facility. Students are responsible for the proper use and protection of any equipment or facility they are permitted to use.

## RESTROOMS, LOCKER ROOMS, SHOWER ROOMS, AND CHANGING ROOMS

Restrooms, locker rooms, shower rooms, and changing rooms are for the exclusive use of the male or female biological sex of each student in a school building or facility used by the school for a school sponsored activity.

## LOST AND FOUND

The lost and found area is **outside** the main office. Students who have lost items should check there and may retrieve their items if they give a proper description. Unclaimed items will be given to charity at the end of each quarter.

## USE OF OFFICE TELEPHONES

Office telephones may not be used for personal calls. Except in an emergency, students will not be called to the office to receive a telephone call.

## USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

For purposes of this policy, "personal communication device" (PCD) includes computers, tablets (e.g., iPad-like devices), electronic readers ("e-readers"; e.g., Kindle-like devices), cell phones, smartphones (e.g., iPhones, Android devices, Windows Mobile devices, etc.), and/or other web-enabled devices of any type.

While students may possess PCDs in school, on school property, during after school activities (e.g., extra-curricular activities) and at school-related functions, they must be powered completely off (i.e., not just placed into vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight during school hour and during after school activities (e.g., extra-curricular activities).

Students may not use PCDs on school property or at a school-sponsored activity to access and/or view Internet web sites that are otherwise blocked to students at school.

Students may use PCDs while riding to and from school on a school bus or other Board-provided vehicles at the discretion of the bus driver, classroom teacher, or sponsor/advisor/coach. Distracting behavior that creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated.

During after school activities, PCDs shall be powered completely off (not just placed into vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight when directed by the administrator or sponsor.

Under certain circumstances, a student may keep his/her PCD "On" with prior approval from the Principal.

Except as authorized by a teacher, administrator or IEP team, students are prohibited from using PCDs during the school day, including while off-campus on a field trip, to capture, record and/or transmit the words or sounds (i.e., audio) and/or images (i.e., pictures/video) of any student, staff member or other person. Using a PCD to capture, record and/or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without proper consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted. Students who violate this provision and/or use a PCD to violate the privacy rights of another person may have their PCD confiscated. If the violation involves potentially illegal activity, the confiscated-PCD may be turned over to law enforcement.

The use of PCDs in classrooms, locker rooms, shower facilities, and rest/bathrooms is prohibited.

Students are expressly prohibited from using covert means to listen-in or make a recording (audio or video) of any meeting or activity at school. This includes placing recording devices, or other devices with one- or two-way audio communication technology (i.e., technology that allows a person off-site to listen to live conversations and sounds taking place in the location where the device is located), within a student's book bag or on the student's person without express written consent of the Superintendent. Any requests to place a recording device or other device with one- or two-way audio communication technology within a student's book bag or on a student's person shall be submitted, in writing, to the Principal. The District representative shall notify the parent(s), in writing, whether such request is denied or granted within five (5) days.

Students shall have no expectation of confidentiality with respect to their use of PCDs on school premises/property.

Students may not use a PCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. See Policy 5517.01 - Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior. In particular, students are prohibited from using PCDs to: (1) transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation/transgender identity), disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs; and (2) engage in "sexting" - i.e., sending, receiving, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are also prohibited from using a PCD to capture, record, and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using PCDs to receive such information.

Possession of a PCD by a student at school during school hours is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise abuses this privilege.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the PCD. The Principal will also refer the matter to law enforcement or child services if the violation involves an illegal activity (e.g., child pornography, sexting). Discipline will be imposed on an escalating scale ranging from a warning to an expulsion based on the number of previous violations and/or the nature of or circumstances surrounding a particular violation. If the PCD is confiscated, it will be released/returned to the student's parent/guardian after the student complies with any other disciplinary consequences that are imposed, unless the violation involves potentially illegal activity in which case the PCD may be turned-over to law enforcement. A confiscated device will be marked in a removable manner with the student's name and held in a secure location in the building's central office until it is retrieved by the parent/guardian or turned-over to law enforcement. School officials will not search or otherwise tamper with PCDs in District custody unless they reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of the law or other school rules. Any search will be conducted in accordance with Policy 5771 - Search and Seizure. If multiple offenses occur, a student may lose his/her privilege to bring a PCD to school for a designated length of time or on a permanent basis.

A person who discovers a student using a PCD, recording device, or other device with one- or two-way audio communication technology in violation of this policy is required to report the violation to the Principal.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their PCDs. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or damage to, or misuse or unauthorized use of, PCDs brought onto its property.

Parents/Guardians are advised that the best way to get in touch with their child during the school day is by calling the school office.

“Sexting” is prohibited at any time on school property or at school functions. Sexting is the electronic transmission of sexual messages or pictures, usually through cell phone text messaging. Such conduct not only is potentially dangerous for the involved students, but can lead to unwanted exposure of the messages and images to others, and could result in criminal violations related to the transmission or possession of child pornography. Such conduct will be subject to discipline and possible confiscation of the PCD.

## **ADVERTISING OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES**

Students may not post announcements or advertisements for outside activities without receiving prior approval from the Principal. The Principal will attempt to respond to a request for approval within 1 school day of its receipt.

The School has a television screen in the main hallway outside of the office that may be used for posting notices after receiving permission from the Principal.

## **SECTION II - ACADEMICS**

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are academic activities that are held off school grounds. There are also other trips that are part of the School's co-curricular and extracurricular program. No minor student may participate in any school-sponsored trip without parent/guardian consent and a current emergency medical form on file in the office. Medications normally administered at school will be administered while on field trips. The Student Code of Conduct applies to all field trips.

Attendance rules apply to all field trips.

While the district encourages students to participate in field trips, alternative assignments will be provided for any student whose parent does not give permission for the student to attend.

Students who violate school rules may lose the privilege to go on field trips.

## **GRADES**

Ridgedale Elementary has a standard grading procedure, as well as additional notations that indicate work in progress or incomplete work. Grades indicate the extent to which the student has acquired and demonstrated the necessary learning. In general, students are assigned grades based upon test results, homework, projects, and classroom participation. Each teacher may place a different emphasis on these areas when determining a grade and will inform the students at the beginning of the course. If a student is not sure how his/her grade will be determined, s/he should ask the teacher.

The School applies the following grading system:

90 to 100% = M = Meeting standards

75-89% = AP = Approaching standards

60-74% = LP = Limited Progress toward standards

59% below = NP = No Progress toward standards

### **Grading Periods**

Students will receive a report card at the end of each 9 week period indicating their grades for each course of study for that portion of the academic term.

When a student appears to be at risk of failure, reasonable efforts will be made to notify the parents so they can talk with the teacher about what actions can be taken to improve poor grades.

## **PROMOTION, ACCELERATION, AND RETENTION**

Promotion to the next grade is based on the following criteria:

- A. current level of achievement based on instructional objectives and mandated requirements for the current grade
- B. potential for success at the next level
- C. emotional, physical, and/or social maturity necessary for a successful learning experience in the next grade

A student may be accelerated (either by whole-grade or by subject area) when his/her performance and measured ability significantly exceeds that of his/her grade level peers. Students can be nominated for acceleration by teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and the student him/herself. Decisions regarding acceleration are based on the following criteria:

- A. achievement of grade/course objective and any applicable State-mandated requirements for the grade/course in which the student is currently and any grade(s)/course(s) in the student will skip
- B. achievement of instructional objectives for the present grade/course as well as the succeeding one(s)
- C. potential for success in the accelerated placement based on sufficient proficiency at current level
- D. social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for success in an accelerated placement

A student may be retained at his/her current grade level based on the following criteria:

- A. failure to demonstrate proficiency in mathematics and reading
- B. failure to achieve the instructional objectives at the current grade level that are requisite for success at the next grade level
- C. scoring at the below basic level on any State-mandated assessment test

A student will be retained if s/he is truant (absent without excuse) for more than ten percent (10%) of the required attendance days of the current school year AND has failed two (2) or more of the required curriculum subject areas in the current grade.

Even if s/he falls in the preceding category, a student may be promoted if the Principal and the teachers of the classes that the student failed agree that the student is academically prepared to be promoted.

No student will be promoted to the fourth grade if s/he attained a score in the range designated by O.R.C. 3310.0710 (A)(3) on the State mandated assessment except in accordance with the provisions of Policy 2623.02 - Third Grade Reading Guarantee or in accordance with State law.

A fourth or fifth grade student will not be promoted to the next grade level if the student scored at the below basic level on any State-mandated assessment test.

## RECOGNITION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Students who display significant achievements during the course of the year are recognized for their accomplishments. Areas that may merit recognition include, but are not limited to, academics, athletics, performing arts, citizenship, and volunteerism. Recognition for such activities is initiated by the staff.

### **Honor Roll**

Honor Roll consists of obtaining all A's & B's for the 9 weeks grading period.

### **Special Awards**

The School will also recognize students for various achievements as determined by staff at the end of the academic year. In addition to these, the following specific awards are awarded:

- GoBuck\$ - awarded for attendance (missing less than 16.5 hours per quarter) in grades K - 5 and awarded for achievement (making Honor Roll) in grades 2 - 5. This program is offered through a partnership with The Ohio State University Marion. Awards are tallied for each quarter and distributed at the end of the year.
- Presidential Awards for Educational Excellence - Awarded to 5th grade students that meet the following criteria:
  - 3.5 GPA or higher for 4th grade and Quarters 1 - 3 in 5th Grade
  - 90th Percentile on nationally normed assessment (Winter or Spring iReady) OR recommendations from Teacher plus one staff member to reflect the following: outstanding achievement such as English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, foreign language, and any other courses that reflect the core curriculum. This judgement is to be supported by tangible evidence that consists of either results on teacher-made tests, portfolio assessment, or special projects. The second recommendation from a school staff member may address the following: involvement in community service or co-curricular activities including tutoring other students and/or demonstration of creativity and achievement in visual and performing arts.
- Presidential Awards for Educational Achievement- Awarded to 5th grade students that show outstanding educational growth, improvement, commitment or intellectual development in their academic subjects but not meet the criteria for Educational Excellence Award. This award is based on teacher nominations each year.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework may be assigned. Student grades will reflect the completion of all work, including outside assignments. Homework is also part of the student's preparation for the assessment tests and graduation.

### **STUDENT TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE AND SAFETY**

The District provides Internet services to its students. The District's Internet system has a limited educational purpose, and has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. Student use of the District's computers, network and Internet services/connection ("Network") are governed by the following principles and guidelines, and the Student Code of Conduct. Users have a limited privacy expectation in the content of their personal files and records of their online activity while on the Network.

Parents/guardians and students are advised that the Board may not be able to technologically limit access through the Board's Internet connection to only those services that have been authorized for the purpose of instruction, study and research related to the curriculum. Because it serves as a gateway to any publicly available file server in the world, the Internet opens classrooms and students to electronic information resources that have not been screened by educators for use by students of various ages. The District utilizes a Technology Protection Measure, which is a specific technology that will protect against (e.g., filter or block) access to visual displays/depictions that are obscene, pornographic, and materials that are harmful to minors, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act. At the discretion of the Board or the Superintendent, the Technology Protection Measure may be configured to protect against access to other material considered inappropriate for students to access.

The District further utilizes software and/or hardware to monitor online activity of students to restrict access to child pornography and other material that is obscene, objectionable, inappropriate and/or harmful

to minors. Nevertheless, parents/guardians are advised that a determined user may be able to gain access to services on the Internet that are not authorized for educational purposes. In fact, it is impossible to guarantee students will not gain access through the Internet to information and communications that they and/or their parents/guardians may find inappropriate, offensive, objectionable or controversial. Parents/Guardians assume risks by consenting to allow their child to participate in the use of the Internet. Parents/Guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using the Internet. The District supports and respects each family's right to decide whether to apply for independent student access to the Internet.

Students are encouraged to use the "Network" for educational purposes. Use of the Network is a privilege, not a right. When using the Network, students must conduct themselves in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Students are responsible for good behavior on the District's computers/network and the Internet just as they are in classrooms, school hallways, and other school premises and school sponsored events. Communications on the Internet are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communication apply. Unauthorized or inappropriate use of the Network, including any violation of these rules, may result in cancellation of the privilege, disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, and/or civil or criminal liability. Prior to accessing the Network, students must sign the Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Agreement. Parent/guardian permission is required for minors. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss their values with their children so that students can make decisions regarding their use of the Network that is in accord with their personal and family values, in addition to the Board's standards.

Students must complete a mandatory training session/program regarding the appropriate use of technology and online safety and security as specified in Policy 7540.03 – Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety before being permitted to access the Network and/or being assigned an email address.

Smooth operation of the Network relies upon users adhering to the following guidelines. The guidelines outlined below are not exhaustive but are provided so that users are aware of their general responsibilities.

- A. Students are responsible for their behavior and communication on the Network.
- B. Students may only access the Network by using their assigned Network account. Use of another person's account/address/password is prohibited. Students may not allow other users to utilize their account/address/password. Students may not go beyond their authorized access.
- C. Students may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, data or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the Network.
- D. Students may not use the Network to engage in "hacking" or other illegal activities (e.g., software pirating; intellectual property violations; engaging in slander, libel, or harassment; threatening the life or safety of another; stalking; transmission of obscene materials or child pornography; fraud; sale of illegal substances and goods).
- E. Transmission of any material in violation of any State or Federal law or regulation, or Board policy is prohibited.
- F. Any use of the Network for commercial purposes (e.g., purchasing or offering for sale personal products or services by students), advertising, or political lobbying is prohibited. This provision shall not limit the use of the Network by students for the purpose of communicating with elected representatives or expressing views on political issues.

- G. Use of the Network to engage in cyberbullying is prohibited. "Cyberbullying" involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal Web sites or MySpace accounts, and defamatory online personal polling Websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. For further information on cyberbullying, visit <http://www.cyberbullying.ca>.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. posting slurs or rumors or other disparaging remarks about a student or school staff member on a web site or on weblog;
2. sending e-mail or instant messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to drive up the victim's cell phone bill;
3. using a camera phone to take and send embarrassing photographs/recordings of students or school staff members or post these images on video sharing sites such as YouTube;
4. posting misleading or fake photographs of students or school staff members on web sites.

To the extent permitted by the First Amendment, instances of cyberbullying off school grounds that disrupt the school environment or interfere with the learning process will be considered violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

- H. Students are expected to abide by the following generally-accepted rules of network etiquette:

1. Be polite, courteous, and respectful in your messages to others. Use language appropriate to school situations in any communications made through the Network. Do not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, sexually explicit, defamatory, threatening, abusive or disrespectful language in communications through the Network (including, but not limited to, public messages, private messages, and material posted on web pages).
2. Do not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
3. Do not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a student is told by a person to stop sending him/her messages, the student must stop.
4. Do not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or a danger of disruption.
5. Never reveal names, addresses, phone numbers, or passwords of yourself or other students, family members, teachers, administrators, or other staff members while communicating on the Internet. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, disclosing personal identification information on commercial web sites.
6. Do not transmit pictures or other information that could be used to establish your identity without prior approval of a teacher.

7. Never agree to get together with someone you "meet" on-line without parent approval and participation.
  8. Check email frequently and diligently delete old mail on a regular basis from the personal mail directory to avoid excessive use of the electronic mail disk space.
  9. Students should promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable, especially any email that contains pornography. Students should not delete such messages until instructed to do so by a staff member.
- 
- I. Malicious use of the Network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computer system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited. Students may not use the Network in such a way that would disrupt its use by others. Students must avoid intentionally wasting limited resources. Students may not bypass or attempt to bypass the District's Technology Protection Measure. Students must immediately notify the teacher or principal if they identify a possible security problem. Students should not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an unlawful attempt to gain access.
  - J. All communications and information accessible via the Internet should be assumed to be private property (i.e. copyrighted and/or trademarked). All copyright issues regarding software, information, and attributions/acknowledgement of authorship must be respected. Rules against plagiarism will be enforced.
  - K. Downloading of information onto the Board's hard drives is prohibited, without prior approval from the Principal. If a student transfers files from information services and electronic bulletin board services, the student must check the file with a virus-detection program before opening the file for use. Only public domain software may be downloaded. If a student transfers a file or software program that infects the Network with a virus and causes damage, the student will be liable for any and all repair costs to make the Network once again fully operational.
  - L. Students must secure prior approval from a teacher or the principal before joining a Listserv (electronic mailing lists) and should not post personal messages on bulletin boards or "Listservs."
  - M. Students are prohibited from accessing or participating in online "chat rooms" or other forms of direct electronic communication (e.g., instant messaging or other than e-mail) without prior approval from a teacher or the principal. All such authorized communications must comply with these guidelines.
  - N. Privacy in communication over the Internet and the Network is not guaranteed. In order to verify compliance with these guidelines, the Board reserves the right to monitor, review, and inspect any directories, files and/or messages residing on or sent using the Network. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
  - O. Use of the Internet and any information procured from the Internet is at the student's own risk. The Board makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the Network will be error-free or without defect. The Board is not responsible for any damage a user may suffer, including, but not limited to, loss of data, service interruptions, or exposure to inappropriate material or

people. The Board is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet. Information (including text, graphics, audio, video, etc.) from Internet sources used in student papers, reports, and projects should be cited the same as references to printed materials. The Board will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the Network. Students or parents/guardians of students will indemnify and hold the Board harmless from any losses sustained as the result of misuse of the Network by the student. Use of the Network by students will be limited to those students whose parents/guardians have signed a release of claims for damages against the Board.

- P. File-sharing is strictly prohibited. Students are prohibited from downloading and/or installing file-sharing software or programs on the Network.
- Q. Students may not establish or access web-based e-mail accounts on commercial services through the Network (e.g., Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo mail, etc.).
- R. Since there is no central authority on the Internet, each site is responsible for its own users. Complaints received from other sites regarding any of the District's users will be fully investigated and disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
- S. Preservation of Resources and Priorities of Use: Computer resources are limited. Because space on disk drives and bandwidth across the lines which connect the Network (both internally and externally) are limited, neither programs nor information may be stored on the system without the permission of the Technology Specialist. Each student is permitted reasonable space to store email, web, and personal files. The Board reserves the right to require the purging of files in order to regain disk space. Students who require access to the Network for class-or instruction related activities have priority over other users. Students not using the Network for class-related activities may be "bumped" by any student requiring access for class-or instruction related purposes. The following hierarchy will prevail in governing access to the Network:
  - 1. Class work, assigned and supervised by a staff member.
  - 2. Class work, specifically assigned but independently conducted.
  - 3. Personal correspondence (checking, composing, and sending email).
  - 4. Training (use of such programs as keyboarding tutors, etc.)
  - 5. Personal discovery ("surfing the Internet").
  - 6. Other uses - access to resources for "other uses" may be further limited during the school day at the discretion of the Principal or Technology Specialist.
- U. Game playing is not permitted at any time.

## TRANSMISSION OF RECORDS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Parents/Guardians have to complete and return to the District Form 8330 F4a in order to authorize the staff to communicate with the parent/guardian via facsimile and/or electronic mail ("email"). Parents/guardians who elect to communicate with a staff member via e-mail are required to keep the District informed of any changes to their email address.

## **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)**

### **Introduction**

Ridgedale Local School District recognizes that protecting student and staff data privacy and security is a critical responsibility. The district collects and maintains confidential information related to students, staff, and operations that must be protected in accordance with federal and state laws.

These Technology Governance Guidelines establish clear expectations, responsibilities, and procedures for all staff to ensure that student data is handled securely, used appropriately, and protected from unauthorized access or disclosure.

These guidelines support compliance with laws including FERPA, COPPA, PPRA, CIPA, and Ohio SB29. These guidelines also support and operationalize Board-adopted policies related to data privacy, technology use, and information security.

## **Purpose**

- Define staff responsibilities related to student data privacy and security
- Establish procedures for handling and protecting data
- Ensure consistent and secure use of technology systems
- Promote transparency in how student data is collected and used

## **Scope**

These guidelines apply to all district employees, administrators, students, volunteers, and any individual with access to district data or systems, including contracted third parties and agents of the district.

## **Data Classification and Regulatory Alignment**

Ridgedale Local School District recognizes that data exists in many forms and must be protected accordingly.

Data and information include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal communication (in-person, phone, or other technologies)
- Printed or hard copy documents
- Digital communications (email, text, chat, social media, etc.)
- Data stored or processed on devices (servers, computers, tablets, mobile devices)
- Data stored on internal systems, external media, or cloud-based services

To ensure appropriate protection, data is classified based on sensitivity.

## **Data Classification Levels**

### **Personally Identifiable Information (PII)**

Information that can identify an individual directly or indirectly, including but not limited to:

- Name, date of birth, student ID
- Social Security number
- Educational, medical, financial, or employment records

### **Confidential Information**

Sensitive information requiring strict protection, including:

- Student education records
- Personnel records
- Financial data
- System credentials and access information

## **Internal Information**

Information intended for internal district use only. Unauthorized disclosure may violate:

- Legal requirements
- Contractual obligations
- Copyright protections

## **Directory Information**

Information that may be disclosed under FERPA unless a parent/guardian opts out, including:

- Student name
- Date and place of birth
- Grade level
- Participation in activities and athletics

## **Public Information**

Information approved for public release, such as:

- District communications
- Public reports
- Approved website content

## **Regulatory Compliance**

Ridgedale Local School District complies with all applicable federal and state laws governing data privacy and security. These regulations guide how data is collected, used, shared, and protected.

### **FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)**

Protects the privacy of student education records and requires parental consent for disclosure, with limited exceptions.

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

### **CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act)**

Requires the district to implement internet filtering and monitoring to protect students from harmful online content.

<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>

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

Restricts the collection of personal information from students under 13 and requires parental consent for online services.

<https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule>

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

Provides parents with rights regarding surveys and the collection of student information for certain purposes.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ppra/parents.html>

## **HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)**

Applies to the protection of health-related information when applicable.

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/>

## **PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard)**

Applies to the secure handling of payment card data within district operations.

<http://www.pcisecuritystandards.org/>

The district communicates data privacy practices, parent rights, and the purpose of data collection through annual notices, district policies, and information available on the district website.

# **Staff Responsibilities and Data Handling Expectations**

All Ridgedale Local School District staff are expected to act as responsible stewards of district data. Staff are accountable for maintaining the confidentiality, integrity, and security of all data accessed, created, or stored as part of their job responsibilities.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII), confidential information, and internal data must be protected at all times and must only be accessed, used, or shared by authorized individuals for legitimate educational or operational purposes.

## **Data Protection and Handling**

Staff are required to:

- Ensure that all sensitive data is stored securely and is not accessible to unauthorized individuals
- Access only the data necessary to perform assigned job duties
- Use district-approved systems and secure methods when transmitting or sharing data
- Follow all district policies regarding data access, storage, and sharing

The downloading, uploading, or transfer of PII, confidential, or internal information must be carefully controlled and only conducted using approved systems and procedures.

## **Physical and Environmental Awareness**

Staff must:

- Use secure printing practices when printing sensitive information
- Never leave printed confidential materials unattended
- Properly dispose of documents containing sensitive information (e.g., shredding when required)

- Be aware of their surroundings and avoid discussing confidential information in public or unsecured environments

This includes avoiding conversations involving student or staff information in hallways, public areas, or on cellular devices where information may be overheard.

## Account and System Security

Staff are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and access credentials.

This includes:

- Never sharing usernames or passwords with others (except authorized technology staff for support purposes)
- Logging out of systems or locking devices when unattended
- Protecting access to devices and systems containing sensitive data
- Reporting any suspicious account activity immediately

## Incident Reporting

All staff, contractors, and authorized users must immediately report any known or suspected data privacy or security incident, including:

- Unauthorized access to student or staff data
- Accidental disclosure of sensitive information
- Phishing attempts or suspicious emails
- Lost or stolen devices containing district data

Reports should be made to a supervisor and/or the Technology Department immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

## Digital Tool and Software Approval Procedure

### Purpose

To ensure that all digital instructional tools and software used within Ridgedale Local School District meet instructional standards and comply with student data privacy laws, including FERPA, COPPA, PPRA, CIPA, and Ohio SB29.

### Procedure

All digital tools, applications, and software intended for use with students must be reviewed and approved prior to implementation.

The approval process is as follows:

### **1. Building-Level Review (Instructional Need)**

- Staff members must first submit requests to their building principal
- The principal will review the request to determine instructional value and alignment with district goals

### **2. Curriculum Review (Instructional Alignment)**

- If approved at the building level, the request is forwarded to the Curriculum Director/Leader
- The curriculum office will evaluate alignment with curriculum standards, instructional effectiveness, and redundancy with existing tools

### **3. Technology Review (Privacy & Security Compliance)**

- Following instructional approval, the request is submitted to the Technology Department
- The Technology Department will review the tool to ensure:
  - Student data privacy protections are in place
  - Compliance with FERPA, COPPA, and applicable laws
  - Appropriate data security practices
  - Acceptable terms of service and data collection practices
  - No significant cybersecurity risks

## **Approval and Use**

- Only tools that complete the full approval process may be used with students
- Tools that collect, store, or transmit student data may not be used without Technology Department approval
- Approved tools may be used for instructional purposes as intended

## **Staff Responsibilities**

- Staff must not independently create student accounts or use unapproved applications
- Staff are responsible for submitting requests and following the approval process prior to use
- Staff must discontinue use of any tool that has not been approved

## **Oversight and Compliance**

The Technology Department maintains final approval authority to ensure all digital tools meet student data privacy and security requirements.

The district maintains oversight of approved tools to ensure ongoing compliance with applicable laws and district policies.

## Data Management

Ridgedale Local School District implements data management practices to ensure the accuracy, integrity, and security of all data systems.

This includes establishing procedures that ensure:

- Data access is aligned with employee roles and job responsibilities
- Staff are trained on data privacy and security expectations
- Data is maintained accurately and securely across all systems
- Digital tools and vendor contracts are reviewed to ensure compliance with data privacy and security standards

Staff are responsible for ensuring that sensitive data is transmitted securely and only through approved district systems. The transmission of student data to approved services (e.g., student information systems, learning management systems) is managed using secure methods established by the Technology Department.

Passwords or sensitive access credentials must never be shared through email or unsecured communication methods. Files containing confidential or restricted information must not be transmitted externally or to third parties without appropriate authorization.

The storage or transfer of confidential data on personal or unapproved devices (e.g., external drives, USB devices, personal cloud storage) is prohibited unless explicitly authorized.

When employment or access to district systems ends, all district data in an individual's possession must be returned, deleted, or destroyed in accordance with district procedures.

## Data Security

Ridgedale Local School District regularly monitors and evaluates data security practices to protect against unauthorized access, data loss, or cybersecurity threats.

Data security applies to all forms of data, including:

- Data stored on district devices
- Data stored in cloud-based systems
- Data accessed remotely

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring data is stored in secure, district-approved locations
- Following district procedures for remote access and data protection
- Maintaining the same level of data security when accessing systems off-site

When sharing data, staff must:

- Ensure recipients are authorized to access the information
- Limit sharing to only what is necessary for job-related purposes
- Follow professional conduct and confidentiality expectations

Unauthorized access to data, systems, or accounts is strictly prohibited.

All users should understand that district-owned systems and accounts are monitored and that there is no expectation of privacy when using district technology resources in accordance with district policy.

The district follows established records retention and data destruction practices to ensure that data is not retained longer than necessary.

## System Security and Access Control

Access to district systems containing student or staff data is restricted based on job responsibilities.

Ridgedale Local School District utilizes role-based access controls to ensure that:

- Staff are granted access only to the data necessary for their role
- Access is reviewed and adjusted as job responsibilities change
- Access is removed promptly when employment or access is no longer required

User accounts are created only after appropriate authorization and are maintained by the Technology Department. When staff leave the district, access to systems is revoked in a timely manner.

All users must:

- Use secure passwords that meet district requirements
- Never share login credentials
- Log out or secure devices when not in use

The district may utilize tools such as directory services, single sign-on (SSO), and access management systems to maintain account security and monitor access.

Access to sensitive data by third-party vendors is limited to approved providers who meet district data privacy and security requirements.

## Physical Security

Ridgedale Local School District maintains physical safeguards to protect technology systems and data from unauthorized access, damage, or theft.

This includes:

- Securing servers and network equipment in controlled environments
- Maintaining an inventory of district technology assets
- Monitoring the movement and use of district-owned devices

Staff are responsible for:

- Securing devices when unattended
- Preventing unauthorized access to devices containing sensitive information
- Ensuring devices are not left logged in or accessible to others

The use of unsecured devices or removable media to store or transport sensitive information is discouraged unless approved and properly secured.

District technology equipment must be returned upon request or upon separation from the district.

## Malware, Phishing, and Threat Protection

Ridgedale Local School District implements safeguards to protect systems from viruses, malware, phishing, and other cybersecurity threats.

This includes:

- Network filtering and monitoring systems (CIPA compliance)
- Email security and phishing protection
- System updates and patch management
- Endpoint protection on district devices

Staff play a critical role in maintaining security by:

- Recognizing and reporting phishing attempts
- Avoiding suspicious links, downloads, or attachments
- Reporting potential security threats immediately

## District Training and Awareness

Ridgedale Local School District is committed to ensuring that all staff understand and fulfill their responsibilities related to student data privacy and security through structured training and ongoing awareness efforts.

All new employees receive training on district technology policies, procedures, and expectations, including confidentiality requirements and the proper handling of student data.

The district utilizes PublicSchoolWORKS to deliver and track required staff training.

Through this system, all staff complete training covering:

- Federal and state data privacy laws (including FERPA, COPPA, PPRA, CIPA, and Ohio SB29)
- Confidentiality and protection of student information
- Cybersecurity awareness, including phishing and threat prevention
- Appropriate use of district technology systems and digital resources
- Responsibilities related to electronic records and data handling

District administrators and leadership team members receive additional training and updates to ensure continued compliance with evolving data privacy and security requirements.

Completion of required training is monitored and documented through the district's training system to ensure accountability and compliance.

Ongoing reminders, updates, and communications are provided throughout the year to reinforce best practices and address emerging risks related to data privacy and cybersecurity.

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# Social Media and Digital Communication Guidelines

Ridgedale Local School District recognizes that access to technology and social media provides valuable opportunities for communication, collaboration, and learning. Staff may use digital tools and social media to support instruction, engage with the community, and enhance educational experiences.

At the same time, staff are expected to use these tools responsibly and in a manner that protects student privacy, maintains professional standards, and aligns with district policies.

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## Professional Expectations

All staff are expected to:

- Follow the same standards of professional conduct online as they do in person
  - Use good judgment when posting or sharing information
  - Adhere to district Acceptable Use Policies and Technology Governance Guidelines
  - Assume that all online activity may be public, regardless of privacy settings
- 

## Responsible and Ethical Use

When using social media or digital platforms:

- Staff should only represent the district in an official capacity if authorized
  - Personal opinions should be clearly identified as such and not attributed to the district
  - Communication should remain professional, respectful, and appropriate at all times
  - Staff should only discuss topics within their professional role and responsibility
- 

## Protection of Confidential Information

Staff must not:

- Share or post any confidential or non-public information
- Disclose personally identifiable information (PII) of students, staff, or families
- Share student records, images, or information without appropriate consent

If there is uncertainty about whether information is confidential, staff should treat it as protected and seek guidance.

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## Privacy and Personal Information

Staff should:

- Avoid sharing personal information that could create safety or security risks
- Protect the privacy of students, families, and colleagues at all times
- Verify the accuracy of information before sharing or reposting

## Use of Images and Media

- Student images or videos must not be shared without appropriate parent/guardian consent
- Staff should not post images of students or staff without permission
- District branding, logos, and materials should be used appropriately

## Online Safety and Awareness

Staff are expected to:

- Exercise caution when clicking links or accessing external content
- Be aware of phishing, scams, and malicious content
- Report any suspicious activity or security concerns

## Mistakes and Incident Reporting

If a mistake occurs (such as posting sensitive information):

- The content should be corrected or removed immediately
- The issue should be reported to a supervisor or administrator
- Appropriate steps will be taken to minimize any potential impact

## Digital Citizenship and Conduct

Staff should model appropriate digital behavior by:

- Communicating respectfully and professionally
- Avoiding harassment, bullying, or inappropriate conduct
- Promoting positive and constructive online interactions

Cyberbullying, harassment, or misuse of digital platforms will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

## Acceptable Use of Technology Resources

Use of district technology resources is a privilege, not a right. All users are expected to use district systems in a responsible, ethical, and lawful manner.

Users must:

- Use district-provided accounts and systems for school-related purposes
- Follow all applicable laws and district policies
- Respect intellectual property and copyright laws
- Report inappropriate or unsafe content

Users must not:

- Use technology for illegal, commercial, or unauthorized purposes
- Attempt to bypass security measures or filtering systems
- Access or distribute inappropriate or harmful content
- Install unauthorized software or applications

The district reserves the right to monitor the use of its technology systems to ensure compliance with policies and to maintain system integrity and security.

## Compliance and Enforcement

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including loss of technology access, employment consequences, or additional legal action as appropriate.

All staff are expected to review and acknowledge these guidelines annually as part of required district training.

### STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Unless exempted, each student must pass all portions of the State-mandated assessment test as a requirement for graduation. The test will be administered twice a year until the student passes all parts of the test. Students are only required to retake those parts of the test they have not yet passed. While the School District does schedule make-up dates for testing, students should avoid unnecessary absences.

State test dates are scheduled for the following. Exact dates will be posted on the website and in newsletters:

- Fall 3rd Grade ELA - October
- Spring 3rd - 5th Grade ELA - March/April
- Spring 3rd - 5th Grade Math - April/May

Additional group tests are given to students to monitor progress and determine educational mastery levels. These tests help the staff determine instructional needs.

Classroom tests are given to assess student progress and assign grades. These are selected or prepared by teachers to assess student achievement on specific objectives.

Career and interest surveys may be given to identify particular areas of student interests or talent. These are often given by guidance staff.

By June 30th of each year, parents will be provided with the score of any State-mandated assessment or test administered to their student. Results will be sent via mail or email or, alternatively, will be posted to a secure portal that families can access on the District's or school's website.

### **PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS**

If a school within the District has been designated as “persistently dangerous” as defined by State law, students have the right to transfer to another “safe” school in the District. If there is not another “safe” school in the District providing instruction at the students’ grade level(s), the Superintendent shall contact neighboring districts and request that they permit students to transfer to a school in one of those districts. Further, if a student is a victim of a violent crime on school property, s/he also has the right to transfer to another school in the District. If there is not another school in the District providing instruction at the student’s grade level, the Superintendent shall contact neighboring districts and request that they permit that student to transfer to a school in one of those districts providing instruction at the student’s grade level.

## **SECTION III - STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **SCHOOL-SPONSORED CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES**

Ridgedale Elementary provides students the opportunity to broaden their learning through curricular-related activities. A curricular-related activity may be taken for credit, required for a particular course, and/or contain school subject matter.

The Board authorizes the following student groups that are sponsored by a staff member.

- Lego Robotics
- Power Hours

All students are permitted to participate in the activities of their choosing, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements. Participation in these activities is a privilege and not a right, and students may be prohibited from all or part of their participation in such activities by authorized school personnel without further notice, hearing and/or appeal rights in accordance with Board Policy 5610.05.

### **NON SCHOOL-SPONSORED CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES**

Non school-sponsored student groups may meet in the school building during non instructional hours. The application for permission to use school facilities can be obtained from the Principal. The applicant must verify that the activity is being initiated by students, that attendance is voluntary, that no school staff person is actively involved in the event, that the event will not interfere with school activities, and that nonschool persons do not play a regular role in the meeting. All school rules relating to student conduct and equal opportunity to participate apply to such activities.

Membership in any fraternity, sorority, or other secret society as proscribed by law is not permitted. All groups must comply with School rules and must provide equal opportunity to participate.

No non district-sponsored organization may use the name of the school or school mascot on any materials or information.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL EVENTS**

Students are encouraged to attend as many after school events as possible, without interfering with their school work and home activities. Enthusiastic spectators help to build school spirit and encourage those students participating in the event.

Students attending evening events as nonparticipants are required to be accompanied by a parent or adult chaperone. The Board is not responsible for supervising unaccompanied students nor will it be responsible for students who arrive without an adult chaperone.

## **SECTION IV - STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **School Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance is a significant student responsibility at all grade levels. Many studies correlate regular attendance with success in school. Regular attendance means that the academic learning process is not interrupted, less time is spent on make-up assignments, and students benefit from participation and interaction with others in class. Many important lessons are learned through active participation in classroom and other school activities that cannot be replaced by individual study.

When a parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student has failed to initiate a telephone call or other communication notifying the school or building administration of the student's excused or unexcused absence within 120 minutes after the beginning of the school day, the attendance officer or designee for each school building shall make at least one (1) attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of any student who is recorded as absent without legitimate excuse within 120 minutes after the beginning of each school day by a method designated by the Superintendent in accordance with Ohio law (see AG 5200).

Establishing a pattern of good attendance will benefit the student in school and in the workplace. Attendance is important in the development of a high quality work ethic, which will be a significant factor in a student's success with future employers. One of the most important work habits that employers look for in hiring and promoting a person is the person's dependability in coming to work every day on time. This is a habit the School wants to help students develop as early as possible.

#### **Truancy**

Unexcused absence from school (truancy) is not acceptable. A student will be considered habitually truant if the student is absent without a legitimate excuse for thirty (30) or more consecutive hours, for forty-two (42) or more hours in 1 month, or for seventy-two (72) or more hours in 1 school year. Referral to the court may be made after one hundred three hours (103).

If a student is habitually truant and the student's parent fails to cause the student's attendance, a complaint will be filed with the Judge of the Juvenile Court in compliance with State law and Board Policy 5200. Habitual truancy can also result in:

- Assigned to the Absence Intervention Team (AIT) within 10 days of the triggering event.
- The AIT must develop a Truancy Intervention Plan (TIP) within 14 days of the child being assigned to them.

- Must make three meaningful, good faith attempts to engage parents for participation on the AIT.
- If a parent does not participate, the team must decide if it triggers mandatory reporting to children's services.
- If a parent does not participate, the team designs and implements a TIP.
- If adequate progress, the school will not file charges.
- If a child is not making adequate progress or refuses to participate AND the school has attempted to re-engage the student after the TIP was implemented, the school will file truancy charges against the child/parent.
  - Charges cannot be filed past the 61<sup>st</sup> day after the implementation of the TIP.

### **Excused Absences**

Students may be excused from school for one or more of the following reasons and will be provided an opportunity to make-up missed school work and/or tests:

- A. personal illness (a written physician's statement verifying the illness may be required)
- B. appointment with a health care provider
- C. illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child
- D. quarantine of the home
- E. death in the family
- F. necessary work at home due to absence or incapacity of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- G. observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- H. out-of-state travel (up to a maximum twenty-four (24) hours per school year that the student's school is open for instruction) to participate in a District-approved enrichment or extracurricular activity

Any classroom assignment missed due to the absence shall be completed by the student.

If the student will be absent for twenty-four (24) or more consecutive hours when the student's school is open for instruction, a classroom teacher shall accompany the student during the travel period to provide the student with instructional assistance.

- I. such good cause as may be acceptable to the Superintendent
- J. medically necessary leave for a pregnant student in accordance with Policy 5751
- K. service as a precinct officer at a primary, special or general election in accordance with the program set forth in Policy 5725
- L. college visitation

The District requires verification of the date and time of the visitation by the college, university, or technical college.

- M. absences due to a student's placement in foster care or change in foster care placement or any court proceedings related to their foster care status
- N. absences due to a student being homeless

### **Religious Expression Days**

To receive accommodations for religious expression days, parents or guardians must submit written requests to the Principal within fourteen (14) days after the start of the school year or fourteen (14) days after a student is enrolled in the District. The requests must specify the religious expression day(s) to be approved. The Principal will approve the days without inquiring into the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system.

Students who are absent on approved religious expression days will not face any academic penalties and will be provided with academic accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements that are missed.

### **Notification of Absence**

If a student will be absent, the parents must notify the School by calling 740-383-2020 ext 109 or by emailing [routcalt@ridgedaleschool.org](mailto:routcalt@ridgedaleschool.org) by 9:30am and provide an explanation. If prior contact is not possible, the parents should provide a written excuse upon return after the student's absence. When no excuse is provided, the absence will be unexcused and the student will be identified as truant for that school day. If the offered excuse for a student's absence is questionable or if the number of student absences is excessive, the school staff will notify the parents of the need for improvement in the student's attendance.

Students with a health condition that causes repeated absences must provide the administration with an explanation of the condition from a registered physician.

### **Homebound Instruction**

The School may arrange for individual instruction at home for students who are unable to attend school because of an accident, illness, or disability. Such instruction may be arranged upon receipt of documentation of the student's condition from a physician. For more information, contact Ms. Parthemore at 740-383-2020 ext 111.

### **Make-up of Tests and Other School Work**

Students who are absent from school shall be given the opportunity to make up for missed work. The student should contact their teacher as soon as possible to obtain assignments.

The number of days for completion of make-up work will be equivalent to the number of excused days of absence.

If a student misses a teacher's test due to an absence, s/he should make arrangements with the teacher to take the test at another time. If s/he misses a State Mandated assessment test or other standardized test, the student should consult with the principal to arrange for administration of the test at another time.

### **Suspension from School**

Absence from school due to suspension shall be considered an authorized absence.

A suspended student will be responsible for making up school work missed due to suspension. Assignments may be obtained from their teacher beginning with the first day of suspension. Make up of missed tests may be scheduled when the student returns from school.

The student must complete missed assignments during the suspension and turn them in to the teacher by the time the student returns to school. The student will be given credit for properly-completed assignments and will receive a grade for any made up tests.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Any student who is absent from school for all or any part of the day without a legitimate excuse shall be considered truant and the student and his/her parents/guardians shall be subject to the truancy laws of the State. Please refer also to the Truancy section.

### **Tardiness**

A student who is not in his/her assigned location by 8:00am shall be considered tardy. Any student arriving late to school must come in the front entrance and be signed in by a parent/guardian before going to class.

### **Vacations During the School Year**

It is recommended that parents not take their child out of school for vacations. When a family vacation must be scheduled during the school year, the parents must call the office at 740-383-2020 ext. 109 or send a note detailing dates and reasons for student absence **BEFORE** the absence so that teacher and office staff know ahead of time. If we do not receive a phone call or note before the absence it will be unexcused. It may be possible for the student to receive certain assignments that may be completed during the trip.

**HB 96-** Ohio House Bill 96, which went into effect on September 30th, 2025 made several changes to Ohio's school attendance laws. The law requires schools to do the following:

- Schools must create policies to address chronic absenteeism, including a tiered system of interventions.
- Schools are now required to file a complaint in juvenile court if students cross a truancy threshold and are not showing improvement.

Ridgedale Local Schools have adopted the following tiered intervention approach to support students and families with school attendance:

- When a student crosses the chronic absenteeism threshold (10% of the minimum hours required in the school year), the school will send a warning letter.
- When a student becomes habitually truant, the student will be referred to the MTSS team for an individualized attendance plan. Truancy is defined as thirty consecutive hours absent, forty two hours absent in a month, or seventy hours in a year.
- The MTSS team will meet monthly to review, update and share progress with the student and their family.

### **RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION**

Students shall be provided "released time" during the school day to attend a course in religious instruction conducted by a private entity off District property, in accordance with the requirements of Policy 5223.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

A major component of the educational program at the school is to prepare students to become responsible citizens by learning how to conduct themselves properly and in accordance with established standards. Students are expected to behave in accordance with Federal, State & local laws and rules, Board policies and Administrative Guidelines, in a way that respects the rights and safety of others. Staff will take corrective action to discipline a student and/or to modify the student's behavior when a student's behavior does not fall within these parameters.

School staff may report suspected criminal misconduct by a student to law enforcement. Law enforcement officers will be permitted to carry out necessary law enforcement functions in the schools, including the removal of a student from school grounds in appropriate circumstances.

### **Expected Behaviors**

Students are expected to:

- o act courteously to adults and fellow students;
- o be prompt to school and attentive in class;
- o work cooperatively with others when involved in accomplishing a common goal regardless of the other's ability, gender, race, or ethnic background;
- o complete assigned tasks on time and as directed;
- o help maintain a school environment that is safe, friendly, and productive;
- o act at all times in a manner that reflects pride in self, family, and in the School.

### **Classroom Environment**

It is the responsibility of students, teachers, and administrators to maintain a classroom environment that allows:

- A. a teacher to communicate effectively with all students in the class; and
- B. all students in the class have the opportunity to learn.

### **Dress and Grooming**

The Ridgedale Board of Education recognizes students' rights to express themselves through dress and appearance. This right is supported as long as it does not disrupt the educational environment, compromise safety, or infringe on the rights of others. Students are expected to dress in a manner that promotes a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment.

#### **Section 1: Basic Principle**

Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.

Clothing must be worn in a way that ensures buttocks, breasts, and midriff are fully covered with opaque (non-see-through) fabric. Clothing must not be excessively tight or revealing.

All items listed in the "Must Wear" and "May Wear" sections must meet this basic principle.

#### **Section 2: Students MUST Wear**

While following Section 1, students must wear:

- A shirt with fabric in the front, back, and sides under the arms
- Pants/jeans or equivalent (e.g., skirt, dress, leggings, shorts, sweatpants)
- Shoes

*Note:* Courses or activities (e.g., physical education, CTE, etc.) may require specific attire for safety or instructional purposes.

### **Section 3: Students May NOT Wear**

The following are prohibited:

- Clothing with violent, vulgar, obscene, or profane language or images
- Clothing that depicts or promotes alcohol, tobacco, vapes, drugs, or illegal activities
- Hate speech or content that creates a hostile or intimidating environment toward any group
- Clothing that exposes undergarments or violates Section 1 coverage requirements
- Tube Tops
- Cut-off clothing (e.g., shirts, shorts, pants) that exposes pockets or undergarments
- Accessories or items that could be dangerous, used as a weapon, or conceal a weapon
- In the interest of safety, no slippers/house shoes, cleats, rollerblades, roller skates, or skate shoes.
- Face/head coverings that obscure identity (e.g., hoods up, sunglasses indoors, hats, bandanas), unless approved for religious or medical reasons
- Outerwear (e.g., jackets, coats, etc.) and blankets during the school day
- Spandex/bike/volleyball shorts worn alone during the school day
- Writing, drawing, or coloring on skin
- Any item associated with gang affiliation, including clothing, symbols, or gestures

Additionally, any clothing, accessory, or appearance that disrupts the educational process or presents a safety concern, as determined by administration, is not permitted.

### **Section 4: Students MAY Wear**

As long as they meet all guidelines above, students may wear:

- Hooded sweatshirts (hood must remain down indoors)
- Leggings, yoga pants, jeggings, joggers, pajama pants
- Ripped jeans, as long as undergarments are not exposed
- Athletic attire
- Visible undergarment straps, if overall coverage requirements are met
- The dress code may be altered for certain “Spirit Days,” but only after a request has been made by the advisor/supervisor and permission is granted by the administration.

### **Section 5: Student Reflection Guidelines**

Students are encouraged to consider the following when choosing their attire:

- Does my clothing appropriately cover my body?
- Does my clothing avoid promoting prohibited substances or messages?
- Does my clothing respect others and the school environment?
- Is my outfit safe and appropriate for school activities and weather?

### **Section 6: Enforcement**

Dress code enforcement will be consistent, equitable, and non-discriminatory.

If a student is out of dress code:

1. The student will be asked to change into appropriate clothing, if available.
2. The student may be provided temporary school clothing.
3. The student may call a parent/guardian to bring them appropriate clothing.

Students will not be removed from instruction unless necessary to resolve the violation. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with school policy. Any missed instructional time due to dress code violations will be considered unexcused.

**Final Note:** The administration reserves the right to address any attire not specifically outlined here that is deemed disruptive or unsafe to the learning environment.

### **Gangs**

Gangs that initiate, advocate or promote activities that threaten the safety or well being of persons or that are disruptive to the school environment will not be tolerated.

Incidents involving initiations, hazing, intimidations or related activities that are likely to cause harm or personal degradation are prohibited.

Students wearing, carrying or displaying gang paraphernalia or exhibiting behaviors or gestures that symbolize gang membership or causing and/or participating in activities that are designed to intimidate another student will be disciplined. Prohibited gang paraphernalia will be specifically identified and posted by the Principal.

### **Care of Property**

Students are responsible for the care of their own personal property. Students are encouraged not to bring items of value to school. Items such as jewelry, expensive clothing, electronic equipment, and the like, are tempting targets for theft and extortion. The School cannot be responsible for their safe-keeping and will not be liable for loss or damage to personal valuables.

Damage to or loss of school equipment and facilities wastes taxpayers' money and undermines the school program. Therefore, if a student damages or loses school property, the student and/or his/her parents/guardians will be required to pay for the replacement or repair. If the damage or loss was intentional, the student will be subject to discipline according to the Student Discipline Code.

### **BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION**

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and violence within a dating relationship. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy applies to all activities in the District, including activities on school property, on a school bus, or while enroute to or from school, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, or where an employee is engaged in school business.

This policy has been developed in consultation with parents, District employees, volunteers, students, and community members as prescribed in R.C. 3313.666 and the State Board of Education's Model Policy.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means:

- A. any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student(s) more than once and the behavior both causes mental or physical harm to the other student(s) and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it

creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s); or

B. violence within a dating relationship.

"Electronic act" means an act committed through the use of a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device.

Aggressive behavior is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well being. This type of behavior is a form of intimidation and harassment, although it need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. It would include, but not be limited to, such behaviors as stalking, bullying/cyberbullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying also means cyberbullying through electronically transmitted acts (i.e., internet, e-mail, cellular telephone, personal digital assistance (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) that a student(s) or a group of students exhibits toward another particular student(s) more than once and the behavior both causes mental and physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s).

Any student or student's parent/guardian who believes s/he has been or is the victim of aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to the building principal or assistant principal, or the Superintendent. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above.

All complaints about aggressive behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. The building principal or appropriate administrator shall prepare a written report of the investigation upon completion. Such a report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action shall be included in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying/cyberbullying by an electronic act or otherwise, has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action. This may include suspension or up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

If, during an investigation of a reported act of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying/cyberbullying, the Principal or appropriate administrator believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile learning environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on a Protected Class, the Principal will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to one of the Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers so that it may be investigated in accordance with the procedures set forth in Policy 5517 - Anti-Harassment.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of aggressive behavior is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and

independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as aggressive behavior. Retaliation may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

Deliberately making false reports about harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or other aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Deliberately making false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

If a student or other individual believes there has been aggressive behavior, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, s/he should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

The District shall implement intervention strategies (AG 5517.01) to protect a victim or other person from new or additional harassment, intimidation, or bullying and from retaliation following such a report.

This policy shall not be interpreted to infringe upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by State or Federal law).

The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken. If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the building principal or appropriate administrator shall notify the custodial parent/guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

If after investigation, acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying by a specific student are verified, the building principal or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the custodial parent/guardian of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such a student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

## **Complaints**

Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Such reports shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review, investigation, and action.

Students, parents/guardians, and school personnel may make informal or anonymous complaints of conduct that they consider to be harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who receives an informal or anonymous complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the information provided. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the building principal for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

Individuals who make informal complaints as provided above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action shall 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 harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

When an individual making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of

investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The School District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

### **Reporting Requirement**

At least semi-annually, the Superintendent shall provide to the President of the Board a written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the District web site (if one exists). The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events.

Allegations of criminal misconduct and suspected child abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or to Child Protective Services in accordance with statute. District personnel shall cooperate with investigations by such agencies.

### **Immunity**

A School District employee, student, or volunteer shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy and R.C. 3313.666 if that person reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying promptly, in good faith, and in compliance with the procedures specified in this policy. Such immunity from liability shall not apply to an employee, student, or volunteer determined to have made an intentionally false report about harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

### **Notification**

Notice of this policy will be **annually** circulated to and posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District and discussed with students, as well as incorporated into the teacher, student, and parent/guardian handbooks. At least once each school year a written statement describing the policy and consequences for violations of the policy shall be sent to each student's custodial parent or guardian.

The statement may be sent with regular student report cards or may be delivered electronically.

The policy and an explanation of the seriousness of bullying by electronic means shall be made available to students in the District and to their custodial parents or guardians.

State and Federal rights posters on discrimination and harassment shall also be posted at each building. All new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related complaint procedures.

### **Education and Training**

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of aggressive behavior, including bullying and violence within a dating relationship. The Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate training to all members of the School District community related to the implementation of this policy and its accompanying administrative guidelines. All training regarding the Board's policy and administrative guidelines about aggressive behavior and bullying in general, will be age and content appropriate.

Annually, the District shall provide all students enrolled in the District with age-appropriate instruction regarding the Board's policy, including a written or verbal discussion of the consequences for violations of the policy.

Students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) shall receive age-appropriate instruction in dating violence prevention education, including instruction in recognizing dating violence warning signs and characteristics of healthy relationships. Parents, who submit a written request to the building principal to examine the dating violence prevention instruction materials used in the school, will be afforded an opportunity to review the materials within a reasonable period of time.

The District shall provide training, workshops, and/or courses on this policy for school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students, to the extent that State or Federal funds are appropriated for these purposes. Time spent by school staff in these training programs shall apply toward mandated continuing education requirements.

In accordance with Board Policy 8462, the Superintendent shall include a review of this policy on bullying and other forms of harassment in the required training in the prevention of child abuse, violence, and substance abuse and the promotion of positive youth development.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed. The complaint procedure established by the Superintendent shall be followed.

## TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This guideline provides additional information about the District's procedures in addressing allegations of sex discrimination, including Sexual Harassment. All information below supplements Board Policy 2266 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities. To the extent, there is a conflict between these guidelines and Policy 2266, the Policy controls.

### General Information

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual Harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- A. A Board employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (often called "*quid pro quo*" harassment);
- B. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, **and** objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity; or
- C. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)A(v), or "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

Sexual Harassment may involve the behavior of a person of any gender against a person of the same or another gender.

The following conduct – if sufficiently severe, pervasive, **and** objectively offensive – may constitute Sexual Harassment (this list provides examples and is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive):

- A. unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations;
- B. unwanted physical and/or sexual contact;
- C. threats or insinuations implying that a person's conditions of education or employment may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances;
- D. unwelcome sexual verbal expressions, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; unwelcome sexually degrading language, profanity, jokes, or innuendoes;
- E. sexually suggestive objects, pictures, graffiti, videos, posters, audio recordings or literature;
- F. unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, or pinching;
- G. asking about, or telling about, sexual fantasies, sexual preferences, or sexual activities;
- H. speculations about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history;
- I. giving unwelcome personal gifts such as lingerie that suggest the desire for a romantic relationship; and
- J. leering or staring at someone in a sexual way, such as staring at a person's breasts, buttocks, or groin.

Sexual assault, for purposes of Policy 2266, refers to any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent (e.g., due to the person's age, intellectual or other disability, or use of drugs or alcohol). Sexual assault includes rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, fondling, incest, and statutory rape. All such acts of sexual assault are forms of Sexual Harassment and, in turn, sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and Policy 2266.

Two critical components of assessing allegations of sexual assault involve the concepts of "consent" and a person being "incapacitated." Policy 2266 states that "consent" involves words or actions that a reasonable person would understand as agreement to engage in the sexual conduct at issue. A person, however, may be incapable of giving consent because of age or because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. A person who is incapacitated is not capable of giving consent.

Determining whether there was consent is a critical factor in evaluating whether a sexual assault occurred. As defined above, consent is a mutual, voluntary, and informed agreement to participate in specific sexual acts with another person that is not achieved through manipulation, force, or coercion of any kind, and requires having cognitive ability to agree to participate. Force involves the use, or the threatened use, of physical violence to achieve sexual access. Force further includes the use of a person's body in a physically imposing manner to elicit unwelcome or unwanted sexual contact. Coercion involves unreasonable pressure for sexual activity or contact.

Consent requires an outward demonstration, through mutually understandable words, conduct or action, indicating that an individual has freely chosen to engage in the specific sexual acts. A verbal "no" constitutes lack of consent, even if it sounds insincere or indecisive. Silence or an absence of resistance

does not imply consent, and consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another. Even in the context of an ongoing relationship, consent must be sought and freely given for each specific sexual act. Consent may be withdrawn at any time. When consent is withdrawn, sexual activity must immediately stop.

Impairment or incapacitation due to alcohol and/or drug use, permanent/ temporary mental or physical disability, and being below the age of consent (age sixteen (16)) are factors that detract from or make consent impossible. Incapacity is defined as an inability to make rational, reasonable decisions or judgments. Incapacitation is a state where an individual cannot make an informed and rational decision to consent to engage in sexual contact because the individual lacks conscious knowledge of the nature of the act (e.g., to understand the “who, what, where, when, why or how” of the sexual interaction) and/or is physically or mentally helpless. An individual is also considered incapacitated, and therefore unable to give consent, when asleep, unconscious, or otherwise unaware that sexual contact is occurring.

Incapacitation is found when the Respondent knew or should have known that the Complainant was incapacitated when viewed from the position of a sober, reasonable person. One’s own intoxication is not an excuse for failure to recognize another person’s incapacitation.

Incapacitation may result from the use of alcohol and/or other drugs; however, consumption of alcohol of other drugs, inebriation, or intoxication alone are insufficient to establish incapacitation. Incapacitation is beyond mere drunkenness or intoxication. The impact of alcohol or drugs varies from person to person, and evaluating incapacitation requires an assessment of how consumption of alcohol and/or drugs impacts an individual’s:

- A. decision-making ability;
- B. awareness of consequences;
- C. ability to make informed judgments;
- D. capacity to appreciate the nature or circumstances of the act.

No single factor is determinative of incapacitation. Some common signs that someone may be incapacitated include slurred speech, confusion, shaky balance, stumbling or falling down, vomiting, and unconsciousness.

### **Title IX Coordinator(s)**

The following individual(s) serve as the District Title IX Coordinator(s) and are responsible for overseeing and coordinating the District’s efforts to comply with Title IX and its implementing regulations:

Angie Murphy  
 Director of Student Services  
 740-382-6065 ext 105  
 3103 Hillman Ford Rd. Morral, OH 43337

The Title IX Coordinator(s) reports directly to the Superintendent. Questions about Policy 2266 and/or this Administrative Guideline should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator(s).

### **Notices**

The Title IX Coordinator's(s') name(s), title(s), and contact information – including office address(es), telephone number(s), and email address(es) - must be published on the District's website and/or in the student, parent, handbooks.

Board Policy 2266 must also be published on the District's website and in each handbook or catalog that the District makes available to applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students, employees, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Board.

### **Reports of Sexual Harassment**

All students and Board employees share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting Sexual Harassment.

The Title IX Coordinator(s) shall be available during regular school/work hours to discuss Title IX questions, including questions related to Sexual Harassment, and assist students, parents/guardians, employees, other members of the School District community and Third Parties with any issues they may have related to Policy 2266. The Title IX Coordinator(s) shall accept reports of Sexual Harassment directly from any member of the School District community or any Third Party. Reports may be submitted in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the Title IX Coordinator's(s') published contact information, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's oral or written report. Reports may be made at any time (including during non-work hours).

The District will be considered to have actual knowledge of Sexual Harassment or an allegation of Sexual Harassment if : (1) a Formal Complaint is filed by a Complainant (or a parent/guardian on behalf of a minor child); (2) a Board employee receives a report or otherwise has notice of an incident of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment; or (3) a Board employee witnesses the misconduct. The District may also receive notice about Sexual Harassment in an indirect manner from a member of the local community, social networking sites, the media, or if the information is shared by survivors during public awareness events or campaigns.

When a Board employee files a report of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment with the Title IX Coordinator, the employee is required to report all known details about the alleged Sexual Harassment, including: (1) the name of the alleged Respondent; (2) the person who experienced the alleged Sexual Harassment (i.e., the Complainant); (3) other persons involved in the alleged Sexual Harassment; and (4) any other relevant facts, such as date, time, and location.

When possible, before a reporting student or parent/guardian discloses the above information, the Board employee should inform the student and/or parent/guardian of the employee's obligation to report the information to the Title IX Coordinator.

Upon receiving a report of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the appropriate notice to the Complainant, discuss supportive measures with the Complainant, and explain the Formal Complaint process. The Title IX Coordinator will also inform the Complainant that s/he is available to assist the Complainant in filing a Formal Complaint if that is what the Complainant wants to do. The Title IX Coordinator will further explain to the Complainant that Federal law includes protections against retaliation, and that the District will not only take steps to prevent retaliation but also take strong responsive action if it occurs.

When it comes to allegations of stalking, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the Complainant that it is important to take steps to preserve evidence in cases of stalking, to the extent such evidence exists. Such evidence is more likely to be in the form of letters, emails, text messages, etc. rather than evidence of

physical contact and violence. This type of non-physical evidence will also be useful in all types of Sexual Harassment investigations.

If the report involves a student Respondent, while the Title IX Coordinator is communicating with the Complainant concerning supportive measures and whether to file a Formal Complaint, the Superintendent will determine whether the circumstances warrant consideration of emergency removal of the student Respondent.

If the Superintendent decides that the situation calls for possible emergency removal of the student Respondent, the Superintendent will direct the Principal to convene a team of educators and other appropriate staff members (e.g., school psychologist, guidance counselor, mental health counselor, etc.) to conduct an individualized safety and risk analysis. The team will be tasked with determining whether the student Respondent poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of Sexual Harassment that justifies removal.

If the team determines the student Respondent poses such a threat, it will recommend to the Principal that the District implement an emergency removal (i.e., removal of the student Respondent from the school premises). If the Principal agrees with the recommendation, the Principal will notify the student Respondent, remove the student Respondent from the school premises for the remainder of the school day, and begin the process of suspending or expelling the Respondent pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 3313.66. The student Respondent will have an opportunity to challenge the team's recommendation and the Principal's corresponding decision to remove the student Respondent immediately following the implementation of the removal. The challenge may be filed directly with the Superintendent – even before any recommendation for expulsion is processed by the Superintendent – or by following the due process procedures outlined in Policy 5610 – Removal, Suspension, Expulsion, and Permanent Exclusion of Student, Policy 5610.03 – Emergency Removal of Students, and Policy 5611 – Due Process Rights.

### **Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment**

The Complainant (or his/her parent/guardian if the Complainant is a minor) may file a Formal Complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. Alternatively, the Title IX Coordinator may sign a Formal Complaint. When deciding whether to sign a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator should consider a variety of factors, including but not limited to: (1) circumstances that suggest an increased risk of repeated Sexual Harassment, such as the alleged Respondent's previous history of threats; (2) whether the Sexual Harassment was perpetrated with a weapon; (3) the age of the student subjected to the Sexual Harassment; (4) and whether the school can obtain relevant evidence through other means, such as from security cameras or witnesses.

The Title IX Coordinator must balance the student's or parent's request that a Formal Complaint not be initiated with the District's obligation to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students.

Even when the Title IX Coordinator signs the Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a Complainant; the Complainant remains the individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment.

Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the District will follow its Grievance Process and Procedures, and undertake an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. The Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

### **Grievance Process and Procedures**

The District's grievance process and procedures are detailed in Policy 2266. The grievance process seeks a prompt and equitable resolution of the Formal Complaint.

It is critical that the Title IX Coordinator, and any investigator, decision-maker or person designated to facilitate an informal resolution, does not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants and Respondents generally or any individual Complainant(s) or Respondent(s).

The Title IX Coordinator shall appoint an investigator (unless the Title IX Coordinator intends to serve as the investigator and a decision-maker to assist the District in resolving the Formal Complaint. Upon being assigned to conduct an investigation or to serve as a decision-maker, the investigator and the decision-maker shall confirm in writing that they do not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants and Respondents generally. The investigator and decision-maker shall also – after learning the name(s) of the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) – confirm in writing that they do not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against the individual Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) involved in the specific Formal Complaint.

In appropriate circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may appoint/assign a person to facilitate an informal resolution process. The facilitator must confirm in writing that s/he does not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants and Respondents generally, and does not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against the individual Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) involved in the specific Formal Complaint.

Within two (2) days of learning of the identity of the investigator, decision-maker, and/or facilitator of the informal resolution process, the Complainant and/or Respondent may submit a written objection to the Title IX Coordinator concerning the investigator, decision-maker and/or facilitator of the informal resolution process, based upon an actual or perceived conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants and/or respondents generally or either party to the Formal Complaint. The objecting party must explain the basis for the contention that the investigator, decision-maker and/or facilitator of the informal resolution process has a conflict of interest or is biased and submit any substantiating evidence. Within two (2) days of receiving the written objection, the Title IX Coordinator will decide whether to replace the investigator, decision-maker and/or facilitator of the informal resolution process, and notify the parties of the decision, including the reasons for it.

If there is an ongoing criminal investigation involving the incident that is the subject of the Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will seek to implement the District's grievance process in a manner that does not unduly impact the criminal investigation. To the extent appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator and/or the District-assigned investigator will consider whether information can be shared among the criminal investigators and the District-assigned investigator so that the Complainant(s) is/are not unnecessarily required to give multiple statements about an alleged traumatic event. If the investigation includes forensic evidence, the District-assigned investigator may consult with local law enforcement or a forensic expert to ensure that the District-assigned investigator is correctly interpreting the evidence.

While the District will not wait for the conclusion of a criminal investigation or criminal proceeding to begin its own Title IX investigation, it may delay temporarily the investigation portion of the grievance process while the police are gathering evidence. During this delay in the Title IX investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will implement supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator will also continue to provide reasonable updates to the parties on the status of the investigation and inform the parties when the school resumes its Title IX investigation.

If the Title IX Coordinator delays the investigation portion of a Title IX investigation due to an ongoing criminal investigation, it will promptly resume and complete the investigation once the District learns that the applicable law enforcement has completed its evidence-gathering stage of the criminal investigation. The District will not unreasonably delay its investigation or the determination of responsibility until the ultimate outcome of the criminal investigation or the filing of any charges. The District may work with

its local law enforcement, and local prosecutor's office to learn when the evidence-gathering stage of the criminal investigation is complete.

### **Off-Campus Sexual Harassment**

The District is required to investigate a Formal Complaint that involves conduct that occurred in the District's education program or activity, even if the conduct occurred off school property. The District's education program or activity includes locations, events, and circumstances in the United States over which the Board exercises substantial control over the Respondent and the context in which the Sexual Harassment occurs. The Title IX Coordinator shall determine whether any alleged off-campus Sexual Harassment occurred in an educational program context or school activity. If it did, the grievance process and procedures shall apply and be implemented in the same manner as with an on-campus complaint. Whether the alleged misconduct occurred in this context may not always be apparent from the initial complaint, so the Title IX Coordinator may need to gather additional information to make such a determination. Off-campus educational programs and activities include school-sponsored field trips, athletic team travel, and school club events.

Upon receipt of a report of Sexual Harassment made pursuant to Policy 2266, the Title IX Coordinator will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine:

- A. Whether the alleged conduct, as reported, falls, or could fall, within the scope of Policy 2266; and
- B. Whether the alleged conduct, as reported, constitutes, or could constitute Sexual Harassment.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the alleged conduct could not fall within the scope of Policy 2266, and/or could not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if investigated, the Title Coordinator will close the matter and notify the reporting party if doing so is consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). The Title IX Coordinator may refer the report to the Principal or another staff member, as appropriate.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported could fall within the scope of Policy 2266, and/or could constitute Sexual Harassment, if investigated, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact the Complainant.

As part of the preliminary assessment, the Title IX Coordinator may take investigative steps to determine the identity of the Complainant, if such identity is not apparent from the report.

Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will confirm whether the alleged conduct falls within the scope of Policy 2266, including whether the conduct, as reported, constitutes or could constitute Sexual Harassment, and whether the incident(s) occurred within the context of the District's education program or activity. If the Title IX Coordinator determines the conduct did not occur in the context of an educational program or activity, or could not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if investigated, the Title IX Coordinator will dismiss the Formal Complaint but may refer the matter to the Principal to consider whether the alleged misconduct, while not a Title IX violation, may still involve the creation of an impermissible hostile or discriminatory environment that is prohibited under the Board's other nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies.

### **Supportive Measures**

Supportive measures involve non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the Complainant or the Respondent. Supportive

measures must be offered to the Complainant after a report of Sexual Harassment is made and regardless of whether a Formal Complaint is filed, and to both the Complainant and the Respondent after a Formal Complaint is filed.

The District will implement supportive measures that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the District's educational environment or deter Sexual Harassment. The District will contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the Complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint, and explain to the Complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint.

Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, school/campus escort services, mutual restrictions of contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus (including school buildings and facilities), and other similar measures (e.g., instituting changes to extracurricular activities, transportation, and lunch in order to allow the Complainant and Respondent to avoid contact; informing the Complainant of other available resources, such as victim advocacy, academic support, disability services, health and mental health services, the right to report a crime to local law enforcement, the right to seek judicial no-contact, restraining and protective orders, and other forms of legal assistance).

The Title IX Coordinator will determine appropriate supportive measures on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Notice Provided Prior to a Meeting, Interview**

In advance of any interview, meeting the Title IX Coordinator, investigator and/or decision-maker will transmit a written notice to the Complainant and Respondent that includes:

- A. a physical copy of Policy 2266 or a hyperlink to Policy 2266;
- B. sufficient details known at the time so that the parties may prepare for an initial interview with the investigator, including the identities of the parties involved in the incident (if known), the conduct allegedly constituting Sexual Harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident (if known);
- C. a statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged Sexual Harassment and that a determination of responsibility will not be made until the conclusion of the adjudication and any appeal;
- D. notifying the Complainant and Respondent of their right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice;
- E. notifying the Complainant and Respondent of their right to inspect and review evidence;
- F. notifying the Complainant and Respondent of the District's prohibitions on retaliation and false statements; and
- G. information about resources that are available at the District and in the community.

Should the Title IX Coordinator decide, at any point, to investigate allegations that are materially beyond the scope of the initial written notice, the Title IX Coordinator will provide a supplemental written notice describing the additional allegations to be investigated.

### **Role of Advisors**

All parties are entitled to have an advisor of their choosing to assist them throughout the grievance process. The advisor may be a parent/guardian, relative, friend, attorney, or any other supporter that the party chooses to advise them who is eligible and available. A party may not select a person who is identified as or may be called as a witness to serve as an advisor, with the exception of a parent/guardian.

The parties are expected to notify the Title IX Coordinator, investigator and/or decision-maker of the identity of their advisors at least two (2) days before any meeting, or interview. A party may change advisors during the grievance process but needs to provide a minimum of two (2) days advanced notice to the Title IX Coordinator, investigator and/or decision-maker, as appropriate.

If a party is unable to identify and secure an advisor, upon request, the Title IX Coordinator will appoint an advisor, who may or may not be an attorney. Unless a party presents evidence of a conflict of interest or bias, the party may not decline the advisor assigned by the Title IX Coordinator.

A party's advisor is permitted to accompany the party in all meetings and interviews at which the party is entitled to be present, including intake, investigative interviews, and appeals. Advisors should help their advisees to prepare for each meeting.

Advisors are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, with integrity and in good faith.

All advisors are subject to the same rules, regardless of whether they are an attorney or not. The Title IX Coordinator, the investigator and the decision-maker shall have discretion to determine whether advisors may be permitted to present on behalf of the Complainant or Respondent in a meeting, or interview. Under no circumstances would a parent/guardian be prevented from doing so. Any limitations placed on the advisors shall apply to the advisors for all parties. If it is determined the advisors are not permitted to present on behalf of the Complainant or Respondent, the advisor should request or wait for a break in the proceeding before interacting with District officials. Advisors may confer quietly with their advisees as necessary, as long as they do not disrupt the process. Advisors may request breaks, as needed, in order to confer with their advisees.

Prior to the first meeting, or interview, the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator or the decision-maker will meet or speak with the advisors to clarify their roles and answer any questions they may have.

Advisors are prohibited from interfering with the investigation or the grievance process. If an advisor acts in a disruptive manner or outside the role at a meeting, or interview, the District official in charge of the meeting, or interview will warn the advisor. If the advisor continues to disrupt the proceeding or act in an unprofessional manner, the advisor will be asked to leave and will be dismissed from the meeting, or interview, the meeting or interview will typically continue after the advisor is excused. The Title IX Coordinator will subsequently decide whether the original advisor will be reinstated or will need to be replaced by a different advisor.

In order for the District to share documentation related to the allegations pertaining to a student with the student party's advisor, the Eligible Student or the student party's parent/guardian must provide written consent authorizing such sharing.

The parties are not restricted from discussing or sharing information related to the allegations with their advisor or others who may support or assist them in the process.

Consistent with the Title IX regulations, advisors are required to maintain the privacy of records shared with them by the District during the grievance process; pursuant to FERPA, the records may not be shared with third parties, disclosed publicly, or used for purposes unrelated to the grievance process.

If an advisor is unable to attend a meeting in person, the District official in charge of the meeting will attempt to arrange for the advisor to participate by telephone, video, and/or virtual meeting. However, an advisor's inability to attend a meeting will ordinarily not excuse or prevent the meeting from occurring.

If a party is a Board employee who is entitled to a union representative, the Board employee may be accompanied by both a union representative as well as another advisor at any meeting, interview

### **Remedies**

If the decision-maker(s) determines the Respondent is responsible for violating Policy 2266, the District will take prompt and effective steps to end the sex discrimination/Sexual Harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. The decision-makers(s') written determination should recommend to the Title IX Coordinator and the Superintendent appropriate remedies that may include, but are not limited to:

- A. providing an escort for the Complainant to move safely between classes and activities;
- B. ensuring the Complainant and Respondent do not share classes or extracurricular activities (e.g., re-arranging schedules at the Complainant's request);
- C. moving the Respondent or Complainant to another school within the District;
- D. providing medical, counseling, and academic support services to the Complainant and/or Respondent;
- E. affording/arranging for the Complainant to have extra time to complete or retake classes or exams without academic penalty (e.g., the Complainant is provided extensions on due dates for papers, assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.);
- F. reviewing disciplinary proceedings/actions against the Complainant to see if there is a causal connection between the Sexual Harassment and the misconduct that may have resulted in the Complainant being disciplined;
- G. initiating evaluations for special education or accommodations/modifications under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- H. imposing disciplinary sanctions/consequences, up to and including expulsion or permanent exclusion on a student Respondent and termination on an employee Respondent; and
- I. ordering other global remedies such as:
  - 1. training or re-training employees;

2. developing and distributing materials on Sexual Harassment;
3. conducting Sexual Harassment prevention programs; and/or
4. conducting climate checks/surveys.

## **Training**

All Employees – given that the District is considered to have actual knowledge of Sexual Harassment or allegations of Sexual Harassment if any Board employee has notice of same, all Board employees shall receive training in:

- A. the definition of Sexual Harassment (as that term is used in Policy 2266)
- B. the person(s) to whom such misconduct must be reported, including the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator(s); and
- C. what information should be included in a report, the consequences for failing to report, and what information must be provided to the student and/or parent. For example, Board employees will be trained to inform students about:
  1. the employee's reporting responsibilities; and
  2. their right to file a Title IX complaint with the school and to report a crime to local law enforcement. Board employees shall be trained to report to the Title IX Coordinator(s) both allegations of and actual incident(s) involving Sexual Harassment, without determining first whether the incident or allegations meet the applicable definition of Sexual Harassment or are substantiated.

## **Title IX Coordinator(s)/Investigator(s)/Decision-Maker(s)/Facilitators of Informal Resolution Process**

The District's Title IX Coordinator(s), along with any investigator(s), decision-maker(s), or persons designated to facilitate an informal resolution process, shall receive training on the definition of Sexual Harassment (as that term is used in Policy 2266), the scope of the District's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including, appeals and informal resolution processes, as applicable, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interests, and bias.

The training shall include information on the following topics:

- A. working with and interviewing persons subjected to Sexual Harassment;
- B. particular types of conduct that constitute Sexual Harassment;
- C. the proper standard of review for Formal Complaints (i.e., preponderance of the evidence);

- D. consent, incapacity, coercion, force, and the role age, mental or physical disability, and/or drugs or alcohol can play in a person's ability to consent;
- E. the need for remedial actions for the Respondent, Complainant, and school community;
- F. how to determine credibility;
- G. how to evaluate evidence and weigh it in an impartial manner;
- H. how to conduct investigations;
- I. confidentiality.

Decision-makers must also receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.

Investigators must receive training on how to prepare an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Any materials used to Train IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any persons who facilitate an informal resolution process, must not rely on sex stereotypes, and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.

### **Students**

The District shall provide age-appropriate education about Sexual Harassment to students. In the younger grades, the District will cover these topics in its anti-bullying and harassment training. In the older grades, students will receive training in specific topics, including:

- A. Title IX and what constitutes Sexual Harassment under the school's policies;
- B. the school's definition of consent applicable to sexual conduct, including examples;
- C. how the school analyzes whether conduct was unwelcome under Title IX;
- D. how the school analyzes whether unwelcome sexual conduct creates a hostile environment;
- E. reporting options, including how to file a Formal Complaint and any timeframes set by the school for reporting;
- F. the school's grievance process and procedures used to address reports of and Formal Complaints alleging Sexual Harassment;
- G. disciplinary code provisions relating to Sexual Harassment and the consequences of violating those provisions;
- H. how to report Sexual Harassment to school officials and local law enforcement and the ability to pursue law enforcement proceedings simultaneously with a Title IX grievance; and
- I. Title IX's protections against retaliation.

The training will also encourage students to report Sexual Harassment, even if they are unsure whether the incident meets the definition of Sexual Harassment contained in Policy 2266. The District will emphasize that its primary concern is student safety, and that use of alcohol or drugs never makes the alleged victim at fault for Sexual Harassment.

The District shall specifically inform students that all Board employees are responsible for reporting information involving Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s), including the need to report the names of the alleged Complainant and Respondent, as well as relevant facts including the date, time, and location. The issue of confidentiality will be discussed during the training.

The District shall provide the above training on a regular basis and periodically review their efficacy.

### **Retaliation**

Federal law strictly prohibits retaliation against a Complainant, Respondent, or witness. The Title IX Coordinator will inform the Complainant, Respondent and other individuals who participate in the grievance process of this prohibition and direct the Complainant to report any retaliation, whether by students, Board employees, or other members of the School District community or Third Parties that is directed toward the Complainant. Upon learning of alleged retaliation, the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Superintendent will take strong responsive action as appropriate.

### **Contact Information for the Office of Civil Rights**

Individuals may submit questions or file complaints relating to Title IX with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at any time. OCR's regional office in Cleveland has jurisdiction for all of Ohio:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Cleveland Office  
1350 Euclid Avenue  
Suite 325  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115  
(216) 522-4970  
FAX: (216) 522-2573  
TDD: (216) 522-4944  
E-mail: OCR.Cleveland@ed.gov  
Web: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr>

### **Retention of Investigatory Records and Materials**

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing retention of all records that must be maintained pursuant to Policy 2266. All investigators, decision-makers (including decision-makers of appeals) and facilitators of informal resolution processes shall retain all documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created and/or received as part of an investigation, determination of responsibility, or informal resolution process, which may include but are not limited to:

- A. all written reports, allegations, Formal Complaints, statements, and responses pertaining to an alleged violation of Policy 2266;

- B. any narratives that memorialize oral reports, allegations, Formal Complaints, statements, and responses pertaining to an alleged violation of Policy 2266;
- C. any documentation that memorializes the actions taken by District personnel or individuals contracted or appointed by the Board to fulfill its responsibilities related to the investigation, determination of responsibility, and/or the District's response to an alleged violation of Policy 2266;
- D. written witness statements;
- E. narratives, notes from, or audio, video, or digital recordings of witness interviews/statements;
- F. e-mails, texts, or social media posts that directly relate to or constitute evidence pertaining to an alleged violation of Policy 2266 (i.e., not after-the-fact commentary about or media coverage of the incident);
- G. notes or summaries prepared contemporaneously by the investigator in whatever form made (e.g., handwritten, keyed into a computer or tablet, etc.), but not including transitory notes whose content is otherwise memorialized in other documents;
- H. written disciplinary sanctions issued to students or employees and other documentation that memorializes oral disciplinary sanctions issued to students or employees for violations of Policy 2266;
- I. dated written determinations of responsibility/investigative reports (including summaries of relevant exculpatory and inculpatory evidence) and other documentation that memorializes oral notifications to the parties concerning the outcome of the investigation, including any consequences imposed as a result of a violation of Policy 2266;
- J. documentation of any supportive measures offered and/or provided to Complainants and/or Respondents, including no-contact orders issued to both parties, the dates the no-contact orders were issued, and the dates the parties acknowledged receipt of the no-contact orders;
- K. documentation of all actions taken, both individual and systemic, to stop the discrimination or harassment, prevent its recurrence, eliminate any hostile environment, and remedy its discriminatory effects;
- L. copies of the Board policy and/or procedures/guidelines used by the District to conduct the investigation, and any documents used by the District at the time of the alleged violation to communicate the Board's expectations to students and staff with respect to the subject of Policy 2266 (e.g., Student Code of Conduct and/or Employee/Administrator Handbooks);
- M. copies of any documentation that memorializes any informal resolution to a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

The documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) retained may include public records and records exempt from disclosure under Federal (e.g., FERPA, ADA) and/or State law (e.g., R.C. 3319.321) – e.g., student records and confidential medical records.

The documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created or received as part of an investigation or proceeding related to determination of responsibility shall be retained in accordance with

Policy 8310, Policy 8315, Policy 8320, and Policy 8330 for not less than seven (7) calendar years, but longer if otherwise required by the District's records retention schedule.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE**

No form of violent, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior, including excessive truancy, will be tolerated.

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE CODE**

Each of the behaviors and/or types of misconduct described below are prohibited and may subject the student to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, student conference, parent/guardian notification, parent/guardian conference, detention, in-school discipline, suspension and/or expulsion from school. Furthermore, any criminal acts committed at or related to the School will be reported to law enforcement officials as well as disciplined at school. Certain criminal acts may result in permanent exclusion from school.

#### **1. Possession/use of drugs and/or alcohol**

Possessing, using, transmitting or concealing, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, controlled substance including, but not limited to, narcotics, mood altering drugs, counterfeit controlled substances, lookalikes, over the counter stimulants or depressants, anabolic steroids, or drug-related paraphernalia.

If a building principal has a reasonable individualized suspicion of drug or alcohol use, she may request the student in question to submit to any appropriate testing, including but not limited to, a breathalyzer test or urinalysis. In such circumstances, the student will be taken to a private administrative or instructional area on school property for such testing with at least one other member of the teaching or administrative staff present as a witness to the test. If a student refuses to take the test, s/he will be advised that such denial leaves the observed evidence of alcohol or drug use unrefuted thus leading to possible disciplinary action. The student will then be given a second opportunity to take the test.

#### **2. Possession/use of tobacco**

Possession, consumption, distribution, purchase or attempt to purchase, and/or use of tobacco products or electronic cigarettes or similar devices in school, on school grounds, on school buses, in Board-owned vehicles, within any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for by the Board, and at any interscholastic competition, extra-curricular event, or other school sponsored event is prohibited. Tobacco products include, but are not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, vapes, chewing tobacco, snuff or any other matter or substance that contains tobacco. The term "tobacco" includes any product that contains tobacco, is derived from tobacco, contains nicotine, or e-cigarettes and other electronic smoking devices (including but not limited to "JUULs"), but does not include any cessation product approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for use as a medical treatment to reduce or eliminate nicotine or tobacco dependence. Smoking of electronic, "vapor", other substitute forms of cigarettes, or clove cigarettes is also prohibited.

#### **3. Use and/or possession of a firearm**

Bringing a firearm (as defined in the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994) onto school property or to any school-sponsored activity, competition, program, or event, regardless of where it occurs, will result in a mandatory one (1) year expulsion under Ohio law. This expulsion may be reduced on a case-by-case basis by the Superintendent using the guideline(s) set forth in Board Policy 5611.

Firearm is defined as any weapon (including a starter gun) that will or is designed to, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device (as defined in the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994). Firearms include any unloaded firearm and any firearm that is inoperable but that can be readily operated.

Students are prohibited from knowingly possessing an object on school premises, in a school, or a school building, at a school activity, or on a school vehicle that is indistinguishable from a firearm, whether or not the object is capable of being fired, and indicating they are in possession of such an object and that it is a firearm, or knowingly displaying or brandishing the object and indicating it is a firearm.

#### **4. Use and/or possession of a weapon**

The term “weapon” includes any object which, in the manner in which it is used, is intended to be used, or is represented, is capable of inflicting serious bodily harm or property damage, as well as endangering the health and safety of persons. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, guns of any type whatsoever, including air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded), knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, ammunition, incendiary devices, explosives, and other objects defined as dangerous ordinances under State law. It may also include any toy that is presented as a real weapon or reacted to as a real weapon. Possession and/or use of a weapon may subject a student to expulsion and possible permanent exclusion.

A knife is defined as any cutting instrument consisting of a sharp blade fastened to a handle, a razor blade or any similar device that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.

#### **5. Use of an object as a weapon**

Any object that is used to threaten, harm, or harass another may be considered a weapon. This includes but is not limited to padlocks, pens, pencils, laser pointers, and jewelry.

#### **6. Knowledge of dangerous weapons or threats of violence**

Because the Board believes that students, staff members, and visitors are entitled to function in a safe school environment, students are required to report knowledge of dangerous weapons or threats of violence to the Principal. Failure to report such knowledge may subject the student to discipline.

#### **7. Arson**

Intentional or purposeful destruction or damage to school or district buildings or property by means of fire. Anything, such as fire, that endangers school property and its occupants will not be tolerated. Arson is a felony.

#### **8. Physically assaulting a staff member/student/person associated with the District.**

Acting with intent to cause fear in another person of immediate bodily harm or death, or intentionally bullying, inflicting or attempting to inflict bodily harm upon another person. Physical assault of a staff member, student, or other person associated with the District, regardless of whether it causes injury, will not be tolerated. Any intentional, harmful or potentially harmful physical contact or bullying initiated by a student against a staff member will be considered to be assault. Assault may result in criminal charges and may subject the student to expulsion.

**9. Verbally threatening (either orally, in writing or otherwise expressed) a staff member/student/person associated with the District.**

Any oral or written statement or otherwise expressed action that a staff member, student, or other person associated with the District reasonably feels to be a threat will be considered a verbal assault. Profanity directed toward a staff member in a threatening tone may also be considered a verbal assault. Confrontation with a student or staff member that bullies, intimidates, or causes fear of bodily harm or death is also prohibited.

**10. Misconduct against a school official or employee, or the property of such a person, regardless of where it occurs.**

The Board prohibits misconduct committed by a student against a school official or employee, including, but not limited to, harassment (of any type), vandalism, assault (verbal and/or physical), and destruction of property.

**11. Misconduct off school grounds**

Students may be subject to discipline for their misconduct even when it occurs off school property when the misconduct is connected to activities or incidents that occurred on property owned or controlled by the District.

Misconduct is defined as any violation of the Student Discipline Code.

**12. Extortion**

Extortion is the use of threat, intimidation, force, or deception to take, or receive something from someone else. Extortion is against the law.

**13. Gambling**

Gambling (i.e., playing a game of chance for stakes) includes casual betting, betting pools, organized-sports betting, and any other form of wagering. Students who bet on any school activity in which they are involved may also be banned from that school activity.

**14. Falsification of school work, identification, forgery**

Falsifying signatures or data, or refusing to give proper identification or giving false information to a staff member. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, forgery of hall/bus passes and excuses, as well as use of false I.D.'s.

Plagiarism and cheating are also forms of falsification and will subject the student to academic penalties as well as disciplinary action.

**15. Bomb Threats, and other false alarms and reports**

Making a bomb threat (i.e., intentionally giving a false alarm of a bomb) against a school building or any premises at which a school activity is being held at the time the threat is made may result in expulsion for a period of up to one (1) school year. Additionally, intentionally giving a false alarm of a fire, or tampering or interfering with any fire alarm is prohibited. It should be remembered that false emergency alarms or

reports endanger the safety forces that are responding to the alarm/report, the citizens of the community, and the persons in the building. What may seem like a prank, is a dangerous stunt that is against the law and will subject the student to disciplinary action.

#### **16. Terroristic Threat**

Threatening, directly or indirectly, to commit a crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize another or with reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror in another.

#### **17. Possession and/or use of explosives and/or fireworks**

Possessing or using any compound or mixture, the primary or common purpose of which is to function by explosion, with substantially instantaneous release of gas and heat (including, but not limited to explosives and chemical-reaction objects such as smoke bombs and poppers). Additionally, possessing or offering for sale any substance, combination of substances or article prepared to produce a visible and/or audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration or detonation.

#### **18. Trespassing**

Although schools are public facilities, the law allows the Board to restrict access to school property. Being present in any Board-owned facility or portion of a Board-owned facility when it is closed to the public or when the student does not have the authorization to be there, or unauthorized presence in a Board-owned vehicle; or unauthorized access or activity in a Board-owned computer, into district, school or staff computer files, into a school or district file server, or into the Network. When a student has been removed, suspended, expelled, or permanently excluded from school, the student is prohibited from being present on school property without authorization of the principal.

#### **19. Theft, or knowingly receiving or possessing stolen property**

Unauthorized taking of property of another person or receiving or possessing such property. Students caught stealing will be disciplined and may be reported to law enforcement officials. Students should not bring anything of value to school without prior authorization from the Principal. The School is not responsible for personal property.

#### **20. Insubordination**

Students are expected to comply with the reasonable directions of staff. Willful refusal or failure to follow or comply with an appropriate direction given by a staff member, or acting in defiance of staff members.

#### **21. Damaging property (Vandalism)**

Defacing, cutting, or otherwise damaging property that belongs to the school, district, other students, employees or others and disregard for school property.

#### **22. Persistent absence or tardiness**

Attendance laws require students to be in school all day or to have a legitimate excuse for their absence. Penalties for unexcused absences can range from detention to a referral to court and/or revocation of the student's driver's license.

#### **23. Unauthorized use of school or private property**

Students must obtain permission to use any school property or any private property located on school premises. Any unauthorized use of school property, or private property located on school premises, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

**24. Refusing to accept discipline**

Students failing to comply with disciplinary penalties may face enhanced penalties for such action.

**25. Aiding or abetting violation of school rules**

Assisting other students in the violation of any school rule. Students are expected to resist peer pressure and exercise sound decision making regarding their behavior.

**26. Displays of affection/sexual activities**

Affection between students is personal and not meant for public display. This includes touching, petting, or any other contact that may be considered sexual in nature. Sexual activity of any nature is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

**27. Possession of electronic equipment**

The School will supply any electronic equipment or devices necessary for participation in the educational program. Students shall not use or possess any electronic equipment on school property or at any school sponsored activity without the permission of the Principal. Examples of prohibited devices but are not limited to radios, “boom-boxes”, headphones, CD/MP3 players, portable TV’s, electronic games/toys, pagers, cellular telephones, beepers, other paging devices and other electronic communication devices, and the like. Unauthorized electronic equipment will be confiscated from the student by school personnel and disciplinary action will be taken.

**28. Violation of individual school/classroom rules**

Each learning environment has different rules for students. These rules are for the safe and orderly operation of that environment. Students will be oriented to specific rules within each learning environment, all of which will be consistent with this Code.

**29. Violation of bus rules (See V - Transportation)**

**30. Interference, disruption or obstruction of the educational process**

Any actions or manner of dress that materially and substantially disrupts or interferes with school activities or the educational process, or which threaten to do so are unacceptable. Such disruptions include, but are not limited to, delay or prevention of lessons, assemblies, field trips, athletic and performing arts events.

**31. Harassment and/or Aggressive Behavior (including Bullying/Cyberbullying)**

The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community. Harassment and/or aggressive behavior (including bullying/cyberbullying) toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and any speech or action that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive learning environment. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. Individuals engaging in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Conduct constituting sexual harassment, may include, but is not limited to:

- A. verbal harassment or abuse;
- B. pressure for sexual activity;
- C. repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications;
- D. unwelcome touching;
- E. sexual jokes, posters, cartoons, etc.;
- F. suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades or safety;
- G. a pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating discomfort and/or humiliation to another;
- H. remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history.

Note: An inappropriate boundary invasion by a District employee or other adult member of the School District community into a student's personal space and personal life is sexual harassment. Further, any administrator, teacher, coach, other school authority who engages in sexual or other inappropriate physical contact with a student may be guilty of criminal "child abuse" as defined in State law.

Conduct constituting harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or disability may take different forms, including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. **Verbal:**  
  
The making of offensive written or oral innuendoes, comments, jokes, insults, threats, or disparaging remarks concerning a person's race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, or disability.
- B. **Nonverbal:**  
  
Placing offensive objects, pictures, or graphic commentaries in the school environment or making insulting or threatening gestures based upon a person's race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, or disability.
- C. **Physical:**  
  
Any intimidating or disparaging action such as hitting, pushing, shoving, hissing, or spitting, on or by a fellow staff member, students, or other person associated with the District, or third parties, based upon the person's race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, or disability.

Aggressive behavior is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well being. This type of behavior is a form of intimidation and harassment, although it need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, marital status, or disability. It would include, but not be limited to,

such behaviors as stalking, bullying/cyberbullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing.

Any student who believes that s/he is the victim of any of the above actions or has observed such actions by another student, staff member, or other person associated with the District, or by third parties should contact the District's Anti-Harassment Complaint Coordinator: Angie Murphy at 70.382.6065 or [amurphy@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:amurphy@ridgedaleschools.org).

The Complaint Coordinators are available during regular school hours to discuss a student's concerns related to harassment and/or bullying/cyberbullying, to assist a student who seeks support or advice when informing another individual about "unwelcome" conduct, or to intercede informally on behalf of the student.

The student may report his/her concerns to the Anti-Harassment Complaint Coordinators either by a written report, telephone, or personal visit. In reporting his/her concerns, the student should provide the name of the person(s) whom s/he believes to be responsible for the harassment and or bullying/cyberbullying and the nature of the harassing and/or bullying/cyberbullying incident(s). The AntiHarassment Complaint Coordinators will promptly compile a written summary of each such report that will be forwarded to the Principal.

Each report will be investigated in a timely manner and as confidentially as possible. The District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. While a charge is under investigation, no information will be released to anyone who is not involved with the investigation, except as may be required by law or in the context of a legal or administrative proceeding. All records generated under the terms of this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. All individuals involved in an investigation as either a witness, victim or alleged harasser and/or bully/cyberbully will be instructed not to discuss the subject outside of the investigation.

If an investigation reveals that a harassment and/or bullying/cyberbullying complaint is valid, appropriate remedial and or disciplinary action will be taken promptly to prevent the continuance of the harassment and/or bullying/cyberbullying or its recurrence.

Given the nature of harassing and/or bullying/cyberbullying behavior, the School recognizes that false accusations can have serious effects on innocent individuals. Therefore, all students are expected to act responsibly, honestly, and with the utmost candor whenever they present harassment and/or bullying/cyberbullying allegations or charges.

Some forms of sexual harassment of a student may reasonably be considered child abuse that must be reported to the proper authorities.

These guidelines shall not be interpreted to infringe upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by State or Federal law).

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment and/or aggressive behavior is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as harassment and aggressive behavior. Making intentionally false reports about harassment or

aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

Any one having further questions concerning prohibited behaviors and/or the complaint process should request a copy of Board policies and administrative guidelines 5517 and 5517.01.

### **32. Hazing**

Performing any act, or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, team, or organization, that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this rule.

Hazing by any individual, school group, club, or team is not permitted. This includes any form of initiation that causes or creates a risk of causing mental or physical harm, no matter how willing the participant may be. Hazing activities are prohibited at any time in school facilities, on school property, and/or off school property but connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on school property.

All incidents of hazing must be reported immediately to any of the following individuals: the building principal or other administrator; teacher; coach; student club advisor/supervisor, and/or Superintendent. Students who engage in hazing may also be liable for civil and criminal penalties.

### **33. Violent Conduct**

Students may be expelled for up to one school year for committing an act at school, on other school property, at an interscholastic competition, extracurricular event, or any other school program, or directing an act at a Board official or employee, regardless of where or when that act may occur, or their property that would be a criminal offense if committed by an adult and results in serious physical harm to person(s) or property.

### **34. Improper Dress**

Clothing may not include words or visuals that are lewd, obscene, disruptive, abusive, or discriminatory, or that advertise drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Dress or grooming that is disruptive of the classroom or school atmosphere is not allowed. Shoes must be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.

### **35. Careless or Reckless Driving**

Driving on school property in such a manner as to endanger persons or property.

### **36. Burglary**

Entering a building or a specific area of a building without consent and with intent to commit a crime, or entering a building without consent and committing a crime.

### **37. Fighting**

Engaging in adversarial physical contact (differentiated from poking, pushing, shoving or scuffling) in which one or the other party(ies) or both contributed to the situation by verbally instigating a fight and/or physical action. Promoting or instigating a fight (i.e., contributing to a fight verbally or through behavior).

### **38. Lighting Incendiary Devices**

Unauthorized igniting of matches, lighters and other devices that produce flames.

### **39. Possession of Pornography**

Possessing sexually explicit material.

### **40. Unauthorized use of vehicles**

Occupying or using vehicles during school hours without parental permission and/or school authorization.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is important to remember that the School's rules apply going to and from school, at school, on school property, at school-sponsored events, on school transportation, and on property not owned or controlled by the Board but that is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on property owned or controlled by the Board. Furthermore, students may be disciplined for conduct that, regardless of where or when it occurs, is directed at a Board official or employee, or the property of such official or employee. In some cases, a student can be suspended from school transportation for infractions of school bus rules.

The School is committed to providing prompt, reasonable discipline consistent with the severity of the incident. The consequences for misbehavior are designed to be fair, firm and consistent for all students in the School.

Because it is not possible to list every misbehavior that occurs, misbehaviors not listed above will be responded to as necessary by staff.

Two (2) types of discipline are possible, informal and formal.

### **Informal Discipline**

Informal discipline takes place within the School. It may include:

- writing assignments
- work assignments
- in school discipline
- delayed learning opportunities

### **Formal Discipline**

Formal discipline involves removal of the student from school. It includes emergency removal for up to three (3) school days, suspension for up to ten (10) school days, expulsion for up to eighty (80) school days or the number of days remaining in a semester, whichever is greater, and permanent exclusion. Expulsions may carry over into the next school year. Any student who is expelled from school for more than twenty (20) days or for any period of time if the expulsion will extend into the following semester or school year will be provided with information about services or programs offered by public and private agencies that work toward improving those aspects of the student's attitude and behavior that contributed to the incident that gave rise to the student's expulsion. The Superintendent at his/her discretion may require/allow a student to perform community service in conjunction with or in place of an expulsion. The Superintendent may impose a community service requirement beyond the end of the school year in lieu of applying the expulsion to the following school year. Removal for less than one (1) school day without the possibility of suspension or expulsion may not be appealed. Suspension, expulsion, and permanent exclusion may be appealed.

Students being considered for suspension are entitled to an informal meeting with the building administrator prior to removal. Also, students being considered for expulsion are entitled to an informal meeting with the Superintendent or designee prior to removal. During the informal meeting, the student will be notified of the charges and given the opportunity to respond.

Students involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities such as band and athletics can lose their eligibility for violation of the School rules.

If a student commits a crime while under the School's jurisdiction, s/he may be subject to school disciplinary action as well as action through local law enforcement.

### **DUE PROCESS RIGHTS**

Before a student is suspended, expelled, or permanently excluded from school, there are specific procedures that must be followed.

As long as the in-school discipline is served entirely in the school setting, it will not require any notice or meeting, or be subject to appeal.

#### **Suspension from School**

When a student is being considered for a suspension, the administrator in charge will notify the student of the basis for the proposed suspension. The student will be given an opportunity to explain his/her view of the underlying facts. After that informal hearing, the Principal will determine whether or not to suspend the student. If the decision is made to suspend the student, s/he and his/her parents will be given written notification of the suspension within one (1) day setting forth the reason for the suspension, the length of the suspension, and the process for appeal. The suspension may be appealed, within 14 days after receipt of the suspension notice, to the Treasurer of the Board of the Superintendent. The request for an appeal must be in writing.

During the appeal process, the student shall not be allowed to remain in school.

If the appeal is heard by the Board's designee, the appeal shall be conducted in a private hearing. If the appeal is heard by the Board of Education, the appeal shall be conducted in executive session unless the student or his/her representative requests otherwise. A verbatim transcript will be made and witnesses will be sworn in prior to giving testimony. If the appeal decision is to uphold the suspension, the next step in the appeal process is to the Court of Common Pleas.

### **Emergency Removal**

If a student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process taking place either in a classroom or elsewhere on the school premises, the Superintendent or principal may remove the student from any curricular or extracurricular activity or from the school premises. A teacher may remove the student from any curricular or extracurricular activity under the teacher's supervision, but not from the premises.

If a teacher makes an emergency removal, the teacher will notify a building administrator of the circumstances surrounding the removal in writing within one (1) school day. No prior notice or hearing is required for any removal under this procedure. In all cases of normal disciplinary procedures where a

student is removed from curricular or extracurricular activity for less than one school day, and is not subject to further suspension for expulsion, the following due process requirements do not apply.

If the emergency removal exceeds one (1) school day, then a hearing will be held on the next school day after the removal is ordered. Written notice of the hearing and the reasons for removal and any intended disciplinary action will be provided to the student, as soon as practical prior to the hearing. If the student is subject to an out of school suspension, the student will have the opportunity to appear at an informal hearing before the principal, assistant principal, Superintendent or a designee, and may challenge the reasons for the removal or otherwise explain his/her actions.

A student in any of grades pre-kindergarten through three (3) may be removed only for the remainder of the school day, and shall be permitted to return to any curricular and extra-curricular activities on the next school day (following the day in which the student was removed or excluded). When a student in any of grades pre-kindergarten through three (3) is removed and returned to their curricular and extra-curricular activities the next school day, the Principal is not required to hold a hearing (or provide written notice of the same).

Within one (1) school day of the decision to suspend, written notification will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) or custodian(s) of the student. This notice will include the reasons for the suspension, the right of the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) or custodian(s) to appeal to the Board or its designee, and the student's right to be represented in all appeal proceedings. If it is likely that the student may be subject to expulsion, the hearing will take place within three (3) school days and will be held in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Student Expulsion Policy. The person who ordered or requested the removal will be present at the hearing. In an emergency removal, a student may be kept from class until the matter of the alleged misconduct is resolved either by reinstatement, suspension or expulsion.

### **Expulsion from School**

When a student is being considered for expulsion, the student and parent will be provided with a formal notice of the proposed expulsion. This written notice will include the reasons for the intended expulsion, notification of the opportunity to appear in person before the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to challenge the reasons for the expulsion and/or explain the student's action, and notification of the time and place to appear. Students being considered for expulsion may be removed immediately. A hearing will be scheduled no earlier than three (3), nor no later than five (5) school days after the notice is given. Parents may request an extension of time for the hearing. The student may be represented by his/her parents, legal counsel, and/or by a person of his/her choice at the hearing.

In accordance with Board Policy 5610, the Superintendent shall initiate expulsion proceedings against a student who has committed an act that warrants expulsion under Board policy even if the student withdraws from school prior to the hearing or decision to impose the expulsion. The expulsion will be imposed for the same duration that it would have been had the student remained enrolled.

If a student is expelled, the student and the student's parents will be provided with written notice within one (1) school day of the imposed expulsion. The notice will include the reasons for the expulsion, the right of the student, or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or custodian(s) to appeal the expulsion to the Board or its designee, the right to be represented in all appeal proceedings, the right to be granted a hearing before the Board or its designee, and the right to request that the hearing be held in executive session.

Within 14 calendar days after the Superintendent notifies the parents of the expulsion, the expulsion may be appealed, in writing, to the Treasurer of the Board of the Superintendent or its designee. A hearing on the requested appeal will be formal with an opportunity for sworn testimony. If the expulsion is upheld on appeal, a student's parents may pursue further appeal to the Court of Common Pleas.

Students serving expulsions will not be awarded grades or credit during the period of expulsion. Expulsion for certain violations including use or possession of alcohol or drugs, may result in revocation of student's driver's license. When a student is expelled, the Superintendent will notify any college in which the expelled student is enrolled under the Postsecondary Enrollment Option at the time the expulsion is imposed.

### **Permanent Exclusion**

State law provides for the permanent exclusion of a student, 16 years of age or older who engages in certain criminal activity. Permanently excluded students may never be permitted to return to school anywhere in the State of Ohio. A permanent exclusion may be considered if the student is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for committing one or more of the following crimes while on the property of any Ohio school:

- conveying deadly weapons onto school property or to a school function;
- possessing deadly weapons onto school property or at a school function;
- carrying a concealed weapon onto school property or at a school function;
- trafficking in drugs onto school property or at a school function;
- murder, aggravated murder on school property or at a school function;
- voluntary or involuntary manslaughter on school grounds or at a school function;
- assault or aggravated assault on school property or at a school function;
- assault or aggravated assault on school property or at a school function;
- rape, gross sexual imposition or felonious sexual penetration on school grounds, or at a school function, when the victim is a school employee;
- complicity in any of the above offenses, regardless of the location.

This process is formal and may follow an expulsion with the proper notification to the parents.

### **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are entitled to the rights and procedures afforded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (I.D.E.I.A.), and, where applicable, the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **Suspension of Bus Riding/Transportation Privileges**

When a student is being considered for suspension of bus riding/transportation privileges, the administrator in charge will notify the student of the reason. The student will be given an opportunity to address the basis for the proposed suspension at an informal hearing. After that informal hearing, the principal will decide whether or not to suspend his/her bus riding/transportation privileges for all or part of the school year.

If a student's bus riding/transportation privileges are suspended, s/he and his/her parents/guardians will be notified, in writing within one day, of the reason for and the length of the suspension.

### **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

Administrators may search a student or his/her property (including vehicles, purses, knapsacks, gym bags, etc.) with or without the student's consent, whenever they reasonably suspect that a search will lead to the discovery of evidence of a violation of law or school rules. The extent of the search will be governed by the seriousness of the alleged infraction and the student's age. General housekeeping inspection of school property may be conducted with reasonable notice. Student lockers are the property of the District and students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in their contents or in the contents of any other District

property including desks or other containers. School authorities may conduct random searches of the lockers and their contents at any time without announcement. Unannounced and random canine searches may also be conducted.

Additionally, students have NO reasonable expectation of privacy in their actions in public areas including but not limited to, common areas, hallways, cafeterias, classrooms and gymnasiums. The District may use video cameras in such areas and on all school vehicles transporting students to and from regular and extracurricular activities.

Anything that is found in the course of a search may be used as evidence of a violation of school rules or the law, and may be taken, held or turned over to the police. The School reserves the right not to return items that have been confiscated.

## INTERROGATION OF STUDENTS

The School is committed to protecting students from harm that may be connected with the school environment and also recognizes its responsibility to cooperate with law enforcement and public child welfare agencies. While the School believes these agencies should conduct their investigations off school property if possible, investigations can take place at school in emergency situations or if the violation being investigated occurred on school property.

Before students are questioned as witnesses or suspects in an alleged criminal violation, the building administrator will attempt to contact a parent/guardian prior to questioning and shall remain in the room during questioning.

If a student is questioned as the subject of alleged child abuse or neglect, the building administrator will attempt to contact a parent prior to questioning, and s/he (or a designated guidance counselor) will remain in the room during questioning. If the agency investigating the alleged child abuse or neglect suspects the parent is the perpetrator, neither parent will be contacted prior to questioning, but the building administrator (or a designated guidance counselor) will remain in the room during questioning.

If law enforcement or children's services agency removes a student from school, the building administrator will notify a parent.

## STUDENT RIGHTS OF EXPRESSION

The School recognizes the right of students to express themselves. With the right of expression comes the responsibility to do so appropriately. Students may distribute or display, at appropriate times, nonsponsored, noncommercial written material and petitions; buttons, badges, or other insignia; clothing, insignia, and banners; and audio and video materials. All items must meet school guidelines.

### A. Material cannot be displayed if it:

1. is obscene to minors, libelous, or pervasively indecent or vulgar;
2. advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law;
3. intends to be insulting or harassing;
4. intends to incite fighting; or
5. presents a clear and present likelihood that, either because of its content or manner of distribution or display, it will cause or is likely to cause a material and substantial disruption of school or school activities, a violation of school regulations, or the commission of an unlawful act.

- B. Material may not be displayed or distributed during class periods, or between classes. Permission may be granted for display or distribution during lunch periods, and/or before or after school in designated locations, as long as exits are not blocked and there is proper access and egress to the building.

Students who are unsure whether materials they wish to display meet school guidelines may present them to the principal twenty-four (24) hours prior to display.

## **SECTION V - TRANSPORTATION**

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOL**

The School provides transportation for all students. The transportation schedule and routes are available by contacting Robin Townsend – Transportation Supervisor at 740-383-2020 ext 420.

Students may only ride assigned buses and must board and depart from the bus at assigned bus stops. Students will not be permitted to ride unassigned buses for any reason other than an emergency, except as approved by the Principal.

The principal may approve a change in a student's regular assigned bus stop to address a special need. Parents should send a note to the principal stating the reason for the request and the duration of the requested change.

### **CONDUCT ON SCHOOL VEHICLES**

Students who are riding to and from school on District-provided transportation must follow all basic safety rules. This applies to school-owned buses as well as any contracted transportation.

The driver may assign seating or direct students in any reasonable manner to maintain transportation safety.

Students must comply with the following basic safety rules:

Prior to loading (on the road and at school) each student shall:

- be on time at the designated loading zone
- stay off the road at all times while walking to and waiting for school transportation;
- line up single file off the roadway to enter;
- wait until the school transportation is completely stopped before moving forward to enter;
- refrain from crossing a highway until the driver signals it is safe to cross;
- properly board and depart the vehicle;
- go immediately to a seat and be seated.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the bus driver when their child will not be aboard school transportation. Drivers will not wait for students who are not at their designated stops on time.

During the trip each student shall:

- remain seated while the school transportation is in motion;
- keep head, hands, arms, and legs inside the school transportation at all times;
- not push, shove, or engage in scuffling;
- not litter in the school vehicle or throw anything in, into, or from the vehicle;
- keep books, packages, coats, and all other objects out of the aisle;
- be courteous to the driver and to other riders;

- not eat or play games, cards, etc.;
- not use nuisance devices (e.g., laser pointers) on the school vehicle in a way that disrupts the safe transportation of students and/or endangers students or employees;
- not tamper with the school vehicle or any of its equipment (including, but not limited to, emergency and/or safety equipment).

Exiting the school vehicle each student shall:

- Remain seated until the vehicle has stopped;
- Cross the road, when necessary, at least 10 feet in front of the vehicle, but only after the driver signals that it is safe;
- Be alert to a possible danger signal from the driver.

The driver will not discharge students at places other than their regular stop at home or at school unless s/he has proper authorization from school officials.

### **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING ON SCHOOL BUSES**

The Board of Education has installed video cameras on school buses to monitor student behavior.

If a student misbehaves on a bus and his/her actions are recorded, the recording will be submitted to the Principal and may be used as evidence of misbehavior.

### **PENALTIES FOR INFRACTIONS**

A student who misbehaves on the bus shall be disciplined in accordance with the Student Discipline Code and may lose the privilege of riding on the school vehicle. (See Suspension of Bus Riding/Transportation Privileges, above).

### **TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS BY PRIVATE VEHICLE**

When transportation by District vehicle is either not available or feasible, there may be a need to provide transportation to students by private vehicle. However, no students will be permitted to ride in a private vehicle unless written consent is provided by each student's parent using Form 8660 F2 – Parental Consent for Transportation by Private Vehicle. Upon request, parents of participating students will be given the name of the driver, the owner of the vehicle, and the description of the vehicle.