

Whitfield County Schools  
**Elementary Handbook**  
Student Handbook



Cedar Ridge Elementary School

**2018-2019**

**Whitfield County Schools  
Elementary Student Handbook  
Table of Contents**

**Vision, Mission, and Beliefs Statement.....p. 3**

**Whitfield County Schools 2018-2019 Calendar .....p. 4**

**After School Care..... p. 5**

**Attendance (Student).....p. 5**

**Birthdays.....p. 6**

**Buses .....p. 7**

**Cafeteria .....p. 8**

**Car Riders .....p. 9**

**CCRPI (College and Career Readiness Performance Index) .....p. 9**

**Complaint Procedures .....p. 9**

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment .....p. 11**

**Curriculum Information .....p. 12**

**Family Engagement and Involvement .....p. 12**

**Field Trips .....p. 13**

**Gifted Referral.....p. 13**

**Grades and Report Cards.....p. 13**

**Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).....p. 13**

**Medications.....p. 14**

**Nondiscrimination Statement.....p. 14**

**NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.....p. 14**

**OF RIGHTS UNDER.....p. 14**

**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA).....p. 15**

**AND PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA).....p. 17**

**Parent's Right to Know.....p. 18**

**Professional Qualifications (Highly Qualified).....p. 18**

**Publicity.....p. 19**

**School Closings.....p. 20**

**School Improvement Plans.....p. 20**

**Smoking/Use of Tobacco Products.....p. 20**

**Student Internet Usage .....p. 20**

**Title I Purpose and Definition.....p. 20**

**Visitors.....p. 23**

**Volunteers.....p. 23**

**Waste, Fraud, Abuse, and Corruption .....p. 23**

**Whitfield County Schools  
Vision, Mission, and Beliefs Statement**

**Vision**

We envision a valued and dynamic school district that prepares students for success in a global community.

**Mission**

Our mission is to maximize student learning by providing challenging and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

**Beliefs**

1. We believe the needs of students, personnel, families, and the community are best met with a unified direction.
2. We believe our purpose is to lead students to success by engaging them in challenging and meaningful work.
3. We believe teachers are leaders who design learning experiences for students.
4. We believe our personnel, families, and community members are vital to the education of our students.
5. We believe in creating and maintaining a safe, inviting, and inclusive learning environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

# Whitfield County Schools 2018-2019 Calendar

Thursday–Tuesday, August 2–7 .....Pre-Planning for Teachers  
 Wednesday, August 8 .....First Day of School for Students  
 Monday, September 3 .....Labor Day Holiday  
 Friday, October 5..... Student Holiday and Staff Professional Learning Day  
 Monday, October 8.....Staff and Student Holiday  
 Wednesday, October 17.....Early Dismissal (Parent Conference/Professional Learning)  
 Monday-Friday, November 19–23.....Thanksgiving Holidays  
 Friday, December 21.....Early Dismissal for Students (P.M. workday for staff)  
 Monday, December 24–Friday, Jan. 4 .....Christmas Holidays for Students and Staff  
 Monday, January 7.....Professional Learning Day for Staff Only  
 Tuesday, January 8.....Students Resume Classes after Christmas Holidays  
 Monday, January 21.....Staff and Student Holiday (Martin Luther King Birthday)  
 Friday, February 15.....Student Holiday/Staff Prof. Dev. **OR** Inclement Weather  
 Make-up Day  
 Monday, February 18.....Staff and Student Holiday  
 Wednesday, March 6 .....Early Dismissal (Parent Conference/Professional Learning)  
 Monday–Friday, April 1-5 .....Spring Holidays  
 Friday, April 19.....Staff and Student Holiday **OR** Inclement Weather Make-  
 up Day  
 Friday, May 24 .....Early Dismissal (Last Day of School for Students 180  
 days)  
 Monday, May 27 .....Memorial Day Holiday  
 Tuesday-Thursday, May 28–30 .....Post-Planning for Teachers  
 Friday, May 31 .....Makeup Post-Planning for Teachers  
*In case Inclement Weather Days are used*

Elementary Schools – Four 9-Week Grading Periods			Middle Schools – Six 6-Week Grading Periods			
Progress Reports Issued	Nine-Week Grading Period Ends	Report Card Dates	Grading Periods	Six-Week Grading Period Ends	Report Card/Progress Report Dates	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday, Sept. 6	Friday, Oct. 5	Friday, Oct. 12	1 <sup>st</sup>	Friday, Sept. 14	Thursday, Sept. 20
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Thursday, Nov. 8	Friday, Dec. 21	Friday, Jan. 11	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday, Oct. 26	Thursday, Nov. 1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday, Jan. 31	Tuesday, March 12	Tuesday, March 19	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Friday, Dec. 21	Friday, Jan. 11
4 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday, April 23	Friday, May 24	End of Year	4 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, Feb. 8	Wednesday, Feb. 13
			5 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, March 29	Thursday, Apr. 11	
			6 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, May 24	End of Year	
High Schools						
Semester Ends		Progress Reports Issued		Semester Report Cards		
1 <sup>st</sup>	Friday, Dec. 21	Thursday, Sept. 20	Thursday, Nov. 1	Friday, Jan. 11		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday, May 24	Wednesday, Feb. 13	Thursday, April 11	End of Year		

## After School Care

Most Whitfield County Elementary Schools offer after school care for students in grades Pre-K through five. At Cedar Ridge, child care is offered by two private companies: The Boys and Girls Club and Magnolia House. Please contact the child care center of your choice for the cost of the program.

### Attendance (Student)

Students are expected to be in school each day unless excused for one of the reasons listed below.

1. Personal illness that would endanger the student's health or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in the student's immediate family.
3. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
4. Mandated absence by order of governmental agencies, e.g., court order or pre-induction physical for the armed forces.
5. Conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to health or safety.
6. A period not to exceed one day is allowed for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. Approved college visitation in accordance with high school regulations.
8. Working at an electoral poll site during an election.
9. Student trips deemed educational by the Assistant Superintendent.

Parent notes may be accepted for up to 10 absences in a school year and must be turned in five (5) days after the absence. After 10 absences, parents will be required to provide written medical excuses or documentation. However, in cases when a student's absences become excessive and are addressed through an attendance intervention (i.e. Attendance Review Team, Educational Improvement Team or School Social Work Referral) absences will only be excused by written medical documentation.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly and/or while representing the school in an activity approved by the school and/or Board of Education. Students in foster care shall be counted present when they attend court proceedings relating to their foster care.

A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U. S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to five (5) days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.

Individual students who have emergencies to arise that necessitate their absence from school for a portion of the school day must have been present for one half of the instructional day in order to be included in attendance counts.

An unlawful (unexcused) absence is one not permitted under the Compulsory School Attendance Law (20-2-690) and policies of the Whitfield County School Board.

Any combination of five (5) unexcused tardies / late check-ins or unexcused early check-outs will be considered one (1) unexcused absence. If a student has excessive absences or tardies, the school social worker may refer the student and parent(s) to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS), Educational Improvement Team (EIT) or the appropriate court when sufficient legal causes for these absences or tardies do not exist. Corrective measures may be taken against the student and/or parent(s).

When a high school student has more than six (6) unexcused absences per semester in a class meeting fewer than 90 days (6 block days), the student will not receive credit for that course. If a high school student has more than 10 unexcused absences in a class meeting more than 90 days (yearlong courses) the student will not receive credit for that course. Any student who is absent one half day is considered absent the full day. The student must be present for at least one half of the high school class period to be considered present for the class. The student and/or parent/guardian may request the school principal or designee to review the case if there are extenuating circumstances. Upon denial, it can be appealed to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

According to the State Board of Education rules, a student is truant who during the school calendar year has more than five (5) unexcused absences.

- The school will contact you in writing by mail when your child has 5, 10 and 15 total absences each school year.
- Parents may be requested to attend an Attendance Review Team (ART) meeting when students reach 5 unexcused or 10 total absences. Parents who do not attend the ART meeting will be referred to the school social worker. Parents may also be asked to provide a written medical documentation to excuse future absences due to illness.
- Upon review of the student's attendance, the school social worker may refer the student and family on to the community Education Improvement Team (EIT), the Department of Family and Children Services or the Whitfield County Juvenile or Magistrate Court.
- The ART and EIT process is ongoing and may not start over each year. If the intervention was held the previous school year, the family may not attend an ART or EIT the following year. However, the family will be notified by the school social worker of the continued attendance concerns.

## **Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law**

### **CODE SECTION --20-2-690-1.**

- (a) Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program.

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code Section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not to exceed \$100.00 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or both, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part shall constitute a separate offense.

### **Birthdays**

Students may distribute birthday invitations as long as every child in the classroom receives an invitation. Parents who wish to send in cupcakes or birthday treats may do so during the student's designated lunch or recess time.

### **Buses**

Bus transportation is provided by the Whitfield County School System for every student living more than 1 1/2 miles from his/her school. Safety of all students is the primary goal in bus transportation. Students are expected to care for the buses, exhibit respect, courtesy, and consideration for bus drivers and other bus riders, and behave appropriately on the buses. Abuse of any of these may result in the loss of the privilege of participation in the bus transportation program. No food, drink, or candy is permitted on school buses.

### WCS Transportation Guidelines

Whitfield County Schools provides School Bus Transportation for approximately 9,000 of our students on a daily basis. In order to maintain a safe and efficient transportation program and to offer this privilege with fairness and equality, we must require all students to attend their zoned school in order to receive school bus service. Any parents who have been granted permission for their students to attend the school of their choice and whose residence address is not located within that school zone are responsible for transporting their students to and from school.

An exemption exists for students who qualify for special-needs bus services to specific programs in another school as authorized by the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Once a student has been enrolled in the school where their residence is zoned, the student and their family will be given bus route information for the bus to take them to and from their home of record. Due to safety and resource limitations, riding the bus to and from other locations cannot be accommodated.

On a limited (one-time) basis, students may ride to an alternate location as long as they have a signed note from a parent, verified by the school administrator and presented to the bus driver prior to boarding. This exception is also contingent upon space being available on the bus.

Bus routes are established between schools, private residences, and designated neighborhood bus stops. Due to safety concerns, school buses do not deliver students to business locations.

All students are expected to understand and abide by the Bus Safety Rules provided in the student handbook.

If a hardship exists that makes it necessary for a parent to request a student to be delivered to an alternate location on a recurring basis, an exemption may be granted under the following conditions.

Legitimate hardship cases may be appealed to the principal of the school for consideration by submitting a hardship request form provided by the School.

Principals will evaluate each hardship request to determine if the situation precludes parents from being reasonably able to provide childcare, adult supervision, transportation, etc.

The alternate pickup or drop-off location must be at a residence within the student's home school zone.

If the hardship request is approved, the student would be delivered to the alternate address on a regular basis. Students would not be able to intermittently switch between their home and alternate addresses for bus pickup or delivery.

## **Cafeteria**

Free and Reduced Meal Applications

2018-2019 WCS Student Handbook

Free and Reduced Meal Applications are available on-line. Go to the Whitfield County School website at <http://wcs.ga.net/> or [www.lunchapplication.com](http://www.lunchapplication.com) to access the on-line application. Paper copies will be available at the beginning of school. You are encouraged to complete an application if you think your children may qualify. ONLY ONE APPLICATION PER HOUSEHOLD needs to be completed, listing all school age children on the form.

Meal Prices	Students	Adults
Breakfast (Elementary)	FREE	\$1.75
Breakfast (Middle & High)	\$1.25	\$1.75
Elementary Lunch	\$2.25	\$3.25
Middle & High School Lunch	\$2.50	\$3.25

**Extra milk** costs an additional 50 cents. **Reduced breakfast** is 30 cents. **Reduced lunch** is 40 cents. Those who plan to eat breakfast at school should arrive 20-30 minutes before classes begin.

#### On-Line Payment Option

Parents are able to pay for student meals with cash, money order, check or online.

#### Advantages of Using Online Payment System-

- See your student's meal balance at anytime from anywhere
- Deposit payments for multiple students in just one click
- Setup recurring payments for monthly or weekly deposits
- Reviewing individual student meal histories
- Automated notifications via email or text when your student's balance falls below an amount you choose

Go to: [www.K12PaymentCenter.com](http://www.K12PaymentCenter.com) to setup your child's account. You will need your child's Student ID number to setup an account. If you do not know your child's Student ID number you may contact your child's cafeteria manager.

#### Biometric finger scan

Schools will be using a biometric finger scan to identify students. Parents can opt out of the finger scan by contacting their school's cafeteria manager.

#### Charges

Students have a limited charge privilege. If an elementary or middle school student arrives at school without money, they are allowed up to (5) five days of charges. If a high school student arrives at school without money, they are allowed up to (3) three days of charges. If the student has reached the charge limit, he/she will be provided an alternate meal (such as a cheese sandwich and milk). Every effort will be made to notify parents of charges and the alternative meal policy at the first negative balance, utilizing automated calls, letters and

email. Charges are not allowed for extras or a la carte items. Parents are able to pay for student meals online at [k12paymentcenter.com](http://k12paymentcenter.com) or with cash, check or money order.

## Menus

Monthly lunch menus can be viewed on MealViewer at [www.schools.mealviewer.com](http://www.schools.mealviewer.com), or you can access the site from the Whitfield County Schools' website at [www.wcsga.net/](http://www.wcsga.net/) by clicking Departments, then Student Nutrition. The MealViewer App is also available for download on Android and iOS systems.

## Outside Food

Students are encouraged to eat school prepared meals. Food items brought from home to be consumed in the school cafeteria should be in appropriate containers such as paper bags or lunch boxes. Containers with advertising (such as Wendy's, McDonald's, etc.) should not be brought into the school cafeteria. Carbonated beverages should not be brought to school.

## Car Riders

In order to pick up a child in the car rider line, you must have the child's car rider tag issued by the school. If you do not have the tag, please report to the front office with identification to pick up your child.

## CCRPI (College and Career Readiness Performance Index)

The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is mostly based on student achievement, progress, and shrinking gaps in achievement. Scores are based on a scale of 0 – 110 possible points. The state defines the index as “a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.” Detailed scores are available at the state education’s department’s website. <http://www.gadoe.org/CCRPI/Pages/default.aspx>. The 2018 CCRPI reports have not been released as of the printing of this document.

## Complaint Procedures

Parents are expected to address complaints or grievances beginning at the school level with the teacher first and then the administration. Central office personnel should be contacted next should parents feel the issues have not been resolved. If still unsatisfied, the superintendent should be contacted. Parents have the right to speak to the Board of Education through public participation at a Board of Education meeting. Conferences forms, notes, and minutes are kept on file as documentation of the issues. Complaint procedures are described and a form for documenting complaints is located in the administrative handbook. The complaint procedures describe grounds for complaints, federal programs for which complaints can be filed, filing and investigation of a complaint, as well as rights to appeal. The GADOE address to which complaints should be filed is included in the procedure.

### Complaint Procedures under the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965

#### A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Whitfield County School District Board of Education if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a violation of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965

has occurred. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

#### B. Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

1. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
2. Title I, Part C: Migrant Education Program
3. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
4. Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
5. Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
6. Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
7. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities
8. Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children

#### C. Filing a Complaint

A formal complaint must be filed in writing to the Whitfield County School District superintendent or his/her designee.

The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that the LEA has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation);
4. A list of names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complaint's position; and
6. The address of the complainant/s.

#### D. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent or his/her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the Department received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;
3. A statement of the ways in which the Department may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the Superintendent will have sixty (60) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings. If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion will be included. Either the 30-day or the 60-day timelines outlined above may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant.

#### E. Right of Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Superintendent's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Georgia Department of Education  
Office of Legal Services  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE  
2052 Twin Tower East  
Atlanta, GA 30334

## **Comprehensive Needs Assessment**

The Georgia Department of Education requires that each school district and school conduct a comprehensive needs assessment every three years to identify areas for improvement. This process includes representatives of all stakeholders: parents, teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, business partners, community organizations, and faith-based leaders. This extensive study is comprised of looking at all sources of data to conduct a root cause analysis to identify areas that need to be improved. Goals are then determined. These goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time – bound. This is an in depth study that will be conducted every three years to help write a three year school improvement plan. Although the in-depth process will happen every three years, the district and school improvement plan will be reviewed annually for revision. The district and school plans drive the budgets for Title I funding.

## **Curriculum Information**

### *GA Standards of Excellence*

The GA Standards of Excellence clearly define what is expected of Whitfield County students at each grade level. The clear goals set by these educational standards help teachers ensure students have the skills and knowledge to be successful beyond the classroom. Standards do not tell teachers how to teach but do guide their lesson designs to include the knowledge and skills students need to succeed. Standards help teachers customize work to provide the best teaching and learning experiences for their students. Standards also help students and parents see clear and realistic goals for success.

The GA Standards of Excellence are designed to be rigorous and relevant to the real world and to reflect the knowledge and skills our young people need for success in college and their careers. Whitfield County teachers have been trained on the standards and understand what this rigor will look like in their classrooms. The standards emphasize development of critical thinking and problem solving skills in students to help them reflect more deeply and encourage profound learning in all subject areas. In the classroom, work aligned to the GA Standards of Excellence will push students to collaborate, which trains them to be excellent communicators who speak and write effectively.

The GA Standards of Excellence also include an integrated model of literacy, increasing text complexity and the use of technology to enhance learning in all content areas. Math students delve deeper into the process skills by engaging in authentic tasks. GA Standards of Excellence raise the bar for students in all grade levels, requiring teachers, students, and parents to work together to embrace the challenges of this curriculum.

## **Family Engagement and Involvement**

Districts and schools are required to set aside 1% of their budget for activities for building the capacity of parents to help their children succeed academically. The district has one family engagement/involvement coordinator to coordinate activities at the district level. Each school has a parent involvement coordinator that helps to facilitate the relationship between school and families. Parents are asked for input at the district level on our comprehensive needs assessment, district improvement plan, the parent involvement plan, and 1% parental involvement set aside funds. The district does not keep any of the required 1% set aside at the district level. All funds are distributed to schools on an equitable per pupil allocation based on the previous October FTE number of students on free and reduced meals.

At the school level, parents are asked for input on the comprehensive needs assessment which guides the school improvement/Title I plan and budget, parent involvement plan, school compact, and 1% parent involvement set aside funds.

At Cedar Ridge, our Parent Resource Center is located just to the left of the office upon entering the front doors of the building. We have educational games and books that are available for check out. If you do not find something that meets your needs, all you have to do is ask, and we will try to locate materials on your requested topic. Opportunities will be made available to educate the staff on the value and utilization of parent contribution, how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners. Teachers, administrators, and other staff members will implement and coordinate parent programs, parent volunteering, Family Nights, etc., to build ties between home and school and reinforce the value of parent contributions.

## **Field Trips**

All students should have the opportunity of attending field trips during the school year. Field trips are an extension of the educational experience the students receive at school. Therefore, all field trips should be directly related to the GA Standards of Excellence. Donations may be requested from parents to help defray

cost; however, no fees may be required and no student may be denied the opportunity to participate due to not paying.

## **Gifted Referrals**

Whitfield County Schools participates in a yearly gifted screening process. A student may be recommended for consideration by a teacher, parent, administrator, counselor, peer, or self. Reported referrals are reviewed by each school's local gifted eligibility team. This team determines which students will be tested. Student test data is valid for two calendar years.

## **Grades and Report Cards**

Infinite Campus is used for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to record grades, and report cards are sent home at the end of each nine week grading period in order to communicate the academic achievement, conduct, and attendance of students with their parents. Progress reports are sent home at 4 1/2 weeks.

All kindergarten through second grade students receive a standards-based report card which identifies how the student is progressing with the GA Standards of Excellence on a scaled rubric. Grades 3-5 use the numerical format below to report progress.

The letter-numerical grading system is as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Conduct</u>	
A 90-100	Satisfactory	S
B 80-89	Needs to Improve	N
C 70-79	Unsatisfactory	U
Below 70 -U		

## **Measures of Academic Process (MAP)**

Elementary students in all grades take the MAP assessment two times during the school year. A third testing period is optional. MAP allows teachers to assess student progress, group students according to academic needs, and design work that specifically meets the needs of their students.

## **Medications**

All medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter, may be administered only by a designated adult at the school. All medications must be taken by the student or guardian to the school office immediately upon arrival at school. Any student possessing prescription or over-the-counter medicine not in accordance with these guidelines will be considered in violation of the Whitfield County Schools drug policy. Before any medicine can be administered, the school office must have on file a written request from the student's parent or guardian asking that the medicine be administered by the school. The medicine must be in the original container with the name of the patient, the prescribing physician, as well as the name of the pharmacy filling the prescription. All medicine should be kept in a secured area and a dated medication log should be maintained for each student receiving medication.

A student for whom the school has on file supporting medical documentation may carry at all times with parental/guardian permission inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine (epi pens) for allergic reactions and medical needs for diabetes. Students authorized to self-administer such medications shall be instructed not

to permit any other student to handle, possess, or otherwise attempt to use his/her medication and shall be informed that violations of such instructions will be dealt with in accordance with the student code of conduct.

In order for the student to carry and self-administer such medications, or in order for the school to store and administer the medication for students who are unable to self-administer because of age or any other reason, parents must provide a written statement from a licensed physician confirming that the student is able to self-administer the medication and written permission from the parent for the nurse or designated employee to consult with the doctor regarding any questions that may arise concerning the medication.

## **Nondiscrimination Statement**

It is the policy of the Whitfield County School District that racial, sexual, or other forms of harassment are strictly forbidden. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the school district based upon his or her race, color, religion, national origin, disability or sex should promptly report the same to the principal of their school or the appropriate coordinator, who will implement the board's discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures. Students may report harassment or discrimination to their school counselor. Students and employees will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination. A copy of the discriminatory complaint procedure of the Whitfield County School District (GAAA/JAA) is located online in the board of education policy manual at [www.wcsga.net](http://www.wcsga.net) and is available in all school offices and the central office.

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that the Whitfield County School System does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the sports equity coordinator.

### **NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS OF RIGHTS UNDER FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) AND PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

FERPA affords parents and eligible students (over 18 years of age or attending a postsecondary institution) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) or older, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent or designee will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- (3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and its

implementing regulations authorize disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including school nurses and school resource officers); a member of the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); a contractor consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the school district has outsourced services; or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee) or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) FERPA requires the school district, with certain exceptions, to obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student's education records. However, the district may disclose appropriate designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent or eligible student has advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from the student's education records in certain school publications, such as the annual yearbook, graduation or sports activity programs, and honor roll or other recognition lists.

The School District has designated the following information as directory information:

**[Note: The board may, but does not have to, include all the information listed below. Information listed must be consistent with those items designated in board policy].**

- (a) Student's name, address and telephone number;
- (b) Student's date and place of birth;
- (c) Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
- (d) Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
- (e) Dates of attendance at schools within the district;
- (f) Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
- (g) Photograph; and
- (h) Grade level.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers unless parents have advised the school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 30 days after officially enrolling in school or within 30 days of the date of the release of this notice.

(5) You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event; unless you, as a parent/guardian object in writing to the principal to your student being photographed, videotaped or interviewed. You must notify the principal of your objection by the date specified above. The principal

will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, your submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that your student will not be photographed, videoed, or interviewed, or that such information will not be posted on websites or social media sites not affiliated with the school or district, or in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

(6) You have the right to file with the United States Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA or the regulations promulgated there under. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education,  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202.

### **PARENT/ELIGIBLE STUDENT DATA PRIVACY COMPLAINT POLICY**

The Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act is a Georgia state law that is designed to ensure student data is kept private and secure from unauthorized access. Any parent or eligible student ("Complainant") may file a complaint with the local school system if that individual believes and alleges that a possible violation of rights under the federal or state privacy and security laws has occurred. A parent is defined as a natural parent, as guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. An eligible student is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

O.C.G.A. §20-2-667 Parental and student review of education record; model policies subsection (g)(1) directs the Georgia Department of Education to develop model policies and procedures for a parent or eligible student to file a complaint with an LEA regarding a possible violation of rights under federal or state student data privacy and security laws.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that parents or eligible students are provided a formal process to file a complaint with a local school system regarding a possible violation and to set forth the official process that the local school system must use to handle the complaint. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received.

In accordance with OCGA §20-2-667 section(g)(1), Whitfield County School System policy is as follows:

1. Any Parent/Eligible Student with a complaint should request, in writing, a Parent/Eligible Student Complaint form from the following official:

Chris Parker

Director of Student Services

201 East Tyler Street, Dalton, GA 30721

2. The Complainant will be provided a complaint form within 3 business days of receiving the request.

3. A written response must be provided to Complainant within 10 business days of receipt of complaint.

4. The Complainant may file an appeal with the local school superintendent within 10 business days of receiving written response from local school system.

5. Parents or eligible student may file an appeal for a final decision to the local board of education within 10 business days of receipt of written response from local school system. 6. Local boards of education must render a decision within 10 business days of receiving an appeal.

### **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents and eligible students (18 or older or emancipated minors) certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for

marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Parents and eligible students will be notified at the beginning of the school year if the school district has identified the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the activities listed above are expected to be scheduled. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. The Board of Education has developed and adopted policies, in conjunction with parents, regarding these rights as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The district will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The district will also directly notify parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey.

The school is required by federal law to give this notice to parents. However, the school does not have scheduled any such activities as are described above. If any such activities are initiated during the school year, parents will be notified accordingly and will be afforded all rights described herein.

## Parent's Right to Know

### ***Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals***

#### ***Professional Qualifications (formerly highly qualified)***

The NCLB "highly qualified" requirement has been replaced by two different, but comparable requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA):

- Professional Qualifications - applies to ALL teachers and paraprofessionals in grades PK-12
- ESSA In-Field Reporting - applies to ALL teachers in grades PK-12

Under Sec. 1111 of Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, SEAs and LEAs must ensure teachers meet state certification or licensure requirements or, if applicable, must meet the requirements set forth in a state's public charter school law.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission determines state certification requirements in Georgia. However, under O.C.G.A. §20-2-80 / SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.33 (strategic waiver) and §20-2-2065/ SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.07 (charter), Georgia LEAs may submit applications to waive provisions of Title 20 Education Law including certification requirements as determined by the GaPSC. While certification waivers vary from LEA to LEA, a review of current applications on file reflects waivers of teacher certification (§20-2-200), Professional Learning (PL) for certification renewal (§20-2-201), paraprofessional certification (§200-2-204), alternative certification (§200-2-206) and substitute teacher certification (§200-2-216). In order for the GaDOE to ensure that LEA teachers meet state certification requirements, all LEAs must outline LEA professional qualification requirements that align either with GaPSC requirements, approved charter or strategic waiver applications or a combination of the two. This is submitted annually in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) section of the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). LEAs may update professional qualification requirements at any time in accordance with charter and strategic waiver applications. (LEAs needing to update PQ requirements must contact Title II, Part A staff). LEAs may not waive federal professional qualification requirements for paraprofessionals or state professional qualification requirements.

Regardless of charter or strategic waiver status, all LEA teachers and paraprofessionals must hold a Clearance Certificate (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-82, 20-2-211.1, 20-2-2065, SBOE Rules 160-4-9-.07 and 160-5-1-.33, GaPSC Rule 505-2-.42).

Under July 2017 edits to SBOE Rules 160-4-9-.05, 160-4-9-.06, 160-4-9-.07 and 160-5-1-.33, LEAs may not waive certification requirements for Special Education Teachers. In accordance with guidance received from OSEP January 2018, state rules are as binding.

All LEAs should be reminded that ability to waive certification under charter and strategic waiver does not remove LEA obligation to abide by federal, state and local rules, regulations, court orders and statutes relating to civil rights and labor laws. LEAs are encouraged to work with the LEA's human resources staff and legal counsel to ensure all obligations are met.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact the principal, Cindy Dobbins, at 706-712-8400.

## Publicity

## RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Board of Education designates the following information as "directory information." Unless a parent or eligible student makes a timely request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated directory information on the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request:

1. Student's name, address and telephone number
2. Student's date and place of birth
3. Student's email address
4. Student's participation in official school clubs and sports
5. Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team
6. Dates of attendance at schools within the school district
7. Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the district's schools
8. Photograph
9. Grade level

Parents are further notified that students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or school system personnel at school or some school activity or event. **Parents wishing that the above information be denied release must notify the school principal in writing within 30 days of the first day of a school year or the date of enrollment.**

## School Closings

In the event of severe inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, Whitfield County Schools may be closed, may delay starting time, or may advance dismissal time. Decisions regarding school closings will be made by Central Office personnel and will be announced over local radio stations as well as Chattanooga television stations. Whitfield County Schools webpage and other avenues of social media will contain closure information. Blackboard Connect, a student/parent calling system will also be employed to inform parents of school closings. If no announcement is made by approximately 6:30 a.m., it should be assumed that school will be in session. Please do not call the school or Central Office, as lines need to be left open for emergencies.

## School Improvement Plans

After completing a comprehensive needs assessment, all schools, along with stakeholder input, must create a school improvement plan. This is a three-year plan that serves as a guiding document for school improvement. Although the plan may be for three years, it will be reviewed annually. This plan serves to guide how school resources are allocated whether it is local or federal funding. In the spring, plans will be submitted for review by the Director of Title I, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Superintendent for approval. The plans may be revised or amended annually if needed.

At the end of three years, another comprehensive needs assessment will occur and a revised or new school improvement plan will be written. These plans serve as a guiding document for professional learning, instruction and use of funds to improve the achievement of all students.

## Smoking/Use of Tobacco Products

Smoking and the use of tobacco products including vapor pens in the school building or anywhere on school grounds is a violation of Whitfield County School Board of Education policy. This rule applies to field trips and all extracurricular activities which are an extension of the school. All persons on school property must follow this rule.

## **Student Use of Internet**

All students have access to the Internet. Acceptable use and internet safety guidelines are available on the Whitfield County Schools website at [www.wcsga.net](http://www.wcsga.net). Parents may request a written copy of these guidelines by contacting the school. The school district cannot provide an absolute assurance that students will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials or sending and receiving objectionable communications, but the district will ensure that all practical precautions will be taken to keep students safe from illegal and/or inappropriate material. Students are instructed in acceptable use and Internet safety and their internet use is monitored as closely as possible. If a parent does not wish their child to be allowed on the Internet, they must notify the school principal in writing within the first week of each school term.

## **Title I Purpose and Definition**

### **Purpose and definition:**

#### **SEC. 101. IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED.**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

#### **TITLE I--IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED**

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#### **SEC. 1001. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.**

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. This purpose can be accomplished by —

1. ensuring that high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum, and instructional materials are aligned with challenging State academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement;
2. meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance;
3. closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers;

4. holding schools, local educational agencies, and States accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-performing schools that have failed to provide a high-quality education to their students, while providing alternatives to students in such schools to enable the students to receive a high-quality education;
5. distributing and targeting resources sufficiently to make a difference to local educational agencies and schools where needs are greatest;
6. improving and strengthening accountability, teaching, and learning by using State assessment systems designed to ensure that students are meeting challenging State academic achievement and content standards and increasing achievement overall, but especially for the disadvantaged;
7. providing greater decision making authority and flexibility to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance;
8. providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program, including the use of schoolwide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time;
9. promoting schoolwide reform and ensuring the access of children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies and challenging academic content;
10. significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development;
11. coordinating services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies providing services to youth, children, and families; and
12. affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

### **School Level Programs Schoolwide (SWP) or Targeted Assistance (TA)**

#### School Wide Programs:

**A Schoolwide** Comprehensive program is designed to **upgrade the entire educational program** in order to improve the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.

A school-wide school must have a poverty percentage of 40-percent or more.

#### **OR**

A school-wide school must be an identified Priority or Focus school, even if that school does not have a poverty percentage of 40-percent or more.

#### Targeted Assistance Schools

- Services must be targeted to specific at-risk students
- Only eligible students may participate in Title I funded activities
- Use of funds must be consistent with Title I statutes and regulations

## **Whitfield County Title I Schools**

In Whitfield County, we have twenty Title I schools. Thirteen elementary schools and five middle schools operate school wide Title I programs. Two high schools are identified as Title I and operate targeted assistance programs. All Whitfield County Schools conduct an annual comprehensive needs assessment and which leads into a school improvement plan. These plans are reviewed annually for progress and revised as needed. These comprehensive needs assessments and school improvement plans guide the Title I budget planning process at each Title I school.

Cedar Ridge Elementary School, operates a school wide program in which funds are spent to support instructional programming to increase student achievement. The addition of highly qualified instructional staff helps to create an environment which increases both student and staff knowledge. The majority of the 2018-19 budget is utilized to fund staff and provide professional learning and collaboration as funds allow.

## **Visitors**

For security reasons, all persons visiting the school must report to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's sticker. All visitors must have a visible, affixed visitor's sticker if they are outside of the office area. If a visitor appears unannounced, the teacher should instruct the person to go to the office to sign in before any other business can be conducted. Parents may visit classrooms after making an appointment with the teacher. Students from other schools may not visit during the instructional day unless they are participating in a specific program.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are an essential and important part of school life. School volunteers are also considered mandatory reporters and they must adhere to the same reporting guidelines mentioned above. In order to volunteer in WCS, school volunteers must complete the mandated reporter training and must provide the school with a copy of the online training ([www.preventchildabusega.org](http://www.preventchildabusega.org)) or school conducted training certificate plus sign the WCS forms (Mandated Reporter & No Compensation Agreement). These forms must be on file with each school he/she volunteers. Additional volunteer requirements must be completed if volunteer is supervising over-night field trips and/or students outside of teacher's supervision and would need to be discussed with building administrator.

## **Waste, Fraud, Abuse, and Corruption**

The School District (Whitfield County Schools) shall not tolerate fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption of any kind and has an established system for the reporting of suspicious activities.

### **Definitions**

**Fraud:** A false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds from federal, state, or local grants and funds.

**Waste:** Thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or squandering of local, state, or federal resources to the detriment or potential detriment of the District. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs as a result of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

**Abuse:** Excessive or improper use of resources, or employing resources in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for their use. Abuse also includes intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources; extravagant or excessive use as to abuse one's position or authority.

**Corruption:** A form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. Corruption may include many activities, including bribery and embezzlement.

**Responsibilities**

Employees and parties maintaining a business relationship with the District who suspect fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption, whether it pertains to federal, state, or local programs, should report their concerns to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption is suspected by the Superintendent, such allegations should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Education.

All reports of suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption shall be handled under the strictest confidentiality allowed under the law. Informants may remain anonymous as allowed by law but are encouraged to cooperate with investigators and to provide as much detail and evidence as possible of an alleged violation of this policy. Any and all reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption will be investigated. Results of an investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with a legitimate need to know until the results become subject to public disclosure in accordance with state and/or federal law.