Code of Student Conduct 2005-2006

Empowering Students Through Education
DECATUR CITY SCHOOLS
302 Fourth Avenue, N.E.
Decatur, Alabama 35601
(256) 552-3000

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BROOKHAVEN MIDDLE SCHOOL
Dr. Larry E. Collier, Principal 552-3045

CEDAR RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Dr. Beth Lacy, Principal 552-4622

OAK PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
Principal 552-3035

CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVES TO EXPULSION (CAE)
Mr. Bob Cameron, Principal 308-2308

CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION (CAS)
Mr. Bob Cameron, Principal 552-3052

AUSTINVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Ms. Rhonda Reece, Principal 552-3050

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SOMERVILLE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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WALTER JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
  Ms. Jamie Heim, Principal  552-3031

WEST DECATUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
  Ms. Datie Priest, Principal  552-3027

WOODMEADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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*Magnet Schools
## SCHOOL CALENDAR

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<td>August 8, 2005</td>
<td>Teacher Institute (Monday)</td>
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<td>August 9, 2005</td>
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<td>Kindergarten Students Released at Noon</td>
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<td>October 10 &amp; 11, 2005</td>
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<td>October 25, 2005**</td>
<td>Parenting Day – Students Dismissed at 11:30</td>
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<td>November 11, 2005</td>
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<td>Teacher Workday–Students Do Not Attend (Monday)</td>
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<td>January 4, 2006</td>
<td>Second Term Begins (Wednesday)</td>
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<td>January 16, 2006</td>
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<td>Last Day for Students (93 days) (Thursday)</td>
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<td>Elementary and Middle Schools Release at Noon</td>
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<td>May 25, 2006</td>
<td>Austin High School Graduation</td>
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<td>May 26, 2006</td>
<td>Decatur High School Graduation</td>
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<td>May 26, 2006****</td>
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These days will be used as make-up days in the event days are lost due to inclement weather. The number in parentheses indicates the order in which these days will be reclaimed. State Board Policy requires a minimum of 175 schooldays. Graduation is tentatively set for May 25 & 26, 2006 but may be re-scheduled if additional make-up days are required due to school closings.

** Elementary school students dismissed at Noon. Parent/teacher conferences will begin at 1:00 p.m.

*** Teachers will be available for parent conferences until 7:00 p.m.

**** Teachers will be dismissed at 12:00 to make up time difference worked on parenting day.

- ** These days will be used as make-up days in the event days are lost due to inclement weather. The number in parentheses indicates the order in which these days will be reclaimed. State Board Policy requires a minimum of 175 school days. Graduation is tentatively set for May 26 & 27, 2005, but may be re-scheduled if additional make-up days are required due to school closings.

** Elementary school students dismissed at noon. Parent/teacher conferences will begin at 1 p.m.
DECATUR CITY SCHOOLS
CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

The belief of the Decatur City Board of Education is that instruction shall occur in an environment that is conducive to learning because effective quality instruction requires orderly procedures and discipline. The intent of this handbook, as well as the enforcement of its rules, is to ensure the presence of a safe, friendly and business-like atmosphere in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward mutually recognized and accepted goals. Furthermore, acting in the best interest of this community, the policy of the Decatur City Board of Education is to require the principals, faculties, staffs, students, parents, and guardians to adhere to and to comply with this Board of Education approved Code of Student Conduct.

As students progress in the public schools, it is reasonable to assume that an increase in age and maturity will result in the students' assumption of greater responsibility for their actions. Although it is true that differences in age and maturity require different types of disciplinary action, the expectation of student behavior identified in this handbook will apply to all students in grades kindergarten through twelve.

The contents of this handbook will:

- describe roles of the home, student, school and school personnel.

- describe student rights and responsibilities.

- define student discipline in the context of the Board of Education's philosophy.

- identify formal disciplinary actions.

- identify classifications of violations and describe procedures for disciplinary actions.

- standardize procedures for administering formal disciplinary actions.

- conform to the mandates provided in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Board shall provide educational opportunities for students on a nondiscriminatory basis. No person shall be denied benefits of any education program or activity on the basis of race, color, disability, religion, national origin, or sex. Students cannot be denied enrollment due to immigrant status or English speaking ability. Programs offered by schools within the school district shall be open to all students in compliance with statutory and judicial requirements.

DUE PROCESS

The policy of the Decatur City Board of Education is to adhere to and observe the essential elements of due process when carrying out the procedures contained within the Code of Student Conduct handbook. A responsibility of the principals will be to familiarize their staffs with the due process procedures and provide each staff member with a copy of this handbook.

This handbook has been published with the following concepts in mind.

1. School rules must be clearly stated and related to the educational purposes of the school.
2. School rules must be fair and specific enough for students to know what they may or may not do.
3. Students, parents and guardians must be informed of the rules concerning behavior and discipline.
4. When serious disciplinary action is involved, school personnel and students must comply with required procedures.

The consensus of the Board of Education is that the regulations in this handbook deal with a matter of legitimate interest with the intent of protecting the health, safety and welfare of students and insuring the efficient operation of the schools.

ROLES OF THE PARENTS, STUDENTS, SCHOOL AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

In order for effective teaching and learning to take place in our schools, there must be a cooperative relationship among students, parents, guardians, and educators. To foster this relationship:
Parents and Guardians should:

- keep in regular communication with school authorities concerning their child's progress and conduct.

- ensure that their child is in daily attendance and promptly report and explain an absence or tardiness to school officials.

- provide their child with the resources needed to complete class work.

- assist their child in being healthy, neat and clean.

- bring to the attention of school authorities any problem or condition which affects their child or other children.

- discuss report cards and work assignments with their child.

- maintain up-to-date home, work and emergency telephone numbers at the school, including doctor, hospital preferences and an emergency health care form.

- attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences.

- promptly report any change of address.

- report directly to the principal's office when visiting a school.

- sign and return acknowledgment form for receipt of Code of Student Conduct.

Students should:

- attend all classes daily and be punctual in attendance.

- come to class with appropriate working materials.

- be respectful to all individuals and of all property.

- refrain from profane or inflammatory statements.

- conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.

- be clean, neat and appropriately dressed.

- be responsible for their own work.
- respect the classroom and school.
- show a positive, cooperative attitude toward school.
- promptly report any change of address.

**Schools should:**

- encourage the use of good guidance procedures.
- maintain an atmosphere conducive to good behavior.
- exhibit an attitude of respect for students.
- plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- promote effective discipline based upon fair and impartial treatment of all students.
- welcome and encourage participation by parents and guardians in school affairs.
- encourage the school staff, parents, guardians and students to use the services of community agencies.
- encourage parents and guardians to keep in regular communication with the school.
- seek to involve students in the development of policies.
- endeavor to involve the entire community in order to improve the quality of life within the community.

**School Personnel should:**

- be regular in attendance and punctual.
- be prepared to perform their duties with appropriate materials and lesson plans.
- be respectful to all individuals and of all property.
- refrain from profane or inflammatory statements.
- conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- be clean, neat and appropriately dressed.

- abide by the rules and regulations set forth by the school and Board of Education.

- seek changes in an orderly and recognized manner.

- participate in continuous improvement of professional knowledge and skills.

- develop a positive, cooperative attitude toward parents and guardians, students, co-workers and the total school program.

- strive to use a variety of informal disciplinary and guidance methods, prior to, during and after formal disciplinary action including:

  - students' program adjustment.

  - referral to guidance personnel for group or individual counseling with counselors, peer counseling, psychological evaluations and other services deemed appropriate.

  - conferences and/or contacts among administrators, parents, guardians, teachers and students.

  - referral to special education or appropriate agencies for special problems.

**JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Decatur City Schools students are subject to the rules and regulations of the Decatur City Board of Education during the school day, while in attendance at school-related activities and while traveling to and from school or school-related activities. This includes traveling in school vehicles or in public or private vehicles which are being utilized at the time for purposes of transporting students to and from school or school-related activities. In addition, students may be disciplined in those instances where conduct at other times and places is deemed to have direct and immediate impact or effect on the health, safety, discipline or general welfare of the school community. Use or possession of controlled substances, weapons or contraband, and/or threats or acts of violence directed toward students, parents/guardians or School Board employees at any time or place is presumed by the Board of Education to have a direct and immediate impact or effect on the health, safety, discipline or general welfare of the school community.
Any student who violates Board policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatens physical harm to a person will be suspended from school and may not be readmitted to school until (1) any criminal charges or offenses arising from the conduct, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and (2) the person has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the Board of Education as a condition for readmission. Section 16-1-24.1(c), Code of Alabama, 1975.

As a condition to readmission, the Board of Education may prescribe such conditions as it may deem appropriate to ensure the safety or security of students and employees and such conditions may include, but are not limited to, psychiatric and psychological evaluation and counseling. Section 16-1-24.1(d), Code of Alabama, 1975.

A parent, guardian, custodian or person, excluding a foster parent, responsible for the care or control of a minor child enrolled in the Decatur school system shall be responsible financially for such child's destructive acts against school property or persons, and may be requested to appear at school by an appropriate school official for a conference regarding the acts of the child and, if summoned by proper notification by an appropriate school official, shall be required to attend such discipline conference. Section 16-1-24 (e), Code of Alabama, 1975.

ATTENDANCE

Philosophical Basis:

School administrators are required under state law to enforce compulsory school attendance laws. Regular attendance by students facilitates the development of the skills and knowledge necessary to function in a modern democratic society.

Student Responsibilities are:

To take advantage of educational opportunities by attending all classes daily and on time.

To provide the school with an adequate explanation and appropriate documentation indicating the reason for an absence.

To promptly request make-up assignments for each excused absence.

Students Rights are:

To be informed of Board of Education policies and individual school rules regarding absenteeism and tardiness.
To appeal a decision pertaining to an absence.

To make up class work within a specified length of time when there is an excused absence.

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

It is the belief of the Decatur City Board of Education that regular school attendance is important to all students and to the school system. It is further believed that course content and grading procedures should be structured so that regular attendance is necessary in order to successfully complete course requirements.

Subject to parental guidance, each student must be responsible for his/her own attendance. Administrators and teachers will make every effort to encourage regular attendance by students and to solicit assistance from parents and guardians in accomplishing this objective.

An absence is defined as non-attendance (except for in-school activities excused by school personnel) in a regularly scheduled class or activity regardless of the reason for such non-attendance.

Parents or guardians shall send a note of explanation to the school the day the child returns to school. Principals may request a physician's statement if circumstances warrant.

**Excused Absences**

A student shall be excused for absences from school for the following reasons:
1. Illness.
2. Legal requirements.
3. Emergencies approved by the principal.
4. Special circumstances with prior approval by the principal.

**Unexcused Absences**

Absence for reasons other than those listed above as "excused" shall be considered as unexcused.

**Make-Up Work**

If a student is absent for any excused reason, the student shall make arrangements with the teacher the day he/she returns to school to make up missed work. For student absences in excess of two consecutive days, teachers
In making arrangements for make-up work, the teacher should consider the type of illness, the length of time absent, and the amount of make-up work due in all classes.

Long-term assignments such as research papers, special projects, etc., are due on or before the due date even if the student is absent on the date the assignment is due. In unusual cases, extenuating circumstances will be given consideration.

**Reporting Absences (High School)**

On the student's report card in the column to the right of the grade is listed the number of absences from that class for that particular grading period. The figure includes absences from class for all reasons except school related functions. For example, absences from school for illness, legal matters or other reasons are shown. Absences shown here may be either excused or unexcused. Should you have questions, please call the school at your earliest convenience.

Absences for school related purposes will not be shown. Examples of school related absences could include athletic trips, band or choral trips, academic competitions and other similar functions. Absences for school related activities will not appear on the student's cumulative record.

Students out of class for attendance in an alternative setting will be counted as present. Examples of alternative placements include In-School Suspension, the Center for Alternatives to Suspension, and the Center for Alternatives to Expulsion.

**Alabama’s Compulsory Attendance Law**

"Every child between the ages of 7 and 16 shall be required to attend a public school, private school, church school or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term in every scholastic year...."

Requires that any parent/guardian who enrolls a student in school be responsible for the student’s regular attendance and proper conduct.

Provides that a parent may be fined $500.00 and receive up to one year of hard labor if convicted of parental neglect; contributing to the delinquency of a minor; or if the child is found to be a child in need of supervision. They may also be required to pay restitution to the Board of Education.
**Attendance Requirements**

Any student enrolled in grades 1-8 who accumulates more than 20 absences during the year is subject to being retained in the same grade the next school year. Any student in kindergarten who accumulates more than 20 absences is subject to dismissal from the program. Partial day absences will be cumulative in computing this total. Any student enrolled in kindergarten who accumulates more than 10 absences in a semester is subject to forfeiting his/her enrollment.

Any student enrolled in grades 9-12 who accumulates more than 10 absences in any course or subject in any semester is subject to losing credit for the semester's work in that course or subject.

School-sponsored or sanctioned activities are exempt and do not count toward the total absences allowed; however, arrangements must be made for making up work as required.

A student who is suspended from school for disciplinary reasons for any number of days will have that number of days charged against the total number of absences allowed.

A student who has been retained or who has lost credit(s) because of noncompliance with attendance policies shall receive a notation of Noncompliance Attendance (NCA) on his/her report card and cumulative record for that semester or year. The principal shall make the determination of retention or loss of credit due to noncompliance with attendance policies (NCA). In such cases, a parent or guardian and/or student may request a hearing with the Principal and Superintendent to appeal such loss of credit or retention. This request must be in writing, dated and signed, within five days of the notification of the loss of credit. Failure of parent or guardian and/or student to request a hearing shall be sufficient basis for sustaining the loss of credit or retention.

Credit which is lost because of absences will be made up in the same manner as academic failures.

In accordance with Act No. 93-368, the Superintendent or his/her designee is required to notify the Alabama Department of Public Safety when a student who has a driver’s license or a learner’s permit accumulates fifteen (15) total or ten (10) consecutive absences. School attendance for persons between the ages of 15-19 is mandatory for those who wish to retain their driver’s license or learner’s permit. Failure to attend school regularly will result in the forfeiture of the driver's license or learner’s permit. Students who wish to obtain a driver's license or learner’s permit must have certification from their principal that they are in school and in regular attendance.
Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program

The Early Warning Program is a joint effort between the Decatur City Board of Education and the Juvenile Court. It is designed to reduce truancy and the number of student dropouts. The format of the program consists of a group session held once each week in the Morgan County Courthouse in Decatur. The purpose of Early Warning is to share information concerning the legal requirements and school board policies pertaining to attendance—thus, an early warning.

Truancy Definition

A parent, guardian, or other person having charge of any child officially enrolled in Alabama public schools (K-12) shall explain in writing the cause of any and every absence of the child no later than three (3) school days following return to school. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant each day he is absent. The child shall also be deemed truant for any absence determined by the principal to be unexcused.

1. First Truancy / Unexcused Absence (Warning)
   a. Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal or his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the truancy.

2. Third Unexcused Absence
   a. The parent, guardian or person having control of the child shall (1) attend a conference with the attendance officer and principal or his/her designee and/or (2) participate in the early warning program provided by the juvenile court.
   b. Attendance at one of these conferences shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists.
   c. Failure to appear at the school conference and/or to appear at the early warning program shall result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent under (Code of Alabama 1975), s16-28-12 (c) (failure to cooperate), or s12-15-13 (contributing to truancy) or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.

3. Fifth Unexcused Absence
   a. File complaint/petition against the child and/or parent/guardian.

Check-Ins and Check-Outs

Any student who arrives after school has begun must go to the office of the principal and check-in. Student attendance at school is essential to academic success. Certain educational activities that occur during an absence cannot be
replicated by make-up assignments. Parents are encouraged to make dental, medical, and other appointments for their children after school hours or during the summer vacation and holiday periods.

Students who have a valid need to leave school before the dismissal bell shall be checked out at the office of the principal. Such students must be signed out by the parent or guardian. Notes or telephone calls shall not be accepted for purposes of check-out of a student.

The principal has the responsibility of making decisions relating to check-outs. Such decision shall be made in the best interest of the student when emergencies or unusual circumstances arise.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

A student must be in good standing and must have no disciplinary action pending against him/her by the school he/she is leaving in order to be eligible to enroll in my school in the Decatur City School System.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Philosophical Basis:

Personal concerns of students can seriously limit educational development. Schools have the responsibility to provide a guidance program and to make relevant and objective information available to students in such a manner that it will enhance educational development.

Student Responsibilities are:

To use guidance services for their own educational and personal improvement.

To schedule appointments with guidance personnel in advance unless the problem or concern is an emergency.

To work cooperatively with guidance personnel.

Student Rights are:

To be informed as to the nature of the guidance services available in school.

To have access to individual and group guidance.
STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Philosophical Basis:

It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to provide appropriate educational services for all students residing within the city limits.

Student Responsibilities are:

To use special education for educational and personal development.

Student Rights are:

To be informed of the least restrictive environment needed for appropriate education.

To have access to small group instruction based on an individualized educational program.

CURRICULUM

Philosophical Basis:

Student opinion regarding curriculum offerings is extremely important, and therefore, deserves careful analysis and consideration. The degree of student involvement in curriculum development is determined by the student's age, grade level and maturity. Final determination of course requirements and program consistency will rest with the professionals who are assigned the curriculum development responsibility.

The Board shall provide educational opportunities for students on a nondiscriminatory basis. No person shall be denied benefits of any education program or activity on the basis of race, color, disability, religion, national origin, or sex. Students cannot be denied enrollment due to immigrant status or English speaking ability. Programs offered by schools within the school district shall be open to all students in compliance with statutory and judicial requirements.

Any student who believes he/she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation, in any programs or activities on the basis of sex may file a complaint in accordance with the Discrimination/Harassment Grievance Procedure appearing at the end of this Code.
**Student Responsibilities are:**

To request participation in academic programs and extra-curricular activities that are compatible with ability.

To seek assistance in course selection from informed professionals in the schools.

To contribute to an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.

To cooperate fully and exert every effort to achieve mastery of the basic skills.

**Student Rights are:**

To have equal access to educational opportunities.

To receive system-wide curriculum course descriptions that will facilitate informed choices.

To receive instruction in courses of study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.

To participate in appropriate basic skills programs in elementary, middle and senior high schools.

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**FREE SPEECH/EXPRESSION**

**Philosophical Basis:**

Citizens in our democracy are guaranteed self-expression under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution of the United States; therefore, in a democratic society, one of the basic purposes of education is to prepare students for responsible self-expression.

**Student Responsibilities are:**

To respect the rights of others and to express themselves in a manner which does not infringe upon the rights of others and does not interfere with the orderly educational process.

To act in a manner which preserves the dignity of patriotic observances.

To plan for, seek approval of, and participate in activities which are consistent with the educational objectives of the school.
**Student Rights are:**

To form and express viewpoints through speaking and writing in a manner which is not obscene, slanderous or libelous.

To affirm identity with the American ideals, i.e. pledging allegiances to the flag.

To refrain from any activities which violate the precepts of his/her religion.

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**GRADES**

**Philosophical Basis:**

An academic grade should reflect the teacher's most objective assessment of the student's academic achievement. Academic grades will not be used as a means of maintaining order in a classroom.

**Parent or Guardian Responsibilities are:**

To review the student's progress reports each grading period.

To schedule a parent/teacher conference if concerns develop about grades.

**Student Responsibilities are:**

To become informed of the method of grade determination in each class.

To maintain standards of academic performance equal to ability and to make every effort to improve performance upon receipt of notification of unsatisfactory progress.

**Student Rights are:**

To receive a teacher's grading criteria at the beginning of each year or semester course.

To receive periodic progress reports.
PRIVACY AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Philosophical Basis:

Federal and state laws provide persons with a reasonable expectation of privacy in addition to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property. Such guarantees are not unlimited and must be balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of all students.

Student Responsibilities are:

To attend school-related activities without bringing material or objects prohibited by law or Board of Education policy or which detract from the educational process.

To respect the property rights of the public at large, as well as those of individuals, and to refrain from destruction of, or damage to, such property.

Student Rights are:

To maintain privacy of personal possessions unless appropriate school personnel have reasonable suspicion to believe a student possesses any object or material which is prohibited by law or Board of Education policy.

To attend school in an educational environment in which personal property is respected.

Student Lockers:

Students are given the opportunity to use lockers provided by the Decatur City Schools. These lockers are property of the Board of Education and are subject to be searched at any time when school officials consider it necessary and/or appropriate. Students are responsible for the contents of their lockers and should keep them locked at all times. Students may use only the locker assigned to them and may not swap lockers unless approval is given by the principal or assistant principal.

Student Automobiles:

Students are permitted to park automobiles in designated areas on the school campus. An automobile is subject to search by School Board employees when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that such vehicle contains items which are prohibited by law or which could be hazardous. Any automobile operated on a school campus by a student must be operated in a safe and legal manner. Cars must be registered in the office and have a corresponding decal displayed in the proper place.
STUDENT RECORDS

Philosophical Basis:

Student records will be maintained by the schools and will be used in making appropriate educational decisions for the students. All information regarding students and their families will be collected, maintained and distributed under safeguards of privacy. These safeguards will be maintained through informed consent, verification of accuracy, limited access, selective discard and appropriate use. The Superintendent of Schools will institute specific procedures for the implementation of this policy as dictated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Parents, Guardian or Eligible Student (18 years of age or above)
Responsibilities are:

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

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

Parents, Guardian or Eligible Student (18 years of age or above)
Rights are:

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

To be protected by legal provisions which prohibit the release of personally identifiable information to anyone other than legally authorized persons without the consent of the parent(s), guardian(s) or eligible student (18 years of age or above).

Security of Records:

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. -1232g, the Board of Education has declared the following as directory information:

Full name of student
Current enrollment status of student

In accordance with Federal Law, Decatur City Schools routinely discloses names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters upon request.
If any adult student or parent of a student enrolled in school wishes to have this information withdrawn from directory information or military recruiters, he/she must notify the school principal in writing prior to August 31 of the current school year.

**STUDENT COUNCIL**

The student council serves as the voice of the student body and intermediator between the student body and the administration. Purposes include providing opportunities for the development of responsibility, initiative and leadership; planning and implementing activities and projects designed to unify the student body and enhance school spirit; and encouraging scholarship and responsible citizenship within the student body.

**STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

**Philosophical Basis:**

Education is the process of inquiring and learning, acquiring and imparting knowledge and exchanging ideas. One of the important roles of the school is to provide effective avenues through which students may express themselves on a wide range of subjects. Official student publications, such as school newspapers, should include viewpoints representative of the student body.

**Student Responsibilities are:**

To refrain from publishing libelous and obscene materials.

To seek full information on the topic about which they write.

To observe the accepted rules for responsible journalism under the guidance of the faculty advisor.

**Student Rights are:**

To participate, as part of the educational process, in the development or distribution of publications.
STUDENT GRIEVANCES

The belief of the Decatur City Board of Education is that the students have both the right and responsibility to express school-related concerns and grievances to the faculty and the administration. Therefore, students shall be assured the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of grievances.

To be granted discussion and consideration of a grievance, any student or group of students should request an appointment with the principal which will not interfere with regularly scheduled classes or school-related activities. The faculty and administration will make an honest effort to resolve student grievances at the most immediate level of supervision.

In the event the principal is unable to resolve a student grievance, the student may then follow the system's grievance procedure as stated in the Policy Manual of the Decatur City Schools.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND PROCEDURES

Detention Hall

The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to assign students to a designated area (detention hall) on campus before and/or at the end of the regular school day for a reasonable and specified period of time as a disciplinary action. Students in grades K-12 will be given a one-day notice of their detention hall assignment. The parent(s) or guardian is responsible for providing transportation in these cases. A reasonable attempt will be made to notify the parent(s) or guardian of students in grades K-5 prior to the assignment of a student to detention hall.

Disciplinary Probation

Disciplinary Probation is a written reprimand for violation of any provision of the Code of Student Conduct. The principal or his/her designated person(s) will review student disciplinary records and should request a conference with the parents of the student involved. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to be violating any provision of the Code of Student Conduct during the probationary period. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to place a student on Disciplinary Probation for a reasonable and specified period of time. The staff members involved in the action will assist in monitoring the student's adjustment to the school environment.
**In-School Suspension**

In-school suspension is a structured disciplinary action in which a student is isolated or removed from regular classroom activities but is not dismissed from the school setting. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to assign students to the in-school suspension program for a reasonable and specified period of time. The principals and their staffs should determine the scope of in-school suspension in their respective schools. Generally the parent(s) or guardian is responsible for providing transportation in these cases.

**Center For Alternatives to Suspension / CAS**

The principal or his/her designee has the authority to assign students to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension (CAS) for a period of time not to exceed ten (10) days. Any assignment to CAS exceeding ten (10) days must have the prior approval of the student, the student’s parents or guardian and the supervisor of CAS or the Superintendent or his/her designee. Generally the parent(s) or guardian is responsible for providing transportation in these cases.

Students assigned to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension are restricted from being on any other Decatur City Schools campus or property and are restricted from attending or participating in any Decatur City Schools programs or activities. This restriction remains in force until the students have successfully completed their assignment to The Center for Alternatives to Suspension.

Offenses which would result in an assignment to CAS are generally the same as those outlined for out of school suspension in this Code of Student Conduct; however, the principal and/or the supervisor of CAS may assign students for other infractions.

Any student entering or returning to Decatur City Schools from detention through the court system will be assigned to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension for ten days.

**Center for Alternatives to Expulsion / CAE**

The Center for Alternatives to Expulsion was created by Decatur City Schools to provide an alternative to long term suspension out of school or expulsion. Students may be assigned to CAE by the Superintendent or his/her designee with the consent of the student and the student’s parents or guardian or students may be assigned to CAE by the Board of Education. Generally the parent(s) or guardian is responsible for providing transportation in these cases.
Students assigned to the Center for Alternatives to Expulsion are restricted from being on any other Decatur City Schools campus or property and are restricted from attending or participating in any Decatur City Schools programs or activities. This restriction remains in force until the students have successfully completed their assignment to The Center for Alternatives to Expulsion.

**Work Assignment**

The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to assign supervised activities related to the upkeep and maintenance of school facilities as a disciplinary action for a reasonable and specified period of time. Work assignments are not intended to interfere with any student's regular class schedule. The parent(s) or guardian will be responsible for providing transportation in these cases. The parent(s) or guardian will be notified prior to the student's placement in a work assignment.

**School Bus Suspension**

The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to deny a student the privilege of riding a school bus based on the misconduct of the student. This action will be for a reasonable and specified period of time.

**Physical Restraint**

The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to use reasonable physical force to restrain a student from abusing or attempting to abuse himself, other students, teachers, administrators, parents, guardians or other staff members. The action may be taken when it is necessary to maintain discipline or to enforce school rules. This must be done in a reasonable fashion to protect all parties involved. Law enforcement officials may be called to assist in the enforcement of this action.

**Corporal Punishment**

The Board believes that corporal punishment is seldom necessary for the resourceful educator. If such punishment is required, it must be administered with extreme care, tact and caution, and then only by the principal, assistant principal or teacher with the knowledge and consent of the principal. No student shall be punished by corporal punishment unless it is done in the presence of the principal or another staff member.

**Administrative Hearing**

The Superintendent or his/her designated person(s) will review recommendations from principals for expulsions and request a conference with
the person(s) involved, which may include principals, teachers, parents, guardians and students to determine whether the expulsion recommendation should be followed.

**Board of Education Hearing**

The Board of Education hearing involving expulsion recommendations will be conducted in accordance with Board of Education policy and procedure.

**Other Community Resources**

The Board of Education and its employees have the authority to request the involvement of various community resources dealing with serious disciplinary problems. Examples of the resources that could be utilized in resolving a discipline problem of a serious nature are: the police department, the sheriff's department, juvenile court, and/or the Department of Human Resources. Other resources may be involved if the problem warrants.

**PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN DISCIPLINE**

The Code of Alabama Sections 16-28-2.2 and 16-28-12 require that the parent or other person having control of a child enrolled in school ensure that the child (1) enrolls in and regularly attends school and (2) engages in proper conduct while in attendance in school. The Code of Alabama further requires the Superintendent to report to the District Attorney the name of any parent with children enrolled in Decatur City Schools who:

A) Fails to require such child to regularly attend school; or
B) Fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself or herself in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

Parents whose behavior fits either section (A) or (B) as listed above may be subject to criminal liability and criminal sanctions. Either the Superintendent or the District Attorney may initiate prosecution of parents for the behavior of their child (children).

**PROCEDURES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

A student recommended for suspension or expulsion will be made aware of the charges and will be given an opportunity to respond. Any time a referral is submitted that warrants suspension or expulsion, a reasonable effort will be made by the school to either contact the parent(s) or guardian by a telephone
call made during school hours or by written notice. The student is responsible for notifying his/her parent(s) or guardian of all written communications from school. Failure to do so may result in further disciplinary action.

**SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS**

**Authority**

The school principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to suspend students from school.

**Notification**

Prior to suspension the student will be made aware of the charges and given an opportunity to respond to them. Written notice will be sent to the Superintendent or his/her designee and parent(s) or guardian stating the reason(s) such action was taken.

Immediate suspension of a student is justified when the student's presence would threaten other students or himself/herself, endanger school property or seriously disrupt the orderly educational process. Principals are given the authority to have the law enforcement agency remove uncooperative students.

**Length**

The suspension of a student is not to exceed ten (10) days except as follows:

1. Any student who has been determined eligible for special education may be suspended, but all procedural safeguards must be adhered to as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or other federal and state regulations.
2. If an incident or violation causes the principal or his/her designated person(s) to recommend the expulsion of a student, the suspension shall remain in effect until such time as the Board of Education has acted upon the recommendation of expulsion.

**Terms**

1. If a student attends or is scheduled to attend more than one Decatur City Schools campus during the same day and is suspended from either school, the suspension will include both schools. The principals of both schools or their designated person(s) must notify each other of such suspensions.
2. Students who are suspended out of school shall not participate or attend any school activities or go upon or remain on any Decatur City Schools property during the suspension.

3. When a student is suspended, his/her teacher must be notified concerning the date of suspension and the number of days suspended.

4. A student who has been suspended from school is not eligible to enroll in any other school in the system until such time that he/she is reinstated in the school from which he/she was suspended.

5. A student who has been suspended or expelled from any school, regardless of school system, is not eligible to enroll in the Decatur City School System until such time that he/she is eligible to be reinstated in the school from which he/she was suspended or expelled.

Readmission

When a student returns to school after suspension, the readmission should be preceded by a conference with the principal or his/her designated person(s). The conference should include the parent(s) or guardian unless otherwise approved by the principal.

EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

In accordance with the Alabama State Compulsory Attendance Law, the Decatur City Board of Education makes the final disposition of any expulsion recommendation. A student may be expelled for any act that is classified as a Class II or Class III offense as defined later. The school principal is initially responsible for determining that an offense has been committed for which expulsion may be warranted.

Any student who is the subject of any expulsion action shall be granted the following rights of due process: a hearing, the right to counsel, the right to hear the alleged charge(s), the right to question all evidence, the right to speak and offer evidence in his/her own behalf and the right to have a full explanation of the applicable Board Policy used to charge the student.

The following steps of due process shall be observed in all expulsion actions:

1. The local school principal shall consult with the Superintendent concerning the student’s infraction(s).
2. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall, by letter, notify the parents/guardians of a conference that may include the student, the parent/guardian, the principal and the Superintendent. Failure of the parent/guardian and/or student to attend shall not nullify the process.

3. If the decision to recommend expulsion is made by the Superintendent or his/her designee, the parents/guardian and the student shall be notified, by letter, of the time and place of an expulsion hearing before the Decatur City Board of Education, and the student shall remain under suspension until the hearing is held. This notice shall be given a minimum of five calendar days before the hearing is held.

4. The student or the parent/guardian may request that the hearing be held in private. Failure of the student and/or the parent/guardian to appear shall not nullify the process.

5. If the decision to expel the student is made, the expulsion shall be for any length of time not to exceed the remainder of the current school year plus the school year which follows immediately thereafter. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall, by letter, notify the parent/guardian and the student of the Decatur City Board of Education’s decision within ten days after it is made.

6. Any student, who has been determined eligible for services or accommodations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, may be expelled provided that all procedural and other requirements of applicable law are observed.

**CLASSIFICATION OF VIOLATIONS**

Violations of the **Code of Student Conduct** are grouped into three classes (Class I, Class II and Class III). Before determining the classification of a violation, the principal or his/her designated person(s) will consult with the involved student(s) and school personnel. Once the classification of the violation is determined, the principal or his/her designated person(s) will implement the disciplinary procedure.

The classroom teacher may deal with classroom disruption by taking in-class disciplinary action, by making a personal call to the parent(s) or guardian when feasible, and/or by scheduling conferences with the parent(s) or guardian and other school staff. When the action taken by the teacher is ineffective, or the disruption is severe, the student should be referred to the principal or his/her designated person(s). Failure to bring notebook, pencil, books or required
materials and equipment to class is ordinarily not cause for referral; however, defiance of a teacher in regard to these areas is cause for disciplinary referral. Parents and guardians should be notified by the teacher of students who consistently exhibit poor work habits.

CLASS I

1.01 Excessive distraction of other students.
   Any conduct and/or behavior which is disruptive to the orderly educational process in the classroom or any other school related setting.

1.02 Participation in a prohibited organization.
   Participation supporting or furthering the cause of fraternities, sororities, secret societies or any group or organization, either on or off Board of Education property, whose activity or proposed activity is disruptive to the orderly educational process. This would include individuals whose purpose is to disrupt or disturb the ability of any student, teacher or administrator to receive or deliver the highest degree of educational opportunity.

1.03 Disrespect / Failure to Follow Directions.
   Disrespect or failure to follow directions, instructions, or order by a Decatur City Schools employee.

1.04 Participation in games of chance involving money and/or other things of value.

1.05 Excessive tardiness.
   Repeatedly reporting late to school or class.

1.06 Intentional and/or non-direct use of profane, offensive or obscene language.

1.07 Violation of dress code. (See "Additional Policies: Dress Code")

1.08 Violation of bus rules. (See “Additional Policies: Bus Rules”)

1.09 Inappropriate public display of affection.

1.10 Unauthorized absence from class or school.
1.11 Continued refusal and/or failure to complete class assignments.

1.12 Failure to carry correspondence home.

1.13 Unauthorized and/or inappropriate use of Board of Education property or private property.

1.14 Littering of Board of Education property.

1.15 Distribution or display of printed materials on Board of Education property or at a school activity without the approval of the principal or his/her designee.

1.16 Sale of anything on Board of Education property or at a school activity without the approval of the principal or his/her designee.

1.17 Possession of and/or use of laser light pointer or any device designed to emit a laser light.

1.18 Soliciting, procuring, causing, encouraging, aiding, abetting or assisting another to commit any of the foregoing offenses.

1.19 Any other violation which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within the definition of a Class I violation after consideration of all the facts.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS-CLASS I OFFENSES**

**First Offense**

In-school conference and/or parental contact when warranted. Circumstances may warrant disciplinary action as outlined under subsequent offenses, including but not limited to those listed in the next paragraph.

**Subsequent Offenses**

In-school disciplinary action such as probation, detention, completion of extra academic assignments, work assignments before or after school, in-school suspension, assignment to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension, corporal punishment, suspension or other reasonable disciplinary action at the discretion of the principal or his/her designated person(s). Special circumstances may warrant a recommendation to the Superintendent for an alternative educational program apart from the normal setting.
CLASS II

2.00 Electronic communication device.

The possession, except for health or other extraordinary needs (and with prior approval by the principal) of a pocket pager, cellular phone, or other electronic communication devices. (The Code of Alabama Section 16-1-27).

2.01 Defiance of Board of Education employee's authority.

Any verbal or non-verbal refusal to comply with a lawful direction, instruction or order of a Board of Education employee.

2.02 Possession and/or use of tobacco products.

Possession of any tobacco product on the person, in the locker, or in other effects of a student; holding of a lighted cigarette (cigar, etc.), inhaling or exhaling of the smoke of tobacco or the using of any other tobacco product.

2.03 Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation.

The threatening, stalking, teasing, taunting, or seeking to coerce or compel a person to do something; engaging in verbal, written or physical conduct that threatens another with harm, including intimidation through the use of epithets or slurs involving race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, religious practices, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability that disrupts the educational process.

2.04 Unsafe and/or unlicensed driving on Board of Education property or other violations of state, municipal or school rules related to the operation or parking of motor vehicles.

2.05 Vandalism.

Intentional and deliberate action resulting in injury or damages of less than $200 to public property or the real or personal property of another.

2.06 Theft.

Taking and/or carrying away of property valued at less than $100 belonging to or in lawful possession or custody of another.
2.07 Gambling/Possession of Gambling Device.

The possession of any device or item which can be used to promote or facilitate gambling or promote or facilitate participation in a game of chance involving money or other items of value.

2.08 Possession of stolen property with the knowledge that it is stolen.

2.09 Theft of lost property.

Obtaining or exerting control over the property of another which is known to have been lost or mislaid, and thereafter failing to take reasonable measures to discover and notify the owner.

2.10 Threats.

Verbal, non-verbal, written or printed communication, threatening an injury to the person, property or reputation of another. This may include threats with the intent to extort money or any pecuniary advantage whatever, or with the intent to compel the person so threatened, or any other person, to do any act or refrain from doing any act against his/her will.

Note: Completion of the threat, either by the victim's complying with the demands or the carrying out of the threats against the victim, constitutes a Class III offense.

2.11 Trespassing.

Willfully entering or remaining in or on any Board of Education structure, conveyance or property without being authorized, licensed or invited, or having initially been authorized, licensed or invited, having been warned by an authorized person to depart and refusing to do so. Unauthorized presence, entering or remaining on Board of Education property or attending any school related activity while under any kind of home suspension, assignment to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension, assignment to the Center for Alternatives to Expulsion, or expulsion.

2.12 Possession of obscene and/or offensive materials.

2.13 Use of obscene and/or offensive manifestations (verbal, written, gesture) directed toward another person and/or offensive manifestations (verbal, written, gesture) which are deemed to create a hostile environment and/or engaging in inappropriate behavior.

2.14 Truancy or unauthorized leaving Board of Education property.
2.15 Possession of a pocket-knife.

2.16 Possession and/or use of matches or lighter.

2.17 Intentionally providing false information to a school board employee, including, but not limited to, student information data and the concealment of information directly related to school business. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any Decatur City Schools document, record, or instrument of identification.

2.18 Intentionally touching or striking another student against his/her will or without his/her consent.

2.19 Honor Code Violations and/or Cheating.

Students shall not engage in any act of deception or falsification. This includes cheating by receiving any unauthorized aid or assistance or the actual giving or receiving of unfair advantage.

2.20 Inappropriate use of technology.

Use of technology resources to:

- Participate in on-line chat rooms without permission/supervision of a Board of Education employee.

- Send, display, or download offensive messages or pictures.

- Harass, insult or attack others.

- Use obscene, profane, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language.

- Damage computers, computer systems, software/programs, or computer networks (this includes changing workstation and printer configuration).

- Violate copyright laws.

- Use other users file folders, work, or password.

- Intentionally waste limited resources.

(See “Additional Policies: Acceptable Use Policy)
2.21 Reckless Endangerment.

Engaging in reckless behavior that endangers one’s self or others.

2.22 Gang or Hate Group Graffiti or Paraphernalia.

Possession, transfer, distribution, display or use of written material, drawings, signs, slogans, names, apparel or other materials related to or used in gang or hate group activities are not permitted on any Board of Education property or at any school related activity.

2.23 Soliciting, procuring, causing, encouraging, aiding, abetting or assisting another to commit any of the foregoing offenses.

2.24 Any other violation which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within the definition of a Class II violation after consideration of all the facts.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS-CLASS II OFFENSES**

**First Offense**

In-school suspension, assignment to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension and/or extended work assignments before or after school and/or suspension. Other reasonable disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the principal.

**Subsequent Offenses**

The disciplinary action for such offenses will be assignment to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension or suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion by the principal as authorized in the expulsion procedures. Pending final determination of the matter by the Board of Education, the student may be offered the opportunity to attend the Center for Alternatives to Expulsion.

*Note:* Commission of Class II and/or Class III offenses may constitute a violation of criminal laws established by Local, State and Federal government, and will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

**CLASS III**

3.00 Fighting.

The initiation of and/or participation in any physical conflict between individuals.
3.01 Provoking, agitating, and/or inciting a fight/confrontation.

3.02 Drugs, Controlled Substance, Imitation Controlled Substance, Alcohol and/or Intoxicating Inhalants.

Admission of and/or being under the influence of and/or unauthorized possession, transfer, distribution, use or sale of drugs, controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages and/or intoxicating inhalants (Refer to U.S. Code of Controlled Substances.)

Communication of the intent or desire to buy, sell, furnish, manufacture, deliver, distribute or exchange drugs, controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, alcohol, and/or intoxicating inhalants.

Communication of the intent or desire to facilitate the sale or exchange manufacture, delivery, or distribution of drugs, controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, alcohol, and/or intoxicating inhalants.

3.03 Arson.

The intentional damage or attempt to damage Board of Education property or property of others located on Board of Education property, by starting or maintaining a fire or explosion.

3.04 Assault upon School Board employee.

The intentional touching or striking or an attempt to touch or strike a School Board employee against his/her will or the intentional causing of bodily harm to a School Board employee.

3.05 Robbery.

The taking of money or other property which may be the subject of larceny from the person or custody of another by force, violence, assault or instilling the fear of same.

3.06 Theft.

The participation in and/or the intentional, taking and/or carrying away of money or other property valued at $100 or more belonging to or in the lawful possession or custody of another without the consent of the owner.
3.07 Burglary.

Entering or remaining in a building, enclosed area, structure, motor vehicle or conveyance owned by the Board of Education with the intent to commit an offense therein during the hours the premises are closed to the public.

3.08 Criminal Mischief.

Willful and malicious injury or damages at or in excess of $200 to public property or to real or personal property belonging to another.

3.09 Possession of Firearms.

Possession of any firearm, pistol, rifle, shotgun, air gun or any other device. "Firearm" is defined as any firearm (including a starter gun), which will, or is designed to, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or any other means, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, any destructive device, any imitation or any replica of a firearm.

3.10 Possession of Weapons.

A knife, metallic knuckles, chemical weapon or device, or any other weapon, instrument, device, or object or any imitation or replica of any other instrument or object that may be used as a weapon or otherwise cause or inflict fear, harm or damage to property or person. Possession of a chemical or chemical imitation which could be used as a weapon or otherwise cause or inflict fear, harm or damage to property or person.

3.11 Bomb Threats or False Reports.

Any communication(s) or attempt to communicate concerning the Board of Education's property which has or could have the effect of interfering or interrupting the educational environment or process. Falsely reporting an incident with the knowledge that the information reported, conveyed or circulated is false. Initiating or circulating a false report or warning of an alleged occurrence or impending occurrence of a fire, bomb, explosion, crime, catastrophe, or any emergency under a circumstance in which it is likely to cause fear, evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or transportation facility, or to cause public inconvenience or alarm, or to interfere or interrupt the educational environment or process. This includes claiming
through verbal or non-verbal communication(s) to have possession of a weapon, drug or any other illegal item.

3.12 Threats of Death or Serious Bodily Injury.

Written, verbal or non-verbal communication of a threat to kill or do serious bodily injury to another person.

3.13 Acts of sexual nature including, but not limited to, battery, intercourse, attempted rape, rape, sexual misconduct. Indecent exposure or conduct that is lewd or indecent.

3.14 Offensive touching of another person.

3.15 Sexual Harassment.

3.16Written, verbal or non-verbal unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.
(See Additional Policies: Sexual Harassment)

3.17 Aggravated Assault.

Intentionally causing bodily harm, disability or permanent disfigurement by use of a weapon or any instrument that could be considered a weapon.

3.18 Explosives.

Preparing, possessing, or igniting explosives that include fireworks, firecrackers, smoke bombs or sting bombs on Board of Education property or at any school related activity.

3.19 Unjustified activation or tampering with fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, AED, security alarm system, or other safety equipment.

3.20 Inciting or participating in student disorder.

Leading, encouraging or assisting in activities or disruptions which result in destruction or damage of private or public property or personal injury, and/or the disruption of school business or educational process.

3.21 Fleeing a School Board employee to elude contact or questioning.

3.22 Violations of the conditions of Disciplinary Probation.

3.23 Use of obscene and/or offensive manifestations (verbal, written, gesture) directed toward or regarding a Board of Education member, employee, volunteer or other adult and/or use of offensive
manifestations (verbal, written, gesture), which are deemed to create a hostile environment.

3.24 Threat.

The completion or attempt to complete a threat to injure a person, property, or reputation of another by verbal or non-verbal communication. This includes extorting money or any pecuniary advantage whatever by compelling another person to do an act or refrain from doing an act against his/her will.

3.25 Commission of any act which constitutes a criminal offense under the laws of the United States, Code of Alabama or City of Decatur and which in the principal's opinion warrants disciplinary action authorized for a Class III offense.

3.26 False accusation statement, or representation directed toward or regarding a Board of Education member, employee, volunteer or other person.

3.27 Soliciting, procuring, causing, encouraging, aiding, abetting or assisting another to commit any of the foregoing offenses.

3.28 Any other violation that the principal may deem reasonable to fall within the definition of a Class III violation after consideration of all the facts.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS-CLASS III OFFENSES**

The disciplinary action for such offenses will be assignment to the Center for Alternatives to Suspension or suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion by the principal as authorized in the expulsion procedures. Pending final determination of the matter by the Board of Education, the student may be offered the opportunity to attend the Center for Alternatives to Expulsion.

**ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

**Student Pregnancy**

Students who become pregnant may request to attend Horizon High School if they or their parents/guardians feel the pregnancy will interfere with normal school activities. A pregnant student transferring to Horizon High School may elect to return to their regular high school at any time. Homebound services for pregnant students are available only in cases of medical necessity.
Drug Abuse

The intent of the Decatur City Board of Education is to comply and to cooperate fully with the laws regarding illegal drug use and drug abuse. The Board of Education understands there are times when prescription drugs may be used by students for medical reasons. Under these circumstances, the student or his/her parent(s) or guardian should register the prescription with the principal or his/her designated person(s) in order to protect the student.

Local School Rules and Regulations

Principals at local schools, with the approval of the Superintendent, may supplement the Code of Student Conduct with rules and regulations that are applicable to the particular school. These rules shall not be contrary to the rules of the Code of Student Conduct. Such rules and regulations shall be reasonable and related substantially to the maintenance of discipline and the implementation of the academic program of the school. Adequate notice of all rules and regulations shall be given and violators shall be treated fairly and consistently.

Summer School Discipline

The Code of Student Conduct and dress code for the school hosting summer school will be strictly enforced. Disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior during summer school may lead to student dismissal from summer school. Decisions of the administration in charge of summer school will be final. There will be no refund of tuition to students who are dismissed.

Bus Discipline

The Decatur City Board of Education is vitally concerned about the safety and welfare of the students riding buses. In an effort to inform students and parents or guardians of acts that can threaten safety and welfare, bus rules and regulations have been adopted. The driver, together with the transportation supervisor and the school principal, shall have full responsibility for discipline on buses. (Note: While students are riding on buses all school rules apply.)

Bus Rules

1. Students will obey the driver willingly and promptly at all times. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students.
2. Students will behave in an appropriate and orderly manner.
3. Students must ride the bus on which they have been assigned.
4. Students may be assigned seats.
5. Students will remain seated facing forward with feet on the floor and legs out of the aisle.

6. Students will keep their feet on the floor at all times while riding the bus. Students cannot put feet on seats or back of seats.

7. Students will not stand or move from their assigned seat while the bus is in motion.

8. Students will not throw trash or litter.

9. Students will not open windows without permission. Students will not throw any items on the bus or out the windows.

10. Students will not extend head, hands, arms or any part of their body out the window.

11. Food, drinks, gum or candy will not be consumed on the bus at any time. No glass containers will be allowed on the bus.

12. There will be no loud talking, singing or laughing on the bus. There will be no yelling or raising of voice on the bus.

13. The person(s) causing damage to a bus or equipment must pay for the damage.

14. Students in violation of the bus rules are subject to disciplinary action.

**Bus Disciplinary Action**

The principal shall enforce the following disciplinary action to assure compliance with these rules and regulations:

First Violation: Student/parent conference and removal from the bus for up to five days. Circumstances may warrant disciplinary action as outlined under subsequent violations.

Second Violation: Parent conference and removal from the bus for up to ten days. Circumstances may warrant disciplinary action as outlined under subsequent violations.

Subsequent Violations: Parent conference and removal from the bus for a minimum of fifteen days. Removal from the bus could equal the number of school days left for the remainder of the school year.
DRESS CODE

The policy of the Decatur City Board of Education is that good grooming and personal appearance are essential elements in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, it is expected that students dress in such a manner that will ensure their health and safety while at school. Furthermore, the dress and personal appearance may not be disruptive or interfere with the legitimate interest and welfare of the students.

Students should comply with the following guidelines:

1. Students must be neatly dressed, clean and well groomed while at school. Middle and high school students must tuck-in all shirts and blouses.

2. Shoes or sandals must be worn.

3. Hair must be clean, neatly styled and well groomed, not in the eyes and not of length dangerous around equipment.

4. Clothing with pictures, writing, and/or symbols promoting the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity, weapons, violence or that may be otherwise offensive shall be considered disruptive of the educational process and is therefore prohibited.

5. Shorts may be worn that are consistent with the intent of this policy.

6. Mini skirts are not acceptable.

7. Appropriate school wear for girls shall be dresses or shirts (blouses) with skirts, pants, or appropriate shorts.

8. Undershirts and sleeveless shirts are not acceptable for boys.

9. With approval of the principal, activity sponsors may establish different rules for dress and grooming as a prerequisite for membership and participation in the activity.

10. Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn inside a building.

11. Clothing, paraphernalia, or devices which are judged to be related to, or associated with hate groups or gang affiliation activity are prohibited.

12. Students will not wear or have in possession any jewelry, ornaments, or accessories that distract from the educational process or that might be used as a weapon.
13. Body piercing which may include facial, body, or tongue is not allowed. This includes accessories that give the impression of body piercing. There is an exception for earrings.

Any students violating the dress code may be suspended for the remainder of the school day and may receive unexcused absences in the classes missed. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to determine what constitutes a violation of the dress code.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The policy of the Decatur City Board of Education forbids sexual harassment of or by any of its students or employees.

A. General Prohibitions and Definitions

1. Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature
   a. Conduct of a sexual nature may include written verbal or physical sexual advances, including subtle pressure for sexual activity; touching, pinching, patting, or brushing against; comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature; and sexually-oriented “kidding”, “teasing”, double entendres, and jokes.

   b. Written verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment when the allegedly harassed student has indicated, by his or her conduct, or otherwise, it is unwelcome. In order to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty, students who consider conduct by other students or school board employees to be unwelcome are encouraged to advise the alleged harasser in writing that such conduct is unwelcome.

   c. A student who has initially welcomed such conduct by active participation or otherwise must give specific notice to the alleged harasser that such conduct is no longer welcome in order for any such subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome. In order to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty, students are encouraged to give such specific notice in writing.

2. Sexual Harassment.

   Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other written verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment if the conduct substantially interferes with a
student’s educational performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

3. Sexual Harassment Prohibited.

It is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct for a student to sexually harass or subject another student to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Students or School Board employees who engage in such conduct shall be subject to sanctions as described below.

B. Reporting and Sanctions

1. Reporting.

   a. Students or their parents or guardians who reasonably believe that other students or School Board employees in the Decatur City School System are guilty of sexual harassment as defined in this policy are encouraged to report such to the principal of their school and/or to the civil rights compliance administrator. Such reports should be made in writing. Report forms are available through the main office in each school.

   b. Students or their parents or guardians are also urged to report any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by fellow students or School Board employees, whether or not such conduct interferes with the student’s educational performance or creates a hostile or offensive educational environment. Such reports should be made in writing. Report forms are available through the main office in each school.

   c. Confidentiality will be maintained and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment. Students or School Board employees who retaliate against one who has filed such charges are subject to the sanctions stated below.

2. Sanctions.

Any student found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including, but not limited to, warning, suspension, or expulsion subject to applicable procedural requirements.
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Decatur City Schools provides to students and staff access to a computer network known as DCS Net. The DCS Net is the wide area network that serves all schools within the Decatur City Schools district. DCS Net includes computer, servers, router, concentrators, software, and the other peripheral devices necessary for the proper functioning of a local area and wide area network. Internet access is an integral part of the service offered through DCS Net. Student and staff access to DCS Net is a privilege and not a right. DCS Net is designed to assist in the instructional goals and objectives of both the Decatur City Schools and the Alabama Course of Study and is provided as a nonpublic forum.

Educational Purpose

The DCS Net offers a wealth of education material to students and staff. Data in the form of text, images, video, and sounds may be brought into the classroom to enhance learning opportunities for both students and staff. The goal of DCS Net is to provide access to information in such manner as to promote lifelong learning. Instructional access to DCS Net shall be under the direction of staff and shall have a defined education purpose. Students browsing should also have an academic purpose and not violate any of the prohibited uses. Students and staff must understand they will be held accountable for their actions regarding the use of DCS Net.

Student Personal Safety

- Students will not post personal contact information about themselves or others. Personal contact information includes telephone number and home address.

- Students will not agree to meet with someone they have met on-line without their parent’s approval and participation.

- Students will not share passwords with others.

Prohibited uses of DCS Net

Please refer to Code 2.20 - Inappropriate use of technology.
DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any student of the Decatur City Schools who believes he/she has been discriminated against, harassed, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation, in any of the school system’s education programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, religion, belief, national origin, ethnic group, or disability, may file a written complaint with the Federal Compliance Coordinator (complaint may be filed using the discrimination/harassment report form or sexual harassment report form).

The coordinator shall conduct a review of the written complaint and mail a written response to the complainant within ten (10) school days after the receipt of the written complaint. A copy of the written complaint and the Federal Compliance Coordinator’s response shall be provided the Superintendent of Decatur City Schools.

If the complainant is not satisfied with such response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent indicating the nature of disagreement with the response and his/her reasons for such disagreement. The Superintendent shall mail a written response to the appeal to the complainant within ten (10) school days after the receipt of the written appeal.

If complainant is not satisfied with such response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Board of Education indicating the nature of the disagreement with the response and his/her reasons for such disagreement. The Board shall consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting following receipt of the appeal. The Board shall permit the complainant to address the Board in public or closed session, as appropriate, concerning his/her complaint and shall provide the complainant with its written decision in the matter as expeditiously as possible following completion of the hearing.

Federal Compliance Coordinator

Dr. Stefanie Underwood
Special Services Center
110 Johnston Street, SE
Decatur, AL  35601
(256) 552-4637
NOTIFICATION OF AVAILABLE SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

Decatur City Schools defines intellectually gifted children and youth as those who perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

If you believe that your child, or a child that you know of, has demonstrated superior abilities in aptitude, school performance, or characteristics such as leadership, creativity, or the performing arts, you may refer him/her for evaluation for services in the talented and gifted program. You may make your referral to the child’s teacher, guidance counselor, or school principal. You may also make your referral to Dr. Bill Gilchrist, Supervisor of Special Education, at (256) 552-4637.

DECATUR CITY SCHOOLS ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. To exercise this right, parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend such a record by writing the school principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified 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 authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school or school board has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); 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 or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest in the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. **The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education** concerning alleged failures by Decatur City Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

   Family Protection Compliance Office
   U.S. Department of Education
   400 Maryland Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

**Notice of Directory Information**

Decatur City Schools has declared the full name and current enrollment status of a student to be directory information and subject to disclosure. However, if any parent or eligible student prefers that such information not be disclosed without prior written consent, he/she should so notify the school principal in writing prior to August 31 of the current school year.

Decatur City Schools also routinely discloses names, addresses and telephone numbers to military recruiters upon request, subject to the parent’s request not to disclose such information without written consent, which request should be submitted in writing to the school principal prior to August 31 of the current school year.
PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors ("eligible students") certain rights regarding our 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 family;
  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.

Decatur City Schools will adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Decatur City Schools will directly notify parents and eligible students of those policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Decatur City Schools will also directly notify parents and eligible students, such as through U.S. Mail or e-mail, at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates of the following activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.

- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.

- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Protection Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605
Asbestos Inspections of Our Schools

On October 22, 1986, President Reagan signed into law the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). This law requires all local education agencies throughout the country, public and private, to inspect their buildings for asbestos containing building materials (ACBM’s) and to take appropriate response actions if necessary to control the release of asbestos fibers into the environment.

In compliance with this law, each building of Decatur City Schools has been inspected and special “Management Plan” reports have been developed by an accredited engineering firm. Each Management Plan describes the results of its corresponding inspection along with recommended response actions in the event of ACBM identification.

A copy of the Management Plan for each building is available for your review in the principal’s or supervisor’s office during normal office hours. If you have any questions regarding this matter, feel free to contact Thomas Garrison at 552-4631.