

Code of Student Conduct

2014-2015



The School Board of Highlands County

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT 2014-2015

Section 1006.07(6) (d), Florida Statutes, requires each school district to distribute to students, parents, guardians, teachers and other school personnel a code of conduct developed cooperatively by students, parents and teachers. This Code of Student Conduct is adopted as official School Board Policy. This Code and its “zero tolerance “ policy for violence (SBHC Policy 5.32) is in force on school grounds, on school-sponsored transportation, before and after school hours and at all school-sponsored functions (field trips, athletic functions, after-school daycare and other school-sponsored events) .

It is the policy of the School Board of Highlands County not to discriminate against employees or students by either deliberate or inadvertent bias based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, handicap, marital status or religion. It is further recognized that a passive policy of nondiscrimination will not of itself result in providing opportunities to those individuals who might otherwise be adversely affected. It is for this reason that the School Board commits itself to a program of affirmative action designed not to discriminate against anyone. According to the Florida Administrative Code 6A-6.0908(3), “national origin, minority or limited English proficient students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their use of a language other than English.”

It is the intent of this Code to be a strict disciplinary guide with its “minimum consequences” listed. Consequences over the “minimum” may be assigned by the principal. If the violation is gang related, the principal shall impose a more severe discipline / punishment. WHILE STUDENTS MAY BE DISCIPLINED FOR INFRACTIONS ACCORDING TO THE RESPONSES OUTLINED IN THIS CODE OF CONDUCT, BE AWARE THAT THERE COULD BE ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCES THROUGH LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR ACTS THAT VIOLATE THE LAW.

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SECTION I: PUBLIC NOTICES

A. STUDENT RECORDS

The School Board of Highlands County (SBHC) maintains educational records in accordance with state and federal laws. Copies of SBHC Student Records Policy are available for public use during school hours at each school or at the SBHC District Office, 426 School Street, Sebring, Florida between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Parents, legal guardians or eligible students have the right to review records on their child, the right to a copy of the records (at a cost of 15 cents per page), the right to challenge information contained in the record, the right to a hearing if the school disagrees to change or destroy information when challenged, and the right to waive access to letters of statements of recommendations or evaluations.

Student education records are forwarded to other schools that have requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

B. NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER COLLECTION AND USAGE

In compliance with Florida Statute 119.071(5), this statement provides notification of the purpose for the collection and usage of student social security numbers by SBHC. SBHC collects and uses a social security number only if specifically authorized by law to do so or it is imperative for the performance of its duties and responsibilities as prescribed by law.

Pursuant to Florida Statute 1008.386, each district school board shall request that each student enrolled in a public school in this state provide his or her social security number. Each school district shall use social security numbers as student identification numbers in the management information system maintained by the school district. A student satisfies this requirement by presenting to school enrollment officials his or her social security card or a copy of the card. The school district shall include the social security number in the student's permanent records.

All social security numbers are protected by federal regulations Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). To protect identity, the SBHC will secure student social security numbers from unauthorized access and assign a unique student identification number. This unique identification number will then be used for all associated educational purposes.

C. FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (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 their respective school guidance counselor a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. A list of addresses for each school is included on the last page of this Code of Conduct. The School official 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.***
Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write their respective school guidance counselor, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. 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 the 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 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 if 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 The Highlands County School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.***
The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. DOE, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901
- (5) If any official or employee of the District refuses to comply with statutory privacy provisions, an aggrieved parent or student who receives injunctive relief may be awarded attorney fees and court costs.

D. DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Highlands County Public Schools reserve the right to release “directory information” without prior permission of the parent **unless the parent has notified the Principal of the school, in writing, within thirty (30) calendar days of the beginning of school that directory information is not to be released.** Lists of students will not be released without School Board action when not otherwise authorized by law or SBHC policies.

Directory information for grades K – 8 consists of student name, participation in and photographs of officially recognized school activities, photographs in the school memory book / yearbook, school newspaper, school website, grade level and awards received.

Directory information for grades 9 – 12 consists of student name, address, participation in and photographs of officially recognized school activities, photographs in the school yearbook, school newspaper, school website, grade level, awards received, the G.P.A. of students recommended for academic recognition (ex. Scholarship Recognition), weight and height of members of athletic teams, and dates of attendance.

Personally identifiable information can be disclosed, transferred or released without prior consent of the parent of a student or the eligible student in connection with enrollment in another school, application for financial aid, research, a state statute, and an accrediting organization. Personally identifiable information will be released without parent consent to appropriate officials in emergency situations, to comply with a lawfully issued subpoena and in cases involving compulsory school attendance and child abuse.

E. RANDOM STUDENT DRUG TESTING PROGRAM

The School Board of Highlands County has implemented a random drug testing program (5.90) for all middle and high school students participating in interscholastic athletics, extracurricular activities and co-curricular activities. The “use of” or “possession of” alcohol or drugs by a student at any time is both illegal and detrimental to that student’s ability to participate in interscholastic athletics, extracurricular activities and co-curricular activities, and is herby prohibited. Any student determined to be in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action related to his or her participating in interscholastic athletics, extracurricular activities or co-curricular activities which may include suspension or removal from athletics, extracurricular participation or co-curricular activities.

F. PHOTOGRAPHS / PUBLICATIONS

From time to time, Highlands County Public Schools photograph or video tape students, and occasionally post student-produced work online for public recognition. Local media often utilize these photographs and video tapes, and/or work, or come on campus with school permission to photograph or videotape students. Surveillance video tapes are also used on buses and in certain areas of school campuses. **If the parent does not wish photographs and/or video tapes of his/her child released or doesn’t want their child’s work posted online, he/she must notify the school Principal in writing within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the school year.** The principal will then take every reasonable effort to ensure such photographs or video taken for the school yearbook or similar publications.

Students may be videotaped on buses and in some other situations for security and safety purposes; these video tapes may be utilized as evidence for certain disciplinary procedures. Additionally, students may be videotaped by school personnel for diagnostic/educational purposes; these tapes would be maintained in a student’s record and available to the parent. Parental notice restricting photographs or video tapes will not apply to the use of these photographs or video tapes for disciplinary procedures.

Highlands County Public Schools may use these photographs and video tapes for an indefinite period of time unless this authorization is revoked in writing. However, if revoked, Highlands County Public Schools shall not be required to recall affected publications, photographs, video tape, and other recorded images then in use.

G. TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLAN & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION USE

Summary of School Board Policy Chapter 8.0 Auxiliary Services

- Acceptable Use:** Use of the Internet and email must be in support of education and research that is consistent with the educational goals and policies of the School Board of Highlands County (SBHC).
- Privileges:** The use of the Internet and email is not a right, but a privilege, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of that privilege. School and district administrators will determine inappropriate use and their decision is final.
- 'Netiquette':** You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Be polite. Do not use vulgar or obscene language. Students should not reveal their private address or phone number or those of others. Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private.
- Warranties:** The SBHC makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The District is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet.
- Vandalism:** Vandalism (malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet, FIRM or other networks or equipment) will result in cancellation of privileges or other appropriate punishment. This includes the creation of, or the uploading of, computer viruses on the Internet or host site.
- Security:** If you identify a security problem, you must notify a system administrator immediately. Do not show or identify the problem to others. Do not use another individual's account or give your account number to anyone else. Any user identified as a security risk may be denied Internet access.

All terms and conditions in this policy are applicable to all users of the Internet, email, and other networks. You may contact a school or district administrator if you are interested in obtaining a complete copy of the SBHC Policy Chapter 8.0 – Auxiliary Services.

Safety Guidelines for Students Student users are expected to protect themselves by following these guidelines:

- a. Do not reveal any personal information of yours or that of any other person (name, address, phone number)
- b. Never share your password with anyone.
- c. Student users shall promptly disclose to their teacher or another school employee any message the user receives that is inappropriate or makes the user feel uncomfortable.
- d. Student users shall receive or transmit communications using only SBHC approved and SBHC managed communication systems.
- e. Students shall not use e-mail in connection with junk e-mail, spamming or any mass mailing.
- f. Students shall not create a false identity or otherwise attempt to mislead others as to the identity of the sender or the origin of the message.
- g. Students shall not transmit unlawful, harassing, libelous (gossip), abusive, threatening, harmful, vulgar, obscene or otherwise objectionable material of any kind.

Internet access is a privilege designed solely for educational purposes, any violation of the Terms and Conditions of the Highlands County School Board Policy 8.60, Telecommunications Plan and Electronic Communication Use, may result in losing access privileges, school disciplinary actions and/or appropriate legal action. Parents who do not approve of their child(ren) having access to the Internet or other non-school network resources, must notify the Principal in writing, within thirty (30) calendar days of the start of the school year. Parents who do not approve of their child(ren) in grades 6 through 12 having access to a SBHC issued email account must notify the Principal in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of the start of the school year.

H. Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents 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:

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. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligible
8. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent

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.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The School Board of Highlands County (SBHC) will develop and adopt policies, in consultation 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 SBHC will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Unless otherwise contained in the Code of Conduct annual notice, The SBHC will also directly notify, such as through U.S. mail or email, 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 SBHC will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. *Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:* Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

The School Board of Highlands County administers the Florida Youth Survey each year. This instrument is administered randomly to students in a limited number of middle and high schools selected by the State. The Highlands County survey is administered in the Spring, usually in April. The survey is important in assessing our school district’s needs, monitoring programs and evaluating prevention program outcomes. Student participation in the survey is strictly anonymous. No personally identifiable information is requested as part of the survey or survey process.

As a parent you have the right to prohibit your child’s participation in this survey. Neither you nor your child is required to give a reason for not participating. Students who do not participate will not be required to answer all the questions - only those they choose to answer. Prior to survey administration, an opt-out form will be distributed to each student to be surveyed. If you do not want your child to participate, the opt-out form must be returned as instructed on the form.

You have a right to inspect the survey instrument prior to administration, if a written request is received by the District. Make such a request by writing to the: Coordinator of Student Services, 426 School Street, Sebring, Florida 33870. Questions can be addressed to the Coordinator of Student Services office at (863) 471-5748.

I. INFORMATION TO MILITARY RECRUITERS

The No Child Left Behind Act requires the School Board to provide, on a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings. A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address and telephone listing not be released to military or to institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent. **A parent wishing to prohibit the release of this information should notify the school Principal within (thirty) 30 calendar days of the start of the school year in writing and shall specify in writing whether the prohibition applies to both military recruiters and institutions of higher education or only to military recruiters or only to institutions of higher education.** This notification to the school Principal must be separate from the notification which the parent provided in regard to "directory information."

J. SECTION 504

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with disabilities. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. *You have the right to:*

1. have your child take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping condition.
2. have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. receive notice with respects to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
4. have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to non-disabled students.
5. have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources and by persons who know the students and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
6. have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program now operated by the District at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the students were placed in a program operated by the District).
7. have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities offered by the District.
8. examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, and placement.
9. request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification evaluation, educational program or placement. (You and your child may take part in the hearing and be represented by counsel. Hearing requests must be made to the Superintendent.)
10. file a local grievance.

If you have questions regarding the District's compliance with Section 504, contact the Coordinator of Student Services at the School Board's District Office.

K. CIVILITY POLICY

Members of the Highlands County School district staff will treat parents, students and other members of the public with respect and expect the same in return. The district must keep schools and administrative offices free from disruptions and prevent unauthorized persons from entering school/district grounds. Accordingly, this policy promotes mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among district employees, parents, students and the public. We do not intend this policy to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. Rather, we seek to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free workplace for our students and staff. In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, we encourage positive communication and discourage volatile, hostile or aggressive actions. This district seeks public cooperation with this endeavor.

DISRUPTIVE INDIVIDUAL MUST LEAVE SCHOOL GROUNDS. Any individual who disrupts or threatens to disrupt school/office operations, threatens the health and safety of students or staff, willfully causes property damage, uses loud and/or offensive language that could provoke a violent reaction or who has otherwise established a continued pattern of unauthorized entry on school district property, will be directed to leave school or school district property promptly by the school's principal, his/her designee, or other chief administrative officer.

DIRECTIONS TO STAFF IN DEALING WITH ABUSIVE INDIVIDUAL. If any member of the public uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting, and/or demeaning manner, the administrator or employee to whom the remarks are directed will calmly and politely warn the speaker to communicate civilly.

If the abusive individual does not stop the behavior, the district employee will verbally notify the abusing individual that the meeting, conference, or telephone conversation is terminated; and, if the meeting or conference is on district premises, the employee shall direct the abusive individual to leave promptly.

PROVIDE POLICY AND REPORT INCIDENT. Parents shall be provided a copy of this policy via the Code of Student Conduct. Other members of the public shall receive a written copy of this policy when a staff member determines that the provisions of this policy are being violated. The staff member will then immediately notify his/her supervisor and provide a written report of the incident (MIS 01.11.) **If necessary, the School Resource Officer or other local law enforcement will be notified of the incident.**

L. SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

PERSONAL INJURY NOTICE

Students are expected to look to their own safety, the safety of other passengers, and to assist the school bus operator to this end. Beyond the exercise of reasonable care, the School Board of Highlands County and its agents are not responsible for injuries to students caused by their own inattention, carelessness, or the acts of other motorists, adverse traffic and weather conditions or other acts of nature.

INJURY CLAIMS ARISING FROM TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING DISTRICT OWNED SCHOOL BUSES

All school buses used in the home-to-school and school-to-home transportation of students to schools in Highlands County are owned and operated by The School Board of Highlands County, Florida, a corporate public body. The Board complies with the tort liability requirements regarding school buses found in Chapter 1006.24, Florida Statutes. Public school buses are defined by state statutes as 'No Fault' vehicles. (627.732, F.S.) In such cases, insurance coverage attaches to the individual, not the vehicle.

If a student is injured as a result of an auto accident while occupying a school bus, the student would recover through the Personal Injury Protection auto policy of the parent, as long as he/she is a resident of the same household. If the parent does not own a vehicle or owns a vehicle but is not insured as required by statute, the student has no recovery through Personal Injury Protection coverage.

6A-3.0121 Florida Administrative Code

The district shall inform parents, guardians, and students at least annually in writing of their responsibilities and related district policies as follows:

1. To ensure the safe travel of their students during the portions of each trip to and from school and home when the students are not under the custody and control of the school district, including during each trip to and from home and the assigned bus stop when the school district provides bus transportation,
2. To ensure that students ride only in their assigned school buses and get off only at assigned bus stops, except when the district has approved alternative buses or arrangements,
3. To ensure students are aware of and follow the district's adopted Code of Student Conduct while the students are at school bus stops and to provide necessary supervision during times when the bus is not present,
4. To ensure that, when the physical disability of the student renders the student unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, the parent or guardian provides the necessary assistance to help the student get on and off at the bus stop, as required by district policy or the student's individual educational plan.

M. NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of The School Board of Highlands County not to discriminate against employees or students by either deliberate or inadvertent bias based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, handicap, marital status, or religion. It is further recognized that a passive policy of nondiscrimination will not of itself result in providing opportunities to those individuals who might otherwise be adversely affected. It is for this reason that The School Board of Highlands County commits itself to a program of affirmative action designed not to discriminate against anyone.

The following person should be notified if the Equity Nondiscrimination Policy is violated:
Director of Human Resources, Recruitment, & Professional Development/Equity Coordinator
The School Board of Highlands County, 426 School Street, Sebring, Florida 33870
Phone: (863) 471-5734 FAX: (863) 471-5673

N. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Parents must indicate if they **do not** approve of their child(ren) receiving corporal punishment in writing to the principal of the school. If approval for administration of corporal punishment is initially given, approval for each separate administration of corporal punishment need not be obtained. Prior parental approval for administration of corporal punishment may be revoked in writing by the parent at any time.

O. BICYCLE HELMETS

Under Florida law, any person who is under the age of 16 and is riding a bicycle, or is a passenger on a bicycle, must wear a bicycle helmet which meets certain standards. Law enforcement officers and school crossing guards are authorized to issue a bicycle safety brochure and a verbal warning to anyone violating this requirement. Violators may be assessed a fine or issued a traffic citation.

P. SKATEBOARDS, ETC.

Use of skateboards, roller blades, shoes with rollers, scooters, etc. are prohibited on school campuses and School Board property.

Q. POLICY ON STUDENT DRINKING AND SMOKING

It is unlawful for any person under the age of 18 to smoke in, on or within 1,000 feet of any school property between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and midnight. Law enforcement may issue a citation and fine up to twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), or fifty (50) hours of community service or, if available, assignment and completion of a school approved anti-tobacco "alternative to suspension" program, Section 386.212, Florida Statute.

Underage drinking is a serious problem in Highlands County. Underage drinking is against the law and will be treated in this manner. The State of Florida will now prosecute every minor caught with alcohol and every minor caught using a fake ID to buy alcohol. Should the Court find you guilty, in addition to penalties involving alcohol, you will also lose your driver's license or the right to get a license when you turn sixteen for up to one year.

R. SCHOOL HEALTH SCREENINGS

As per the School Health Plan, Florida Statutes *381.0056(7)(e)*, and Administrative Rules (Chapter 64F-6.003, F.A.C.), the following health screenings will be conducted during the school year:

- Vision/Hearing and Height/Weight/BMI for grades K, 1, 3, and 6;
- Scoliosis for grade 6;
- Dental screenings for grades 2 or 3.

If you do not want your child's Height/Weight/BMI screening information sent home with your child, but would rather it be mailed, please submit a written request with your mailing address to the health room staff at your child's school.

Additional dental screenings and screenings for the control of communicable disease will be provided as needed.

Unless a written parent request for exemption is provided to the school health room staff, this notification serves as implied agreement with the student's participation in health screening and health appraisals provided by School Health Service Programs.

SECTION II: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. STUDENTS' ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Students Have the <i>RIGHT</i> to:	Students Have the <i>RESPONSIBILITY</i> to:
Observe all school rules or suffer the consequences of unacceptable behavior. Students will be familiar with the District Code of Student Conduct and the School Student Handbook.	Observe all school rules or suffer the consequences of unacceptable behavior. Students will be familiar with the District Code of Student Conduct and the School Student Handbook.
Be shown personal respect by all other students and school personnel.	Show respect to all other students and school personnel.
Make appropriate use of school facilities, properties and materials.	Respect and protect school facilities, properties and materials.
Attend school and benefit from quality educational opportunities.	Attend school and all classes on a regular basis; be punctual (in class and prepared for work when the bell rings.)
Have access to an appropriate education, including instruction and use of materials and tests at a level which allows an opportunity for success.	Participate in educational opportunities by coming to class prepared to learn, completing classroom assignments and homework to the best of their abilities.
Hear, examine and express divergent points of view, including freedom of speech, written expression and symbolic expression.	Consider and respect the divergent point of view of others. Be sure that personal expressions (speech, written or symbolic) do not infringe on the rights of others.
Know in advance how grades in a class will be determined.	Understand the teachers' grading systems, monitoring their own progress in each class.
Enjoy a reasonable degree of personal privacy, be safe and feel safe at school.	Keep their persons and property free of dangerous or illegal objects, materials and substances; pose no threat to others.
Participate in extracurricular activities and clubs if they qualify academically and physically, if appropriate. Students may not be excluded on the basis of sex (except as allowed under Title IX), color, race, ethnic origin, religion or handicap. Students may be excluded for disciplinary reasons.	Abide by the rules of extracurricular activities, display school spirit and good sportsmanship.
Choose whether or not to participate in patriotic or religious activities.	Respect the rights of others to participate in patriotic or religious activities.
Receive person, academic and vocational counseling.	Seek personal, academic and vocational counseling.
Receive appropriate due process in all disciplinary actions, including an appeal procedure.	Cooperate with school personnel in cases involving disciplinary actions, following prescribed steps for an appeal and accepting final decisions.
Dress comfortably in a way appropriate to a school setting.	Choose clothing that adheres to the established school's dress code.
Assemble peacefully on school grounds.	Assemble so as not to disrupt the educational process.
Participate in school government based on a democratic process.	Take an active interest in student government.
Remain in the school program if married, if a parent or if pregnant.	Seek regular medical advice regarding school attendance.
Have access to records and/or transcripts as provided by statute.	Provide the school with all information relevant to making educational decisions, including identification when requested by any staff member, i.e., custodian, bus driver, bus monitor.
Be free from harassment by others and report any harassment without fear of retaliation.	Refrain from harassing others and retaliating against persons who complain of harassment.

B. PARENTS' ROLE

If the Highlands County school system is to do its job, the home and the school must cooperate. The school's responsibility is to provide a quality education in a safe environment for all students. The parents' responsibility includes the following:

1. Understand and support the Code of Student Conduct. Discuss the Code of Student Conduct with your child emphasizing that appropriate behavior enhances the learning process. Advise the principal if you agree or object to the use of paddling as described on page 20.
2. ***Teach your child self-respect, respect for the law, respect for the authority in the school and respect for the rights and property of others.***
3. Show a positive attitude toward the school and toward your child's learning progress by assisting your child with assignments and homework to the best of your ability.
4. Make certain your child attends school all day, every day, unless the child is ill; send a written excuse for legitimate absences. Your child's attendance affects the quality of his/her education and our funding. Please review the Compulsory School Attendance guidelines, page 16.
5. Insure that your child has the necessary school supplies each day, i.e., paper, pencils, etc.
6. Know your child's school, its staff and its curriculum. **Communicate with your child's teachers on a frequent basis.**
7. Work closely with school personnel to solve any disciplinary or academic problems. Parents may be requested to observe the student's classroom behavior to help solve any disciplinary or academic problems.
8. Teach your child to dress properly and neatly and to be clean and well groomed. Please review The School Board of Highlands County Student Dress Code Policy, page 17, and your child's individual school dress code.
9. ***Make sure the school has your current home and work telephone numbers, the home address and an emergency contact person. Update any changes as they occur.***
10. Supervise smaller children attending extracurricular school activities, concerts or assemblies and especially athletic events. Although the school will provide law enforcement, crowd control and proper supervision, **the care of children attending an event is the responsibility of the parent.**
11. Please follow through with scheduled conferences and volunteering commitments. If a conflict arises, please notify the school.

For the purpose of limiting the liability of a school, Section 1003.31, Florida Statutes provides that students are considered under the control and supervision of the school when they are on the premises during a reasonable time before and after school and while attending or participating in a school-sponsored activity at the school site. Reasonable time is defined as 30 minutes before and after school or before the school activity is scheduled or actually begins or ends.

C. CLASSROOM TEACHER'S ROLE

The teacher will inform every student of the classroom discipline plan to be used in that teacher's room. The plan will be compatible with the school plan and the District Code of Student Conduct.

The classroom plan will include a series of steps with punishment increasing if the problem persists. The teacher will provide instruction regarding proper conduct, explaining the punishments for misconduct. The instruction will stress RESPECT. Interventions must include an attempt to contact the parent and may include:

1. When a student fails to follow the rules, the teacher will proceed through the steps listed in the room plan. Consequences may include withholding a privilege, isolation, counseling, detention, extra work, task assignment, parent conference or corporal punishment if corporal punishment is approved in principle by the principal and written authorization for corporal punishment is received from the parent. Approval is not necessary for each specific instance in which it is used (Section 1003.32, Florida Statutes.)
2. If the misconduct is repeated, the teacher will attempt to contact the parent and record the result.
3. The teacher will refer the student's case to a social worker, a school nurse, a guidance counselor or the School Attendance Review Committee (SARC) to seek positive intervention.
4. If the classroom problem persists or the misconduct has become a major disruption, the teacher or staff member will complete the upper section of the Highlands County District Schools Student Discipline Referral Form (MIS 13.04) and refer the student to an administrator who will determine the punishment and advise the teacher of the action taken.
5. Subject to law and to the rules of the District School Board, each teacher or other member of the staff of any school shall have such authority for the control and discipline of students as may be assigned to him or her by the principal or the principal's designated representative and shall keep good order in the classroom and in other places in which he or she is assigned to be in charge of students.
6. Within the framework of this Code of Student Conduct, teachers and other instructional personnel shall have the authority to undertake any of the following alternatives in managing student behavior and ensuring the safety of all students in their classes and school.

D. PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

1. The administrators at each school will, with the assistance of faculty and staff, develop an approved School Discipline Plan based on this Code, the age of the student body and the school's philosophy. Emphasis will be placed on teaching *respect*.
2. Principals have statutory power which permits their determining disciplinary action appropriate to student misconduct, (Section 1006.07, 1006.09, Florida Statutes). Principals must protect the student's rights of due process and appeal.
3. The principal, or the principal's designee, shall give strong consideration to the recommendation for discipline made by a teacher, other member of the instructional staff or a bus driver when making a decision regarding student referral for discipline.
4. The principal, or the principal's designee, may recommend to the superintendent the expulsion of any student who has committed a serious breach of conduct, including, but not limited to, possession of firearm or weapon, willful disobedience, open defiance of authority of a member of his or her staff, violence against persons or property, threat or false report or any other act which substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of the school. Any recommendation of expulsion shall include a detailed report by the principal, or the principal's designated representative, on the alternative measures taken prior to the recommendation of expulsion or state why alternative measures were inappropriate, (Section 1006.09, Florida Statutes).
5. The principal, or the principal's designee, shall make a *good faith effort* to contact the student's parent or guardian by telephone to inform them of a decision to recommend expulsion for their child.
6. The principal, or the principal's designee, shall make a *good faith effort* to immediately inform a student's parent or guardian by telephone of a student's suspension and the reason for the suspension, (Section 1006.09, Florida Statutes).
7. The principal, or the principal's designee, shall make a *good faith effort* to contact the parent or guardian of a student who may be placed in personal or legal jeopardy due to interrogation by a police officer. This does not include questions concerning any other matter pertaining to school or a school-related activity or event.
8. Principals must release a student to law enforcement officers when a warrant is presented for the student's arrest. In this case, the principal shall make a *good faith effort* to contact the parent or guardian.
9. Disciplinary decisions are based on the judgment of the individual administrator according to the details of each specific case.
10. The student's record may be considered. Punishment will be increasingly severe if rules are broken repeatedly or habitually. Repeated disruptive behavior may constitute "defiance of authority."

The principal is required to report certain infractions to law enforcement authorities and may press charges with the State Attorney if the violation warrants such action.

E. SCHOOL BUS OPERATOR

The principal or the principal's designee may delegate any disciplinary authority to school bus operators except for suspension of students from riding the bus.

AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL BUS OPERATORS (Section 1006.10, Florida Statutes)

1. The school bus operator shall require order and good behavior by all students being transported on school buses.
2. The district school board shall require a system of progressive discipline of transported students for actions which are prohibited by the Code of Student Conduct. Disciplinary actions, including suspension of students from riding on district school board owned or contracted school buses, shall be subject to district School Board policies and procedures and may be imposed by the principal or the principal's designee. The principal or the principal's designee may delegate any disciplinary authority to school bus operators except for suspension of students from riding the bus.
3. The school bus operator shall control students during the time students are on the school bus, but shall not have such authority when students are waiting at the school bus stop or when students are en route to or from the school bus stop except when the bus is present at the bus stop.
4. If an emergency should develop due to the conduct of students on the bus, the bus operator may take such steps as are immediately necessary to protect the students on the bus.
5. School bus operators shall not be required to operate a bus under conditions in which one or more students pose a clear and present danger to the safety of the operator, other students, or the safety of the bus while in operation. The district school board shall have measures in place designed to protect the school bus operator from threats or physical injury from students.
6. District school boards may use transportation, school safety, or FEFP funds to provide added security for buses transporting disruptive or delinquent students to and from school or other educational activities.
7. In the case of a student having engaged in violent or blatantly unsafe actions while riding the school bus, the district school board shall take corrective measures to ensure, to the extent feasible, that such actions are not repeated prior to reassigning the student to the bus.

The school bus operator has no authority to control students while they are waiting at the bus stop or when they are on their way to or from the bus stop, except when the bus is present at the bus stop.

F. STAFF MEMBERS ROLE FOR DISCIPLINE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

All school personnel shall be informed and are responsible for all school board administrative rules concerning discipline. All school personnel, including teachers, custodians, paraprofessionals, school volunteers, cafeteria workers, office staff, etc., shall become involved in the discipline process anywhere on campus or at school functions off campus. Verbal warning, verbal reprimands and written discipline referrals are the normal procedures used to handle discipline problems outside the classroom.

Severe misbehavior observed outside the classroom will be referred directly to an administrator.

G. SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AND RESOURCE OFFICERS

The School Board of Highlands County, the Sheriff's Office of Highlands County, and the Sebring, Avon Park and Lake Placid City Police Departments have formed a collaborative, cooperative relationship to safeguard our students, staff and schools. To this end, we wish to emphasize the following procedural guidelines in the event School Resource Officers become actively involved in criminal investigations on school campuses.

Investigative procedures may become necessary in those felony and/or misdemeanor cases occurring on school campuses or at school-sponsored activities which are not best handled solely through school disciplinary procedure. All such offenses which are criminal in nature shall be reported to law enforcement. School officials are additionally expected to cooperate with law enforcement in a reasonable and prudent manner in the investigation of criminal offenses which involve students but which have occurred outside school related events.

Our expectation is that school administrators and law enforcement officers respect the authority of each agency's function and maintain continual communication for our mutual benefit as well as the benefit of our students.

H. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Florida Statute 1003.24 places the responsibility on parents and legal guardians for school attendance of children. It is essential that our children receive an education. Failure to attend school in a regular and timely fashion hinders the education process. Truancy and poor school performance have a direct relationship to juvenile delinquency and destructive behavior. A disproportionate percentage of juvenile crime occurs when juveniles should be in school.

Regular school attendance is required for students between the ages of 6 and 16. A child must be enrolled in school for the entire school year if he or she attains the age of six years by February 1 of that school year. (Section 1003.21 Florida Statutes).

1. Attendance in a public school supported by public funds;
2. Attendance in a parochial, religious or denominational school;
3. Attendance in a private school supported by tuition or endowments; or
4. Attendance in a home education program as defined in the Florida Statute 1000.21.

Florida Statute 1003.21 states that: "A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that **age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment** with the district school board." This form, MIS 13.54 can be accessed at all secondary schools in the District.

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be on time in order to benefit the most from the instructional program. Any student who is absent will be expected to make up all work missed. Grades will be recorded when appropriate. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent to arrange for the makeup work with each teacher involved after the student's return to class. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide and accept assignments within a time frame prescribed by the principal, not to exceed two weeks. Students in grades 6-12 who are placed on 'out of school suspension', expulsion or other unexcused absences shall not be allowed to earn credit for making up missed work.

In compliance with Florida School Laws, The School Board of Highlands County recognizes excused absences as those resulting from:

1. Personal illness of the pupil (medical evidence may be required by the principal);
2. Court appearance of the pupil (summons required);
3. Medical appointment of the pupil (a medical statement may be required);
4. Religious holiday;
5. Death in the immediate family;
6. Approved school activity (absences recorded but not reported);
7. Attendance at a center under Health and Rehabilitative Service supervision;
8. Insurmountable problems (permission by principal may be required).

Written notice stating the reason for the student's absence must be presented to school personnel. Absences not documented in writing by the parent/guardian and not included in the excuses listed above shall be UNEXCUSED. If a student is continuously sick and repeatedly absent from school, the student must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance.

Pre-Arranged Absence Policy: The purpose of a pre-arranged absence is to allow absences for reasons normally unexcused. Pre-arranged absence forms (MIS 01.12) are available in the school office and one should be submitted as far in advance as possible, but not less than three days prior to the requested date.

Students must present a signed pre-arranged absence form to the principal or designee. During the initial review, an administrator/designee will consider the student's attendance, grades, and discipline. Upon initial review, the form will be returned to the student to obtain teachers' signatures, and comments/assignments (secondary schools only). Once teachers' signatures are obtained, it will be resubmitted to the administrator/designee for final approval or disapproval.

Students are responsible for turning in assigned work within a reasonable amount of time. No pre-arranged absences will be granted during semester exams or state testing.

Each school will have a School Attendance Review Committee (SARC) that meets regularly to address attendance. Guidelines are provided in The School Board of Highlands County Code of Student Conduct under absenteeism. The SARC may refer cases to the local Children In Need of Service/Families in Need of Services (CINS/FINS). The CINS/FINS provider has the authority, under Florida law, to file charges against the parent/guardian, student and refer the family for intervention services. (Section 1003.27, Florida Statutes).

Each public school principal or designee shall notify the district school board of each minor under its jurisdiction who accumulates 15 unexcused absences in a period of 90 calendar days. For appropriate-aged middle and high school students, the superintendent must provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles the legal name, sex, date of birth and social security number of each minor who has been reported and fails to satisfy the school attendance requirements of Section 322.091, Florida Statutes. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles may not issue a driver's license or learner's driver's license and shall suspend any previously issued driver's license.

I. STUDENT DRESS CODE

Policy 5.37 - Statutory Authority: 1001.41; 1001.42, Florida Statutes

- (1) We believe that all students have the right to a safe, healthy school environment. We believe that all students have the responsibility to dress appropriately and observe basic standards of cleanliness and good grooming. A student's dress and appearance should not cause disruption, distract from the educational process, or create a health or safety concern for himself or others. Therefore, we establish as policy the following:
 - (a) Shoes shall be worn at all times. Heelies, roller shoes, etc., are not allowed.
 - (b) Dresses, skirts, shorts and skorts shall be below mid-thigh with no slits above mid-thigh.
 - (c) Formfitting, body hugging clothes are not allowed.
 - (d) Pants must be zipped, worn at the natural waistline, and be no longer in length than the heels of the shoes.
 - (e) No head coverings are allowed.
 - (f) Blouses, shirts and dresses shall not:
 1. be strapless
 2. be transparent
 3. reveal bare midriff
 4. be low cut
 - (g) Undergarments must be worn but not visible.
 - (h) All clothing must be worn right side out.
 - (i) Students may not wear clothing or display jewelry, buttons or any other items (including tattoos) with words, phrases, symbols, pictures, patches or graphics which are indecent, distracting or disruptive to the learning environment. This includes anything that is hazardous, offensive or sexually suggestive.
 - (j) Choke or wallet chains and chain belts are not allowed.
- (2) In addition to the minimum standards herein established, each school may enhance upon these guidelines utilizing faculty, staff, parent and student input as appropriate. Provision for exception based upon religion shall be made at school sites. Please refer to Student Handbook for individual school rules.
- (3) **School-based administrators have the final authority to determine when personal appearance and dress do not meet Board and school standards and also have the authority to take appropriate action.**

SECTION III: PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

A. REMOVING A STUDENT FROM CLASS

1. A teacher may send a student to the principal's office to maintain effective discipline in the classroom. The principal shall respond by employing appropriate discipline-management techniques consistent with the Student Code of Conduct under Section 1006.07, Florida Statutes.
2. A teacher may remove from class a student whose behavior the teacher determines to interfere with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn.
3. If a teacher removes a student from class under Section 1003.32, Florida Statutes, subsection (2), the principal may place the student in another appropriate classroom, in Individualized Study Services (ISS) suspension, or in an alternative education program as provided by Section 1003.53, Florida Statutes, or the principal may recommend the student for Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) or expulsion, as appropriate. The student may be prohibited from attending or participating in school-sponsored or school related activities.

The principal may not return the student to that teacher's class without the teacher's consent unless the committee established under Section 1003.32, Florida Statutes, determines that such placement is the best or only available alternative. The teacher and the placement review committee must render decisions within five days of the removal of the student from the classroom.

4. Placement Review Committee, established under Section 1003.32, Florida Statutes:

Each school shall establish a committee to determine placement of a student when a teacher withholds consent to the return of a student to the teacher's class. A decision must be rendered by the teacher and the Placement Review Committee within five days of the removal of the student from the classroom. Committee membership must include at least the following:

- a) Two teachers, one selected by the school's faculty and one selected by the teacher, who have removed the student and
 - b) One member from the school's staff who is selected by the principal. The teacher who withheld consent to readmitting the student may not serve on the committee.
5. Any teacher who removes 25 percent of the students from any class shall be required to complete professional development to improve classroom management skills.

B. INVESTIGATION OF CRIMINAL LAW VIOLATIONS

NOTIFICATION

Principal's Role

1. All violations of law shall be reported to the School Resource Officer who will determine the appropriate legal action to be taken. Notification of parents by school personnel shall be made by the principal or his/her designee solely at the instruction of the principal.

Role of the School Resource Office

1. In the event a law violation requiring a criminal investigation is reported to the School Resource Officer, he/she shall notify the principal or his/her designee.

INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

Principal's Role

1. The principal or his/her designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent or guardian of a student who may become a suspect or who may be placed in personal danger or legal jeopardy due to interrogation by a police officer. If contact is attempted, this will be done in cooperation with the law enforcement officer. When at all practical, an administrator or a parent should be present during interrogation of a student who is a suspect unless this provision is waived by parent or student.
2. The School Resource Officer shall in no way be hindered from making an arrest or conducting a criminal investigation.
3. If, at any point, the school principal has a concern regarding the investigative procedures taking place, he/she should contact the Deputy Superintendent and/or the supervisor of the School Resource Officer Juvenile Division or the Chief of Avon Park, Sebring or Lake Placid Police Department in whose jurisdiction the respective school is located.

Role of the School Resource Officer

1. Law enforcement officers wishing to interview a suspect on campus shall notify the principal and shall make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or guardian as a matter of Sheriff's Office, Sebring, Lake Placid or Avon Park City Police Department policy. Further questioning of students will be conducted according to Florida Statute and Sheriff's Office, Sebring, Lake Placid or Avon Park City Police Department policy in whose jurisdiction the respective school is located.
2. If, at any point, the SRO has a concern regarding his/her ability to freely function at a school site with school administrators, he/she should contact the supervisor of the School Resource Officer Unit, Juvenile Division, the Chief of Avon Park, Lake Placid or Sebring Police Department in whose jurisdiction the respective school is located.
3. If, at any point, a student who was called for questioning as a victim or witness becomes a suspect, all interrogation by the SRO shall cease until a reasonable attempt to notify parents or legal guardian is made.

C. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

In Accordance with State Legislation, Corporal Punishment Remains an Option in this Code.

Parents must indicate if they do not approve of the child(ren) receiving corporal punishment in writing to the Principal of the school.

Paddling shall be administered on the posterior of the student and shall not exceed five (5) swats. This punishment will be administered in accordance with Section 1003.32, Florida Statutes.

Such punishment shall be by a school administrator or designee or teacher if approved in principle by the principal. The punishment shall be administered in the presence of another adult School Board employee. The principal shall prepare guidelines for administering such punishment, the conditions under which the punishment shall be administered and the specific personnel on the school staff authorized to administer the punishment. The person who administered the punishment shall, upon request, provide the pupil's parent or guardian with a written explanation of the reason for the punishment and the name of the other adult who was present.

Students may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored activity the day they receive corporal punishment.

D. GUIDELINES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)

The principal or designee may suspend a student for up to ten (10) days. A reasonable attempt should be made to inform the parent or guardian, by telephone, for each suspension and the reasons for it. A written report shall be made within 24 hours and a copy delivered to the parent by school personnel or by U.S. mail. A written report shall also be provided within 24 hours to the Superintendent. The length and conditions of the suspension may vary depending on the seriousness of the misconduct and the student's record.

Principals of elementary schools may permit parents of students who are in grades K-5 to come to school and spend a day observing their child in the classroom instead of having their child serve a one day Out-of-School Suspension (OSS). Parents must notify the principal, in advance, by calling the school when they receive notice of the Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) or by coming to school with their child and reporting directly to the principal's office so that arrangements may be made for the visit. This option may be used a maximum of four times during the school year. The visit must be within three (3) school days from the date the child was suspended. If the parents must leave school before the school day is over, their child must leave with them.

Students in grades 6-12 who are placed on Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will not be allowed to make up missed work for credit unless other options are listed in an individual school's handbook or are incorporated in a school's pilot program. **While suspended, a student may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored activity.**

PENDING EXPULSION: If, and only if, School Board action on an expulsion recommendation is pending and the 10-day suspension period would expire before the next regular or special meeting of the School Board, the Superintendent may extend the suspension through the date of the next regular or special meeting of the School Board. At such meeting, if the expulsion recommendation is not heard due to a continuance for an administrative hearing requested by the parent or the parent's attorney, or for other good cause show, the School Board may continue such suspension until the next regular or special meeting of the School Board scheduled to hear the expulsion matter. Attendance at The Academy during such periods of suspension may be required if so directed by the School Board.

E. INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY SERVICES (ISS)

Schools may develop systems of Individualized Study Services (ISS). Individualized Study Services (ISS) will be assigned by the principal or designee and will consist of supervised isolation for the length of the school day. Students will be allowed to complete work through assignments provided by the student's teacher(s). Students assigned to Individualized Study Services (ISS) may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored activity the day or days they are assigned to Individualized Study Services (ISS).

F. STUDENT TRAINING ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION PROGRAM (STATS)

Principals of schools may offer to their students and parents an alternative to suspension. This program is called S.T.A.T.S. and is designed as an alternative to Out-of-School Suspension. Students who are enrolled in the S.T.A.T.S. Program would serve Individualized Study Services (ISS) in lieu of OSS in addition to attending a prescribed number of Monday evening seminars. A parent must also attend. Seminar topics include: Elementary School Issues, Juvenile Justice, Anger Management, Moral Reasoning Skills and Peer Pressure. Upon successful completion of S.T.A.T.S., the work that the student completed in ISS would be counted for grades. Failure to complete the seminars would result in an OSS and all work done in ISS would revert to zeros.

G. EXPULSION GUIDELINES

Florida Statutes define expulsion as "the removal of the right and obligation of a student to attend a public school under conditions set by the District School Board, and for a period of time not to exceed the remainder of the term or school year and one additional year of attendance", §1003.01(6), Florida Statutes. Students may not be readmitted through other state agencies.

EXPULSION PROCEDURES

- 1) Upon commission of an offense for which expulsion is recommended, the student shall receive a written discipline referral from the principal or designee indicating that expulsion of the student will be recommended to the Superintendent. The student shall at that time be suspended out of school for up to ten (10) school days.
- 2) The principal or designee shall recommend, in writing, to the Superintendent that the Superintendent recommend expulsion of the student to the School Board. Any recommendation of expulsion shall include a detailed report by the principal or the principal's designee on the alternative measures taken prior to the recommendation of expulsion.
- 3) If the Superintendent intends to recommend expulsion, the Superintendent, or his representative, shall, within five (5) business days from the receipt of the Principal's recommendation, provide the parents a written statement of the recommendation of expulsion, a statement of the charges against the student, a statement advising the parents of the right to a hearing on the matter pursuant to §§120.569 and 120.57(2), Florida Statutes, and a statement that a request for such hearing must be made, in writing, and delivered prior to the Board's decision on the recommended expulsion. This provision shall be accomplished by certified mail, hand delivery or in person.

Notification shall be complete at the time of personal service or at the time of mailing if certified mail is utilized. **It shall be the absolute responsibility of the parent to accept delivery of certified mail.**

- 4) The School Board's designee shall schedule an informal meeting with the student's parents to discuss the charges and potential outcomes. Both the student and school officials may present their respective versions of the facts. The student or parents may, at their own cost, have legal counsel present to advise them at the meeting. In an appropriate case, the School Board's designee may extend to the parents and student an offer to participate in a district alternative discipline program. Any agreement reached at the informal meeting is subject to Board approval.

5) Should the parents be offered and accept an agreement as to the student's participation in a district alternative discipline program, the expulsion shall be forwarded to the Board with the additional recommendation that the student be allowed to complete the alternative program. The item shall be placed on the Board's agenda for consideration at the next regular meeting. The Board shall consider and approve or reject the recommendation for expulsion and the alternative discipline program agreement, if any.

6) Should the parents disagree with the proposed expulsion (without request for a hearing), or refuse to sign an offer for the student to participate in a district alternative discipline program, the expulsion shall be forwarded to the Board. The Board shall consider the matter as it would any other item on the action agenda.

7) Should the parents disagree with the recommendation of the Superintendent and request a formal hearing, the matter shall be referred for an expulsion hearing at a separately scheduled meeting, where the Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate. **Merely "contesting" the proposed expulsion is NOT a request for a formal hearing pursuant to 120.569 and 120.57(2), Florida Statutes.** A request for formal hearing must be made, in writing, and received by the Superintendent within three (3) weekdays of the informal meeting the Board's designee as referenced in Section G: 4 (Expulsion Guidelines.)

EXPULSION HEARINGS

1) Should a parent timely submit a written request for formal hearing, a formal hearing shall be conducted pursuant to § 120.569, Florida Statutes, and the appropriate subsection of § 120.57, Florida Statutes. The provisions of Chapter 28-106, Florida Administrative Code, sets out the procedures governing the formal hearing.

2) Except for good cause, factual matters alleged in the recommendation for expulsion, but not denied in the request for hearing, shall be presumed admitted. Failure to raise a particular defense in writing will be considered a waiver of such defense.

3) All parties shall have an opportunity to present evidence and argument on all issues, to conduct cross-examination, to submit rebuttal evidence and to be represented by an attorney.

4) The School Board or hearing officer will conduct the hearing and the Board shall review the findings and adopt an order. The order will be delivered, in writing, to the student's parent or guardian.

5) The School Board shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding by tape recording. On the request of any party, the School Board shall make a full or partial transcript available at actual cost, inclusive of transcription by a court reporter if deemed appropriate, payable in advance of transcription by the requesting party.

6) Either party may, at its own cost, make arrangements for and provide a court reporter to attend the hearing.

7) A party adversely affected by final action is entitled to judicial review. All proceedings for review shall be instituted by filing an appropriate petition in the Second District Court of Appeal and review shall be conducted in accordance with the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.

DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

1) The Board or its designee may offer a student the opportunity to have his or her expulsion expunged through successful completion of a district alternative discipline program.

2) Participation in a district alternative discipline program is a privilege, not a right. Offers to participate in a district alternative discipline program are extended at the Board's designee's discretion. Any agreement reached between the Board's designee, the student and parents, involving a recommendation for expulsion and a recommendation to participate in a district alternative discipline program, is subject to Board approval.

3) Students assigned to the district alternative programs by a stipulation hearing with the Board's representative will have no gap between grades assigned by sending school and those earned in the program.

Per District policy, students pending expulsion hearings before the Board are placed in a status of suspension. While suspended, students are not allowed to earn credit. To eliminate inequities in the number of days in suspension status pending Board hearing on expulsion due to scheduling issues, students assigned to the District's alternative programs by a Board hearing will begin earning credit from the program only after a five (5) day suspension (zeroes) from the sending school.

4) Upon the Board's decision that the student has successfully completed a district alternative discipline program, the student's expulsion shall be expunged. The student shall be permitted to return to school under such conditions and restrictions as provided in a district alternative discipline program regulations. The expulsion shall thereafter be deleted from the student's discipline record.

H. GUIDELINES for DISCIPLINE Of EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

All Exceptional Education Students are expected to abide by the rules outlined in the Code.

As part of the screening, identification and placement of exceptional education students in special programs for the disabled, parents will be fully informed of discipline policies and procedures. The consequences of a violation of the Code of Student Conduct by an exceptional student will be determined by the principal in consultation with appropriate staff members and in consideration of the disability or special condition that apply in the specific case. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized by Congress in 2004. Disciplinary procedures will follow the changes required by the new reauthorization and Florida's State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03312, FAC. A complete section on discipline procedures can be found in the Exceptional Student Education Handbook.

When exceptional education students are functioning in the regular school program, they will behave according to standards expected of all students unless their misconduct is clearly a manifestation of the identified disability. Each case will be fully reviewed by staff, parents and administrators.

Students who are classified as gifted are considered exceptional, but they receive the same disciplinary process as students in the regular school program.

Students with disabilities who are eligible for Exceptional Student Education services who commit violations of the Code of Student Conduct will receive consequences consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA 2004) and federal regulations enacted pursuant to such law and Florida's State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03312, FAC or subsequent regulations as updated from time to time.

Students with disabilities who are removed from school for disciplinary reasons must have a manifestation determination before the placement of the student can be changed. A manifestation determination examines the relationship between the student's disability and a specific behavior that may result in disciplinary action. The IEP team and other qualified personnel must determine if the student's behavior represents a manifestation of his disability.

If a parent disagrees with the manifestation determination, he or she may request an expedited hearing. During the hearing procedures the student must remain in the current educational placement unless the parent of the student and the district agree otherwise.

I. CODE VIOLATIONS

Across the nation and the state, a rash of serious incidents, accidents and injuries has awakened educators, parents and law enforcement officials to the need for more emphasis on maintaining order in the schools. During 1988-89, The School Board of Highlands County enacted and enforced a strong Code of Student Conduct designed to teach children and youth to abide by the rules.

The basis of the strict Code is the concept of **RESPECT** – respect for others, for property, for authority and for self.

Changes have been made each year since 1988, but the basic concepts are the same. Each **STUDENT** is responsible for his own behavior and for knowing the rules of his own school; **TEACHERS** are expected to handle minor misconduct thus avoiding referral to the principal; and **PARENTS/GUARDIANS** are to be involved if possible. The violations listed in this book are considered serious and will be enforced by school administrators and the Board as consistently as possible.

Unacceptable behaviors are defined uniformly, but the punishment varies depending on the degree of misconduct, the age and record of the student and the judgment of the principal.

The School Board of Highlands County has authority to regulate all conduct on school property, on school-sponsored transportation, field trips, and extracurricular activities or at any school-related activity or function. This Code of Student Conduct is applicable to all conduct on school property, on school-sponsored transportation and at all school-related functions or activities whether during school hours or otherwise.

WARNING TO STUDENTS

1. GANG RELATED:

If the violation of the Code is gang related, the principal shall impose a more severe discipline/punishment than the minimum consequence for the offense.

2. FELONY CHARGES:

In accordance with Section 1006.09, Florida Statutes, if you are charged by the State attorney with committing a crime off-campus that is a felony, or would be a felony if committed by an adult, you might be removed from school until your guilt or innocence is decided by the court. In accordance with Section 1006.15, Florida Statutes, a student must maintain satisfactory conduct and, if a student is convicted of, or is found to have committed, a felony or a delinquent act which would have been a felony if committed by an adult, regardless of whether adjudication is withheld, the student's participation in extracurricular activities shall be prohibited for a period of a calendar year from the date of adjudication.

J. SEARCHES

1. *Random Searches for Weapons and Drugs*

Students and their property are subject to random searches by school officials using any appropriate means (metal detectors, dogs, etc.). At various times throughout the school year, law enforcement may be asked to search the entire school campus, including all buildings and cars in the parking lot, with dogs that are trained to find marijuana and other illegal drugs or paraphernalia. Items that are prohibited by this Code, which are found during these searches, will be used as evidence to discipline students according to the appropriate section of this Code

2. *Vehicle Searches*

Student vehicles could contain items or substances that are not permitted on school property. All vehicles parked on School Board property or at school events are subject to search by administrators or designee, teachers and/or School Resource Officers, if the Officer is directed to do so by a school administrator. The School Resource Officer will search without orders from the administration if the School Resource Officer has probable cause.

Students who are found to possess items otherwise prohibited by this Code of Conduct in vehicles under their control shall immediately remove said vehicle from School Board property (or return from school event) and shall not be permitted to operate or park any vehicles on School Board property for the remainder of the school year or for the duration of any period of expulsion.

Driving a vehicle to school is a privilege that can be revoked.

3. *Search of Person, Property or School Locker*

The School Board of Highlands County endeavors to ensure a safe environment for students. School administrators and school employees act in place of parents or guardians while students are under their supervision and will conduct searches of students, student lockers and their personal property if they have reasonable suspicion or probable cause to believe they may possess any item that is prohibited.

Students, either on their person or in their personal property, may improperly be in possession of items or substances that are not permitted on school property, on school-sponsored transportation, or at school-sponsored activities or functions. Students, their personal property, or their school lockers are subject to search by administrators or designee, teachers, or School Resource Officers if the Officer is directed to do so by a school administrator upon reasonable suspicion that a prohibited item may be possessed. The School Resource Officer will search without orders from the administration if the School Resource Officer has probable cause.

K. SCHOOL BUS GUIDELINES

We believe all students can behave appropriately and safely while riding on a school bus. We will not tolerate a student stopping a bus operator from doing their job or preventing other students from having safe transportation. The District makes the following commitments:

1. To ensure the safe travel of their students during the portions of each trip to and from school and home when the students are not under the custody and control of the school district, including during each trip to and from home and the assigned bus stop when the school district provides bus transportation.
2. To ensure that students ride only in their assigned school buses and get off only at assigned bus stops, except when the district has approved alternative buses or arrangements.
3. To ensure students are aware of and follow the Districts Code of Student Conduct while they are on the bus.
4. To ensure that, when the physical disability of the student renders the student unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, the parent or guardian provides the necessary assistance to help the student get on and off at the bus stop, as required by District policy or the student's individual educational plan.

Video surveillance cameras may be operating on school buses at any time. Students' pictures and conversations may be recorded. Surveillance tapes are considered confidential student records and, as such, are for use by district staff and will not be released to third parties except as provided by Florida Statutes.

RIDING A SCHOOL BUS IS A PRIVILEGE. SERIOUS OR REPEATED MISCONDUCT WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM THE BUS AND PUNISHMENT FOR THE MISCONDUCT USING THIS CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT. *Bus operators report rule violations to school administrators. School administrators review such reports and determine appropriate action based upon this Code of Student Conduct.*

Misconduct on the bus will be considered the same as misconduct at school or on the school premises and will be handled by the school administrator in the same manner as on campus. No firearms, knives, or weapons of any kind may be brought to school or on board the school bus.

Students or parents will pay for any damages/vandalism deliberately inflicted to the bus by students.

Although all school rules apply on the bus, there are additional special rules due to the nature of bus transportation.

PERSONAL RESPECT CONCEPTS

The following personal conduct is expected of students:

No pushing, no hitting, no threats, no name-calling, no bullying, no cruel humor and no put-downs. Listen to the instructions of adults in charge; treat every person with respect and take responsibility for your own

SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS RIDING BUSES

1. *Stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus. Walk 10 feet in front of the bus, wait for operator's signal before crossing road.*
2. *Be on time – the bus cannot wait for tardy students.*
3. *Students must board and leave bus at their regular stop location unless student has prior written request from parent and approved by principal.*
4. *Rules of classroom conduct are to be observed, provided that ordinary conversation may be allowed.*
5. *No animal (dead or alive), glass or glass containers, sharp objects, ball bats, batons, radios or drumsticks will be allowed. Electronic communication devices must be turned off and put away.*
6. *Large objects which interfere with the seating or safety of others will not be permitted on the bus (i.e., large band instruments, over-sized backpacks, duffel bags, rolling luggage, skate boards, inflated balloons, large project boards, drill rifles or drill flags.) Any item or personal property prohibited by this Code or by specific school direction WILL NOT be permitted on the bus.*

School bus operators, attendants, and other Transportation Department personnel may conduct searches of students, including their personal property, while riding on school buses if reasonable suspicion of illegal activity exists.

SCHOOL BUS STOP SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

1. Parents should insure that if possible, an adult waits with children at school bus stops (not always possible with one parent families or where both parents work), but something could be worked out with all parents of children at the bus stop to be there on a rotating basis.
2. Know the path your child takes to and from their home to the school bus stop.
3. Avoid short cuts through woods, alleys, parks, or other areas where they could be alone.
4. Identify safe houses along the way that your child could run to or into for help if needed.
5. Insure your child does not have their name on their backpack, etc., as this would enable a potential abductor to call out to the child by name.
6. If your child feels concerned for their safety, they should always tell their parents and the bus driver of any such concern.
7. If approached on the way to or from the bus stop or at the bus stop, tell your parents, the bus driver, and school officials.
8. Report any suspicious vehicle, writing down the license number and providing it to school and law enforcement officials.
9. Stand away from any vehicle that stops near the bus stop and do not allow yourself to come close to or enter the vehicle of someone you don't want to.
10. Run from anyone displaying a weapon, this while throwing books, yelling, and making as much noise as they can. Under no circumstances go with an abductor. Kick, bite, but no matter what the threat, do not go along with your kidnapper. Once he takes you away, your chances of survival greatly diminish.

L. DISCIPLINE REVIEW PROCEDURES

THE PRINCIPAL'S DECISION IN CASES INVOLVING DETENTION, INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY SERVICES, OR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS IS FINAL.

STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT:

- to know what the charges are against them (what rule has been broken.)
- to give an explanation of their action and to present their view of the incident.

Students who believe that a disciplinary action is unfair may follow the review procedure. If the student's review is successful, the student will be permitted to make up any school work missed as a result of the punishment and any record of the punishment will be amended in the student's file. **Punishment will not be withheld during the review process.**

THESE STEPS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL REVIEWS

- Step 1.** Informal. Students should take their complaint(s) to the person(s) involved and try to solve the problem informally. If unsuccessful, they may move to Step 2.
- Step 2.** Within five days of the incident, the student (or parent) must give the principal a *written* and signed statement of request for review. A copy of this written request for review is to be given to the person who made the referral. The written request should describe the problem and give all the facts. The student may offer a solution to the problem. The principal will review the case and make a decision within three school days after receipt of the written request for review. The principal's decision in cases involving detention, Individualized Study Services, or participation in extra-curricular activities or events is final.
- Step 3.** If the punishment being reviewed is an Out-of-School Suspension and the principal's decision is deemed unacceptable, the student or parent may forward the written request for review and the principal's written response to the Superintendent with a written statement. The student/parent shall send a copy of the request for review to the principal. A request for review must be filed within five school days after receipt of the principal's decision. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will act on the request within five school days after receiving the documents. The Superintendent's decision will be final in all discipline cases with the exception of expulsions. The School Board determines whether or not a student will be expelled.

SECTION IV: CHART OF INFRACTIONS

The following chart is a list of the most common serious infractions but does not include every possible violation. Please note that the MINIMUM CONSEQUENCES vary according to the grade level of the student. When a punishment is listed as “principal’s discretion,” such term shall include parental conferences, student counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS, or such other punishments of a relatively non-serious nature. Offenses by pre-kindergarten students shall be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the principal based on the severity of the infraction.

More severe punishments may be assigned by any principal depending on the facts of the specific case, up to and including expulsion, except as specifically limited by law.

****** Offenses which must be reported to law enforcement authorities if the violation is criminal in nature. Such offenses may result in charges being filed by school officials. In such cases, officials shall make a good faith effort to contact a parent immediately to enable the parent to be present during the investigation.

ISS.....INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY SERVICES
OSS.....OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

A. ABSENTEEISM

1. ATTENDANCE

In accordance with Florida Statute 984.151, after five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or ten (10) within a 90 calendar-day period, the Superintendent may file a truancy petition.

EXCESSIVE LATE ARRIVALS OR EARLY CHECKOUTS WILL BE TREATED AS AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE AND DEALT WITH AS PER FLORIDA STATUTES 984.151, 1003.02, AND 1003.26

If the student is not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings, he/she will be classified as tardy. A student who accumulates five (5) unexcused tardies or checkouts, except for documented medical/dental appointments or other authorized reasons that constitute an excused absence, shall be deemed absent one school day. With high school students, tardies/checkouts from each period will count toward the total. Elementary and middle school tardies/checkouts will be assessed on a daily basis (F.S. 1003.02).

Upon the occurrence of any of the foregoing conditions, verbal notice or notice by registered letter will be sent to the parent or guardian requiring the parent or guardian to appear before SARC (School Attendance Review Committee) or the school's child study team, if applicable, pursuant to Florida Statute 1003.26.

After 15 unexcused absences in any 90-calendar-day period, the student and his/her parent/guardian will be referred to the local Children In Need of Services/Families In Need of Services (CINS/FINS). The CINS/FINS provider has the authority under Florida law to:

- a) file legal charges against the parent/guardian.
- b) file legal charges against the student.
- c) refer the family for intervention services.

After 15 absences due to illness (excused or unexcused) in any 90-calendar-day period, students will be required to provide a physician's statement explaining the absences.

2. SKIPPING

Reporting to school, but subsequently missing a class or leaving the school grounds without authorization shall subject students to the following minimum consequences:

Absenteeism		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal/teacher/parent conference within three (3) days of incident.	ISS, minimum one (1) day or corporal punishment.
2 nd	Principal's discretion ranging from corporal punishment to ISS.	ISS, minimum three (3) days.
3 rd	More severe punishment based on principal's discretion. The principal may assign a more severe punishment on the first or second offense.	

B. ****ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, DRUGS, TOBACCO:PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

1. ** POSSESSION

use, (caught in the act of, using, admits to use or is discovered to have used in the course of investigation), being under the influence, procurement, purchase, delivery, distribution, transfer, sale or the attempt to commit any of the foregoing of any of the following substances or items upon school property, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any school-related function or activity; or detectable consumption or use, prior to being present on school property, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any school related function or activity, of any of the following substances.

- a) Alcoholic beverages
- b) Any controlled substance as defined by Chapter 893, Florida Statutes
- c) Prescription drugs, other than controlled substances, for which the student or potential purchaser has no valid prescription
- d) Hallucinogenic drugs or combinations
- e) Counterfeit drugs, including prohibited substances, which shall include those substances possessed, sold and/or used that are held out to be, or represented to be, controlled substances or illegal substances
- f) Paraphernalia for use of controlled substances
- g) Any compound, liquid or chemical specified under Section 877.111(1), Florida Statutes
- h) Any legal substances used in an unsafe way, such as inhalants or over-the-counter drugs.
- i) K-2 and any other synthetic compound used in an attempt to obtain an altered state of consciousness.

NOTE: An attempt is any act toward the commission of an offense resulting in failure to commit the offense or interception or prevention in the execution of the offense.

Refusal to submit to a reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol test shall be treated with the same consequences as possession (see definition above).

Alcohol-Controlled Substance-Prescription, Hallucinogenic & Counterfeit Drugs-Paraphernalia-and/or any Compound, liquid or chemical specified under Florida Statutes

Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion and/or OSS up to 10 days and mandatory parent conference with School Board or designee. (If parent or guardian does not appear before the School Board or designee on the designated date, the OSS will be changed to expulsion.)	Expulsion (limited exceptions may be allowed as per Section 1006.09, Florida Statute.)

2. OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION

- a) **Over the counter medication shall be delivered to the health clinic or the school office and administered in accordance with parental instructions.** If a student brings over the counter medication and distributes it to another student, a more severe consequence shall be administered.
- b) Any student medically required to carry a metered dose inhaler for treatment of asthma must present a current doctor's note requiring the inhaler and its prescribed use to the Principal's office, together with written approval from their parent as required by Section 1002.20, Florida Statute.

Over the Counter Medication		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Warning/parent notification	
2 nd	Parent conference	Principal's discretion
3 rd	Principal's discretion	Two (2) days OSS

3. **TOBACCO

- a) Possessing or using tobacco or any tobacco product.
- b) Possessing or using any counterfeit substance held out to be tobacco.
- c) Possessing or using electronic cigarettes / nicotine delivery systems.

Tobacco		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS, minimum one (1) day.	Corporal punishment or ISS, minimum three (3) days.
2 nd	OSS minimum three (3) days.	
3 rd	OSS minimum five (5) days.	

C. DEFIANCE OF AUTHORITY

1. DISOBEYING OR DISREGARDING SCHOOL PERSONNEL or SCHOOL RULES

Defiance of Authority		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal/teacher/parent conference within three (3) days of incident.	ISS, minimum one (1) day or corporal punishment.
2 nd	Principal's discretion ranging from corporal punishment to ISS.	ISS, minimum three (3) days.
3 rd	More severe punishment based on principal's discretion up to and including expulsion. The principal may assign a more severe punishment on the first or second offense.	

D. DISHONESTY

1. CHEATING

Illegally procuring or sharing of work/test responses. EXAMPLES of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying from another student's test or helping another student during a test
- Providing other students with information regarding a test
- Submitting another student's work as one's own
- Stealing copies of tests or answer keys
- Copying another student's homework, test, quiz, project, book report, assignment or take-home test
- Allowing another student to copy a test, homework assignment, quiz, project, book report, assignment or take-home test
- Plagiarizing or presenting material taken from another source without appropriate documentation
- Changing answers on a test, assignment, project, etc., after grading
- Changing grades in a grade book or altering a computer grading program
- Using programmable calculators in a manner not specified by the teacher

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES

The work on which the student cheats will be graded as ZERO and an individual school consequence shall be imposed in addition to the zero.

2. LYING/FALSE STATEMENTS

Giving false oral information to school personnel or making a false written statement for use by school personnel.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES

Principal's judgment based on severity of offense.

WARNING: A recommendation of expulsion may also be made for any student found to have intentionally made false, injurious accusations against a teacher or other member of the school staff according to the School District Code of Student Conduct. Also, the parent or guardian of such student may be liable for any expenses incurred by the falsely accused person in the defense of the charges made, and the student and parent or guardian may be sued for slander or libel as provided by law.

E. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The term wireless communication includes those devices which provide communication by text, word, voice or picture; such as cell phones, palm pilots, iPods, iPads, laptops, notebooks, e-readers, etc.

Unless authorized for educational use by an administrator or teacher, all electronic communication devices shall not be activated or used during school hours or on school buses. Cell phones/Electronic devices used by a student during an unauthorized time will result in the teacher or administrator directing the student to turn off the device and to put it away. Administration will be notified by referral. Repeated use of an electronic device may result in an administrator confiscating the device and returning it to the parent after a parent/administrator conference. Any failure to comply with a directive by a teacher or administrator for the student to shut off and put away the device shall result in a referral for Defiance of Authority.

NOTE: The School Board of Highlands County is not financially responsible for electronic communication devices that are lost or stolen on campus, on the school bus, or at a school event.

No student may have in his or her possession any electronic communication device or any other item that records, stores, or transmits data during any standardized or regularly scheduled testing (EOC, semester exams, PERT etc.).

Any student using an electronic communication device in committing a criminal act at a school, on a bus, or at a school event is guilty of a serious breach of conduct, and will be referred for criminal prosecution as well as school discipline.

(See Defiance of Authority for punishments)

Electronic Communications	
Offense	Elementary and Secondary
1 st	Documented warning, confiscation of item, notification and return to parent.
2 nd	One day ISS plus consequences listed above.
3 rd	Two days ISS plus consequences listed above.
4 th	Three days OSS, loss of privilege, plus consequences listed above.

F. INAPPROPRIATE PERSONAL CONDUCT

- 1. LANGUAGE** Using profanity or verbal abuse including name calling, racial slurs, or derogatory statements.

Profanity or Verbal Abuse
ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES
Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS, based on severity and number of offenses. Counseling is mandatory.

2. BULLYING

The incident is bullying if the incident includes systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation. (MIS 1.21)

3. HARASSMENT

Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing conduct in written, verbal or physical form: or use of electronic communication devices that: 1) places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, 2) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or 3) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school including any course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose.

Bullying & Harassment		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, to ISS.	ISS minimum three (3) days.
2 nd	OSS minimum one (1) day.	
3 rd	OSS minimum three (3) days.	

4. ** HAZING (grades 6 -12)

Any action or situation that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student at a school with any of Grades 6 – 12 for purposes including but not limited to; initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a school with any of grades 6 – 12. Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

- Pressuring, coercing, or forcing a student into:
 1. Violating state or federal law.
 2. Consuming any food, liquor, drug or other substance; or
 3. Participating in physical activity, such as whipping, beating, branding, or exposure to the Elements.

Reports of Hazing can be made to any School Board Employee

Hazing DOES NOT include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective.

(Grades 6 -12)

OSS minimum ten (10) days and incident reported to law enforcement.

Principal may recommend expulsion based on severity of the incident.

5. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Disrespect and Minor Confrontations

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES

Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS. Based on the severity and number of offenses.

6. CONSPIRACY

by a student to assist any other student to violate any of the rules set forth in this Code of Student Conduct.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES

Same as the minimum consequences of the rule actually violated by the other student(s).

7. INAPPROPRIATE DRESS

While on the grounds of a public school during the regular school day, students are prohibited from wearing clothing that exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent or vulgar manner or that disrupts the orderly learning environment.

ALL GRADE LEVELS

1 st Offense	Verbal warning. Principal must call parent or guardian.
2 nd Offense	Principal must meet with parent/guardian; student ineligible to participate in or attend extracurricular activities for a period not to exceed five (5) days.
3 rd Offense	ISS for a period not to exceed three (3) days; student ineligible to participate in or attend extracurricular activities for a period not exceed 30 days. Principal must send parent/guardian a letter notifying them of sanctions.

8. OTHER

Other **inappropriate conduct as determined by the principal**, examples: gambling, possession/sale of, downloading or printing pornographic materials, public display of affection, other conduct deemed inappropriate by the principal.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES

Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS. Based on the severity and number of offenses.

G. ****MAKING FALSE REPORTS**

1. BOMB THREATS** Threat to throw, project, place, or discharge any destructive device. False report about planting bomb or explosive. It is unlawful for any person to threaten to throw, project, place, or discharge any destructive device with intent to do bodily harm to any person or with intent to do damage to any property of any person, (Section 790.162, Florida Statutes).

2. FALSE REPORTS** Make a false report, with intent to deceive, mislead or otherwise misinform any person concerning the placing or planting of any bomb, dynamite or other deadly explosive, (Section 790.163, Florida Statutes).

3. FALSE FIRE ALARMS** Setting off fire alarms when there is no fire or false alarm of emergency when no emergency exists

Bomb Threats/False Reports/False Fire Alarms		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS, to OSS, mandatory parent conference.	Ten (10) days OSS and mandatory parent conference.
2 nd	Five (5) days OSS and mandatory parent conference.	Expulsion.
3 rd	Expulsion.	

H. ****POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS OBJECTS**

1. **FIREARM Firearm means any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive. Firearms of any kind (operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded) including, but not limited to, handguns, zip guns, pistols, rifles, shotguns, starter guns, explosive propellants or destructive devices.

2. **WEAPONS Weapons means any dirk, metallic knuckles, slingshot, slungshot, air guns, BB guns, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device or other device which can be used to inflict physical harm on another.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES
Expulsion from school for balance of current school year, summer school and all of the next year.

3. **KNIVES Knives or objects that can be used to cut, including, but not limited to, hunting knives, razor knives, box cutters, etc.

Knives	
ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
<p><u>K-2:</u> Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS, to OSS.</p> <p><u>3-5:</u> OSS minimum five (5) days.</p>	OSS minimum five (5) days to Expulsion.

4. ****HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

such as chemicals or other substances.

- a) The term “hazardous materials” includes all materials and substances which are now designated or defined as hazardous by the law of this state or federal law or by the rules or regulations of this state or any federal agency.
- b) The term “spill” includes the accidental spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, or dumping of any hazardous waste or material which creates an emergency hazardous situation or is expected to create an emergency hazardous situation.
- c) An “emergency hazardous situation” exists whenever there is an imminent and substantial threat to public health and safety, Section 768.128, Florida Statutes.

Payment for damages and cleanup of hazardous spills on School Board property will be sought from parents.

The initial determination of whether or not a substance or material constitutes a hazardous substance or material shall be the right of the principal or designee.

Hazardous Materials		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal’s discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS, to OSS, parent notification.	Principal’s discretion, parent notification up to and including expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the violation.
2 nd	OSS five (5) days and parent conference.	Ten (10) days OSS and parent conference.

5. ****Other Dangerous Objects**

Mace, pepper spray, cigarette lighters, lasers, laser pointers, and other objects used in a threatening or intimidating way or items such as fireworks, air soft guns, chemicals, etc., that can be used to cause a disruption as determined by the principal or the principal’s designee.

ALL GRADE LEVELS

Out-of-School Suspension – Minimum two (2) days

The initial determination of whether or not an object constitutes a weapon or dangerous object shall be the right of the principal or designee. Firearms, weapons, knives, and dangerous objects will be confiscated.

WARNING: Exhibiting a firearm or weapon within 1,000 feet of a school or possessing a firearm on school property or possessing an electric weapon, destructive device, or other weapon on school property is a third degree felony.

NOTE: Simulating a firearm or weapon while playing or wearing clothing or accessories that depict a firearm or weapon or express an opinion regarding a right guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the United States constitution is not grounds for disciplinary action or referral to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system. A student may be subject to disciplinary action if a student’s clothing or simulating a firearm or weapon while playing substantially disrupts student learning, causes bodily harm to another person, or places a person in reasonable fear of bodily harm.

I. SCHOOL BUS VIOLATIONS

- Disobeying the school bus operator – the operator has complete authority over the students. Students will sit in assigned seats;
- Not staying seated at all times when bus is moving;
- *Failure to wear safety belt while riding bus equipped with safety belts;
- Having arms and heads outside windows. Intentionally littering on the bus, throwing objects inside the bus, throwing objects from the windows or throwing objects at the bus.
- Using abusive or profane language on the bus;
- Not being quiet at all railroad crossings;
- Pushing/tripping, etc., while boarding, leaving, or riding buses; not keeping their hands to themselves;
- Eating or drinking on the school bus.

School Bus Violations		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion and parent notification.	
2 nd	One (1) day bus suspension and parent conference with principal.	Three (3) days bus suspension and parent conference with principal.
3 rd	Minimum three (3) days bus suspension.	Minimum ten (10) days bus suspension.
4 th	Minimum of five (5) days bus suspension.	Long-term suspension from the bus (withdrawal of bus privileges for a period between eleven (11) days and the balance of the school year.
5 th	Withdrawal of bus privileges for minimum period of ten (10) days.	
Suspension from the bus applies to all home-to-school and school-to-home school bus transportation.		

Each passenger on a school bus that is equipped with safety belts or restraint system shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt at all times while the bus is in operation.

Other violations of this Code of Conduct occurring on the school bus will have the consequences as set forth under such violation.

J. **SEXUAL OFFENSES

1. **SEXUAL BATTERY

Any sexual act or attempt directed against another person, forcibly and/or against the person's will, or where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his or her youth, or because of temporary or permanent mental incapacity. This category includes rape, penetration of private body parts of another person (either through human contact or using an object), and all acts prohibited by Section 794.011(h), Florida Statutes.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES
Principal shall recommend expulsion.

2. **SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- a) pinching or patting the buttocks of another; direct contact or attempted contact with the private parts of a person.
- b) deliberate brushing against the private body parts of another.
- c) comments, kidding, jokes, or teasing with regard to physical attributes, or lack thereof, or sexual orientation.
- d) the victim must have indicated, verbally or by his/her conduct, that such acts and/or comments, kidding, jokes, or teasing are unwelcome.

All victims of sexual harassment are required to report such activity to an administrator, guidance counselor, or teacher immediately and school officials shall make a good faith effort to notify the parents or guardians of the victims immediately.

Sexual Harassment		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, to ISS.	Parent notification and one (1) day ISS. Principal's discretion may include expulsion based on the severity of the offense.
2 nd	Parent conference and one (1) day OSS.	Parent conference and five (5) days OSS. Principal's discretion may include expulsion based on the severity of the offense.
3 rd	Principal's discretion any punishment up to and including expulsion.	

3. ** SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

CONSENSUAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, ON SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRANSPORTATION, AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS FUNCTIONS: Such conduct shall include but not be limited to:

- a) Consensual sexual activity, to include any penetration of private body parts of another person by human contact and such acts prohibited by Sec. 794.011(h), Florida Statutes.
- b) Consensual sexual activity, as defined under Lewd and Indecent Behavior Violation Section F, 2.A, and 2.B, page 46, Florida Statutes.

Sexual Misconduct		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS, Counseling is mandatory.	Parent notification and five (5) days OSS. Principal's discretion; any punishment up to and including expulsion, based on the severity of the offense. Counseling is mandatory.
2 nd	Parent conference and ten (10) days OSS and recommendation for further counseling.	Parent conference and ten (10) days OSS and recommendation for further counseling. Principal's discretion; any punishment up to and including expulsion based on the severity of the offense.
3 rd	Principal's discretion; any punishment up to and including expulsion.	

4. ** LEWD AND INDECENT BEHAVIOR

- a) Touching any person in a lewd or indecent manner.
- b) Exhibiting private parts or committing any other sexual act or conduct on a person.
- c) Knowingly committing any of the above acts in the presence of a child under the age of 16 years, or who is mentally incapacitated, without actually committing sexual battery as previously defined.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES
Parent notification and principal's discretion up to and including expulsion.

K. **VIOLATIONS AGAINST PROPERTY

1. **THEFT

A person commits theft if he or she knowingly obtains or uses, or endeavors to obtain or to use, the property of another with intent to, either temporarily or permanently:

- a) deprive the other person of a right to the property or a benefit from the property.
- b) appropriate the property to his or her own use or to the use of any person not entitled to the use of the property, Section 812.014, Florida Statutes.

ALL GRADE LEVELS
Restitution based on value and number of occurrences.
Parent notification and principal's discretion up to and including expulsion.

2. **TRESPASS

Trespassing upon grounds or facilities of a school; any person who:

- a) does not have legitimate business on the campus or any other authorization, license, or invitation to enter or remain upon school property;
- or**
- b) is a student currently under suspension or expulsion and who enters or remains upon the campus or any other facility owned by any such school;
- or**
- c) enters or remains upon the campus or other facility of a school after the principal of such school, or his or her designee, has directed such person to leave such campus or facility or not to enter upon the campus or facility;
commits a trespass upon the grounds of a school facility (Section 810.097, Florida Statutes).

Theft and Trespass		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, ISS, parent notification and payment for loss.	Parent notification, payment for loss and ISS minimum five (5) days.
2 nd	OSS minimum one (1) day and payment for loss.	OSS minimum three (3) days and payment for loss.
3 rd	OSS minimum three (3) days and recommendation for professional counseling before returning to school and payment for loss.	OSS minimum ten (10) days, recommendation for professional counseling before returning to school and payment for loss.

3. **BURGLARY

Burglary means entering or remaining in a dwelling, a structure, or a conveyance with the intent to commit an offense therein, unless the premises are at the time open to the public or the defendant is licensed or invited to enter or remain (Section 810.02, Florida Statutes).

Burglary		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	<u>K-1:</u> Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS, parent notification. <u>2-5:</u> OSS for minimum of five (5) days.	OSS for minimum of ten (10) days up to expulsion.

4. **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF

Criminal Mischief: Willfully destroying public property or property of others. A person commits the offense of criminal mischief if he or she willfully and maliciously injures or damages, by any means, any real or personal property belonging to another, including, but not limited to, the placement of graffiti thereon or other acts of vandalism thereto, (Section 806.13, Florida Statutes).

Criminal Mischief		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention to ISS, payment for damages, parent notification.	Payment for damages and parent notification plus corporal punishment or OSS minimum one (1) day.
2 nd	Payment for damages, parent notification plus corporal punishment and/or OSS minimum one (1) day.	
Note	Damages to a school bus may also result in suspension from the bus for minimum of three (3) days.	Damages to a school bus may also result in suspension from the bus for minimum of five (5) days.

5. **ARSON

Arson: Any person who willfully and unlawfully, or while in the commission of any felony, by fire or explosion damages or causes to be damaged any structure. (Section 806.01, Florida Statutes)

ALL GRADE LEVELS- ALL OFFENSES
PRINCIPAL SHALL RECOMMEND EXPULSION

L. VIOLATIONS OF INTERNET POLICY, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Note: Consequences are in accordance with the MIS Technology Policies and Procedures Manual.

**1. VIOLATING INTERNET POLICY, RULES AND REGULATIONS OR
INAPPROPRIATE USE OF THE NETWORK (**HACKING)**

a) Any student found violating the terms and conditions of the Highlands County School District policies, school rules, computer lab rules, and/or regulations on use of the Internet or internal network, as set forth by School Board policy 8.60, will lose access privileges and be subject to school disciplinary actions and/or appropriate legal action.

ALL GRADE LEVELS – ALL OFFENSES
Principal’s discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, ISS, OSS to expulsion.

2. **DESTRUCTION OF SOFTWARE OR HARDWARE

ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
Payment for damages and Principal’s discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS, to OSS minimum one (1) day.	Payment for damages, parent notification and corporal punishment or OSS for minimum of one (1) day.

M. ****VIOLENCE / THREAT OF VIOLENCE**

1. ****ASSAULT**

a) An “assault” is an intentional, unlawful threat by word or act to do violence to the person of another, coupled with an apparent ability to do so, and doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in such other person that such violence is imminent (Section 784.011, Florida Statutes.) No bodily contact is necessary.

b) If the assault is on an employee of the school district and does not qualify under Section 784.081, Florida Statutes (Section H, #5 of this Code), the principal shall suspend out of school for up to 10 days and may recommend expulsion.

Assault		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal’s discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS.	<i>High School:</i> Corporal Punishment or ISS minimum three (3) days. <i>Middle School:</i> ISS two (2) days
2 nd	OSS minimum one (1) day.	<i>High School:</i> OSS minimum five (5) days. <i>Middle School:</i> OSS one (1) day
3 rd	Principal’s discretion on a more severe punishment and parental involvement.	

2. ****AGGRAVATED ASSAULT** An “aggravated assault” is an assault

- a) with a deadly weapon without intent to kill; or
- b) with an intent to commit a felony

Aggravated Assault		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	<i>K-1:</i> Principal’s discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS. <i>2 – 5:</i> OSS minimum five (5) days.	OSS minimum ten (10) days up to expulsion.

3. ****BATTERY/FIGHTING**

a) “Battery or Fighting”: Intentionally and actually touching or striking another person against the will of the other person, or intentionally causing bodily harm to another person, (Section 784.03, Florida Statutes.) The right to determine whether physical contact is indeed a “fight or battery” shall be within the sole discretion of the principal or designee.

b) If the battery involves the transmission or extraction of body fluids (i.e., blood, urine, saliva, etc.), it will result in more severe consequences.

c) If the battery is on an employee of the School District and does not qualify under Section 784.081, Florida Statutes, the principal shall suspend the student out of school for up to 10 days and shall recommend expulsion.

Battery / Fighting		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention to ISS.	<u>Middle School:</u> ISS minimum three (3) days and parent conference. <u>High School:</u> OSS minimum three (3) days, parent conference and counseling.
2 nd	OSS minimum one (1) day.	<u>Middle School:</u> OSS minimum three (3) days and parent conference. <u>High School:</u> OSS minimum five (5) days, parent conference.
3 rd	OSS minimum three (3) days.	OSS minimum ten (10) days and recommendation for professional counseling before returning to school.
4 th	OSS minimum five (5) days and recommendation for professional counseling before returning to school.	Expulsion.

4. **AGGRAVATED BATTERY

A person commits aggravated battery who, in committing battery:

- a) intentionally or knowingly causes great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement; or
- b) uses a deadly weapon.

ALL GRADE LEVELS-ALL OFFENSES
PRINCIPAL SHALL RECOMMEND EXPULSION AT ALL GRADE LEVELS

5. **ASSAULT/BATTERY ON EMPLOYEE, OFFICIAL

ASSAULT/BATTERY ON ANY ELECTED OFFICIAL (SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR SUPERINTENDENT) OR ON A SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE, as defined in this Code of Student Conduct, shall be subject to increased punishment if the person committing the offense knew, or had reason to know, the identity, position or employment of the victim, Section 784.081, Florida Statutes.

a) The principal, or the principal’s designee, shall recommend to the superintendent the following minimum punishment for any student:

Involved in the use of or threat of physical force or violence against an educator. “Educator” includes instructional personnel, administrative personnel and teacher paraprofessionals as defined in Section 1000.21, Florida Statutes.

b) The principal, or the principal’s designee, shall recommend to the superintendent the following minimum punishment for any student:

Involved in the use or threat of physical force or violence against any person acting on behalf of the school, both on and off the campus (S.R.O., D.A.R.E. officer, therapist, counselor, contracted personnel, volunteers, guest speakers, etc.).

Assault / Battery on Employee, Official		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	<u>K-2</u> : OSS minimum five (5) days. <u>3-5</u> : Expulsion minimum nine (9) weeks.	Expulsion

WARNING: Whenever any student, parent, or other person commits an assault or battery upon any elected official or employee of a school district, when the person committing the offense knows or has reason to know the identity or position or employment of the victim, and the elected official or employee is on school property or is away from the school property on official business, the offense for which the person is charged shall be classified:

Assault	=	First degree misdemeanor
Battery	=	Third degree felony
Aggravated Assault	=	Second degree felony
Aggravated Battery	=	First degree felony

6. ** ROBBERY

Robbery means the taking of money or other property which may be the subject of larceny from the person or custody of another, with intent to either permanently or temporarily deprive the person or the owner of the money or other property, when in the course of the taking there is the use of force, violence, assault, or putting in fear, Section 812.13, Florida Statutes.

7. ** ARMED ROBBERY

If, in the course of committing the robbery, the offender carried a firearm or other deadly weapon, then the robbery is a felony of the first degree, punishable by imprisonment for a term of years not exceeding life imprisonment or as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084, s. 812.13(2)(a). If, in the course of committing the robbery, the offender carried a weapon, then the robbery is a felony of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083 or s. 775.084, s. 812.13(2)(b).

Robbery / Armed Robbery		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	<u>K-1</u> : Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, counseling, corporal punishment, detention, ISS to OSS, parent notification. <u>2-5</u> : OSS for minimum of five (5) days.	OSS for minimum of ten (10) days up to expulsion.

8. **EXTORTION Obtaining something of value through use of threat or force. Whoever, either verbally or by a written or printed communication, maliciously threatens to accuse another of any crime or offense, or by such communication maliciously threatens an injury to the person, property or reputation of another, or maliciously threatens to expose another to disgrace, or to expose any secret affecting another, or to impute any deformity or lack of chastity to another, with intent thereby to extort money or any pecuniary advantage whatsoever, or with intent to compel the advantage whatsoever or with intent to compel the person so threatened, or any other person, to do any act or refrain from doing any act against his or her will, Section 836.05, Florida Statutes.

Extortion		
Offense	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1 st	Principal's discretion ranging from parent conference, corporal punishment, ISS to OSS.	OSS minimum five (5) days and payment for loss.
2 nd	OSS minimum ten (10) days, recommendation for professional counseling and payment for loss.	
3 rd	Expulsion	

SECTION V: PARENT GUIDE



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY 2014 - 2015

Highlands County School Board Members

Ronnie Jackson, Chairperson, District 1
Donna Howerton, District 2
Jan Shoop, District 3
Bill Brantley, Vice Chairperson, District 4
Jill Compton, District 5
Wally Cox, Superintendent
Rodney Hollinger, Deputy Superintendent

VISION

Leading Together to Achieve Excellence

MISSION

By uniting stakeholders, we will prepare our students to be college and career ready, empower our students to achieve personal excellence, and foster responsible citizens.

426 School Street
P.O. Box 9300
Sebring, Florida 33870-4098
Telephone: (863) 471-5555
Fax: (863) 471-5600

For more information, visit the Highlands County Public School Website at
www.highlands.k12.fl.us

This guide provides parents and others with a quick reference tool regarding information they may need to make decisions about their child's educational progress and to assist their child in navigating the educational process. Additional information may be obtained from the individual schools or by contacting the district office at 471-5555.

FOR A COMPLETE COPY OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN, CONTACT A SCHOOL OR THE DISTRICT OFFICE OR VISIT THE DISTRICT WEBSITE.

PARENT CHECKLIST

Parent Self-Assessment Checklist

Working together, we can make your child's school experience successful and enjoyable. The purpose of this parent checklist is to provide you with information on ways parents can help their child be successful in school.

Complete this checklist for your own information. Check all that you are currently doing to support your child in school. Set a goal for improving in any area(s) that need(s) attention.

Attitude

I stress the importance of education and doing one's best.
I help my child to set short and long term educational goals.
I celebrate my child's academic accomplishments.

Academics

I have a consistent time and place to do homework in my home.
I ensure that my child has access to materials needed to complete assignments.
I regularly discuss and ask to see work that my child is doing in school.
I attend workshops on helping my children at home.

Behavior

I teach and reinforce positive behaviors such as respect for self and others, hard work, and responsibility.
I make sure that my child has a regular routine.

Building Responsibility

I encourage my child to accept responsibility for his/her actions.
I make sure that my child is in attendance and on time for school each day.
I monitor and promote my child's participation in extracurricular and after-school activities.

School/ Home Connections

I communicate regularly with my child's teachers in person, on the phone, by E-mail, or in writing.
I attend open house, science fairs, plays, musical events, class trips, sporting events, curriculum nights and other school activities.
I volunteer in the school setting when possible.

Entrance to Public School

Parents of students entering the Highlands County school system for the first time may register their children at the school they will attend. Children under 18 must have a parent or guardian present at registration. Students who are 18 must have proof of their age. To find out which school your child should attend, call (863) 471-5567. To register, the parent or guardian must provide the following information for each student enrolled:

- ◆ Evidence of child's birth date. (Birth certificate or other acceptable evidence may be required as per F.S.1003.21 (4) (a-g))
- ◆ Certificate of immunization against communicable diseases (F.S. 1003-22)
- ◆ Evidence of a physical examination within the last twelve months (F.S.1003.22): A 30-day waiver for physical examinations will be approved upon initial enrollment for students who have been enrolled in a public school. This waiver WILL NOT be approved for students who have not been enrolled in a public school. (Schools must provide assistance in obtaining this information).
- ◆ Proof of residence. Documentation such as homestead exemption, lease or rental agreement or utility bill will be required upon entrance to school.

Schedule of Immunization Requirements

Prior to entering a public school, parents of children in grades kindergarten through 12 must present or have on file with the school a certification of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. These immunizations must be documented on Form 680 from the Department of Health.

Immunizations Required for Pre-Kindergarten Entry:

4 DTP/DTaP shots

3 Polio shots

4 Hib shots: The number of doses of Hib may vary according to age that series was started or vaccine used. If child was over 15 months when first vaccine was given, one dose will be given.

1 MMR shot

3 Hepatitis B shots

1 Varicella (chicken pox) shot

*** Pre-K students must have started the series and have a current immunization certificate.

Immunizations Required for Kindergarten and Grades 1-6 Entry:

5 DTP/DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) shots: If the 4th DTP/DTaP vaccine is administered on or after the fourth birthday, a 5th DTP/DTaP is not required.

4 Polio shots for **grades 1-6**: If third dose of polio was given on or after the fourth birthday, a fourth dose is not required.

2 MMR shots

3 Hepatitis B shots

2 Varicella (chicken pox) shots for **KG – 5th Grade**

1 Varicella (chicken pox) shot for **grade 6**

Immunizations Required for Grades 7-12 Entry:

5 DTP/DTaP shots

4 Polio shots

2 MMR shots

3 Hepatitis B shots

1 Tdap shot for **grades 7, 8 & 9**

1 Tdap or TD shot for **grades 10-12**

1 Varicella (chicken pox) shot for **grades 7, 8, 9 & 10**

Immunization not required, but recommended for girls 11-13 years old:

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV)

Attendance

It is essential that our children receive an education. Failure to attend school in a regular and timely fashion hinders the education process. Parents and guardians must be responsible for sending their children to school.

In compliance with Florida School Law, the School Board of Highlands County recognizes excused absences as those resulting from:

- Personal illness of the student (Medical evidence may be required by the principal. No more than two days absence will be excused because of head lice unless there is a re-evaluation by the principal or his designee.);
- Court appearance of the student (summons required);
- Medical appointment of the student (a medical statement may be required);
- Religious instruction or religious holiday;
- Death in the immediate family;
- Approved school activity (absences recorded but not reported);
- Attendance at a center under Health and Rehabilitative Service supervision;
- Insurmountable problems (permission by principal may be required).

Pre-Arranged Absences - The purpose of a pre-arranged absence is to allow absences for reasons normally unexcused and should be submitted as far in advance as possible, but not less than three days prior to the requested date. Please refer to the Student Progression Plan for more information on compulsory school attendance.

PARENT RESOURCES
Community Service Agencies

For further information/description of services contact the Student Services Office at (863) 471-5748.

Tri-County Human Services	(863) 452-0106	Dept. of Children & Families	(800) 962-2873
Children's Advocacy Center	(863) 402-6845	Highlands County Public Health	(863) 386-6040
Guardian Ad Litem Program	(863) 402-6969	Boys and Girls Club	(863) 385-9652
Peace River Center	(863) 519-3744	Youth & Family Alternatives	(863) 499-2430
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	(863) 402-9001	Victim Advocate	(863) 402-7329
Safe House Hotline	(863) 386-1167	Parent Hotline	(800) 352-5683
Early Childhood Services	(800) 654-4440	Kids Hope United	(863) 385-1009
Children's Home Society	(863) 382-0007	Florida Kid Care	(888) 540-5437
Early Learning Coalition	(863) 314-9213	Florida Dept. of Juvenile Justice	(863) 471-5300
Highlands Co. Coalition for Homeless	(863) 452-1086	FL Missing & Endangered Children	(888) 356-4774

South Florida State College: Avon Park (863) 453-6661, Sebring (863) 382-6900, Lake Placid (863) 465-3003

RESOURCE SITES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- School Board of Highlands County www.highlands.k12.fl.us
- Monthly School Cafeteria menus www.highlands.k12.fl.us/sbhc/FoodNutrition_Menus.html
- Florida Department of Education www.fldoe.org
- Florida Standards www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/sss/
- FCAT Explorer www.fldoe.org
- FCAT Parent Network www.fcatparentnetwork.com
- SBHC Student Progression Plan www.highlands.k12.fl.us
- No Child Left Behind www.fldoe.org
- Career Planner www.facts.org
- Career Voyages www.careervoyages.gov
- Choices www.florida.access.bridges.com
- ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA <http://school.eb.com>
(Contact school for username and password)
- ATOMIC LEARNING <http://atomiclearning.com>
(Contact school for username and password)
- EdGATE www.edgate.com
- Just Read, Florida! www.fldoe.org
- Florida Virtual School www.flvs.net
- Florida Bright Futures Scholarships www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org
- Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org
- Federal Student Aid - FASFA www.fasfa.com
- Talented 20 Program www.fldoe.org/Talented20
- Learning Activities/Resources www.brainpop.com
- FDLRS - Child Find www.efdlrs.net/heartland
- South Florida State College www.southflorida.edu
- Take Stock in Children www.southflorida.edu/adminother/alumni/takestock
- Next Generation Sunshine State Standards www.floridastandards.org
- Code of Student Conduct www.highlands.k12.fl.us
- McKay Scholarship www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/mckay
- Homeless www.fchonline.org

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTING

The school year is divided into four nine-week periods.

- All students receive progress reports no later than the fifth week of each grading period.
- Progress reports and nine-week student report cards indicate when a student the student's progress.
- Students who are enrolled less than 20 days may be given a written statement of progress in lieu of a report card.
- Parents are notified in writing at the end of the 3rd grading period of the possibility of retention.
- Parents will be sent results of standardized state test scores.
- Report cards will be distributed to students every nine weeks and will depict and grade:
The student's academic performance in each class or course, which in grades 1 through 12 must be based upon examinations as well as written papers, class participation, and other academic performance criteria, and will include the student's performance or non-performance at his or her grade level.
- The student's report card will include the student's conduct, behavior, and the student's attendance, including absences and tardiness.

The final report card for a year shall contain a statement indicating end-of-the-year performance or non-performance at grade level, satisfactory or unsatisfactory school behavior, attendance and absences, and promotion or non-promotion.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY GRADING SCALE

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D = 60-69 F = 0-59

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS IN SCHOOLS

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in our schools. Some of the ways parents are involved: PTA/PTO, School Advisory Council, mentoring, tutoring, chaperoning, school or classroom volunteer, business partner, substitute teaching, and event planning. To further discuss how you might become involved at your child's school, contact your child's teacher or the principal. Parents can take steps that make a positive difference academically, such as:

- **Read with your child.**
- **Discuss the day's events with your child.**
- **Know the names of the courses/classes your child is taking and the teachers of these classes.**
- **Look at your child's schoolwork on a daily basis.**
- **Work with your child on homework and special projects.**
- **Establish a daily routine in the home and set aside time each day in this routine for homework.**
- **Encourage good work habits.**
- **Talk about the importance of getting a good education, and provide regular encouragement to your child.**
- **Expect a report card each nine weeks, review it and discuss the information on the report card with your child.**

If you have questions or concerns, contact the teacher or principal immediately.

CONFERENCE NIGHT AND OPEN HOUSE ARE IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO VISIT THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL AND MEET WITH THEIR CHILD'S TEACHERS. THE MORE INFORMED PARENTS BECOME, THE BETTER PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN WORK TOGETHER AS A SUCCESSFUL TEAM.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

THE FEDERAL NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001 REQUIRES THAT TITLE I SCHOOLS, THOSE WITH HIGH NUMBERS OF LOW INCOME STUDENTS, MAKE ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) IN THE PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF ALL STUDENTS. AYP measures the progress of schools toward meeting state identified academic achievement standards in reading, math and writing. Measurement of AYP targets the performance and participation of various subgroups based on race, socioeconomic status, disability and limited English proficiency. Presently, 100 percent of all subgroups must pass all standards, or the school will not be deemed to have made AYP.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT

Students must participate in a variety of assessments throughout their academic career. These include but are not limited to:

- Kindergarten - FLKRS (Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener)
- Grades 3 – 8: New English/Language Arts (ELA) Assessment
- Grades 3 – 8: New Math Assessment
- Grades 5, 8: FCAT 2.0*: Science
- Grade 10** ACT/ PLAN
- Grades 11 - 12 FCAT Retakes
- Grades 9-12***Common Placement Test/Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (CPT/PERT)
- 9-12****ACT/SAT
- End-of Course Exams in Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I, US History and Civics (Baseline)

* A new Assessment is being developed in ELA and math that all students attending Florida public schools are required to take between grades 3 and 10.

**All 10th grade students take the PLAN. It provides information about student progress in academic courses and can be used to plan a high school course of study for post-secondary plans.

***Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) is the admissions test for entrance into the community college. All students are encouraged to take the PERT.

****The ACT and SAT are admissions tests for entrance into the university system. All students are encouraged to take the ACT or SAT. See a guidance counselor for testing dates.

Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Listed below are accommodations that may be used for standardized testing. These are accommodations that may be used when presenting the assessment, responding to the assessment, or in special settings. Guidelines for assistive technology accommodations are also provided. Accommodations may be provided so long as they do not alter the content or supply cues and information not available to all students. Accommodations used during the testing should be those used in the classroom for daily academic achievement. Accommodation may include:

- Presentation
- Responding
- Schedule
- Setting
- Assistive Technology

A student with a disability for whom the IEP committee determines that an end-of-course assessment cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations, shall have the end-of-course assessment results waived for the purpose of determining the student's course grade and credit as required.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GRADES K-5

Information about the elementary curricular program, promotion, retention, and reporting progress to students and parents visit www.highlands.k12.fl.us

Curricular Program

The elementary curriculum is aligned to the Florida Standards/Next Generation Standards and the Grade Level Expectations that cover language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, physical education and the arts. These subjects are provided according to a regular schedule developed by the individual staff. It is at the discretion of the individual school to determine the inclusion of assemblies, field trips, holiday programs, dramatic presentations, recess, and other special events.

Grading

Grading Elementary Subjects -Soft and hard grades are assigned using the definitions listed below:

Soft Grades

K-Grade 5

S-Satisfactory (A,B,C,)

N-Needs Improvement (D,F)

Hard Grades

Second through Fifth Grades

A 90-100% Outstanding Progress

B 80-89% Above Average

C 70-79% Average Progress

D 60-69% Lowest Acceptable Progress

F 0-59% Failure

I Incomplete

Year – long grades for elementary school courses shall be averaged using the following process:

- Individual grades below 50 will be averaged using a base value of 50 for the lowest grade.

	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
LANGUAGE ARTS	SOFT	SOFT	HARD	HARD	HARD	HARD
MATH	SOFT	SOFT	HARD	HARD	HARD	HARD
SCIENCE	SOFT	SOFT	HARD	HARD	HARD	HARD
SOCIAL STUDIES	SOFT	SOFT	SOFT	SOFT	HARD	HARD

Soft grades will be given in the areas of health/physical education, conduct, music and work habits as these are participatory and creative subjects. These subjects will be taught with more emphasis on participation and less emphasis on tests and evaluation. There will be no "+" or "- added to hard or soft grades.

Promotion

Promotion is based on being proficient in Language Arts, Math, and Science. A student is on or above grade level if the student has met proficiency levels of the Florida Standards/Next Generation Standards as defined by the "On Grade Level Indicators." The supporting data will be reviewed and verified by the Principal and will be maintained by the teacher. The final decision regarding a student's proficiency level in Language Arts, Math, and Science will be made by the Principal.

For additional information about promotion at the elementary level, please refer to the 2014-2015 School Board of Highlands County **Student Progression Plan**.

Each student who does not meet both state and district levels of performance for student progression in Language Arts, science, and math for each grade level, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student's difficulty and areas of academic need. The teacher in consultation with the student's parent or legal guardian may develop, in a timely manner, a Progress Monitoring Plan to assist the student in meeting state and district expectations.

Retention

Students who do not meet promotion requirements for the grade to which they are assigned may be retained in the same grade for the next school year and may be assigned to a special program. Student retention is viewed as one strategy that may allow students additional time to master skills before being exposed to more advanced materials. Students who are not ready for the more challenging work of the next grade should be retained. If a student's reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring a level 2 or higher on the statewide assessment test in reading for grade 3, the student must be retained unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause. Parents will be notified of the possibility of retention.

Grade 3 reading proficiency is the state focus of accountability for no social promotion. By the end of third grade, students are expected to be able to read independently. This means that the children can read and understand words, sentences, and paragraphs without help.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES 6-8

The following section contains general information concerning your child. For more detailed information on the curricular program, promotion, retention, and reporting progress; visit: www.highlands.k12.fl.us

Program of Studies

Promotion from one grade to the next is based upon year end course grades and demonstrating proficiency of the Sunshine State Standards. A student **will not** qualify for promotion to the next grade level at the middle school level if the student has failed three (3) or more core academic courses for the current year. Core academic courses are defined as Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

The following courses must be successfully completed for a student to be promoted to high school. (F.S. 1003.4156)

- Three middle school or higher courses in English (LA). These courses shall emphasize literature, composition, and technical text.
- Three middle school or higher courses in mathematics (MA). Each middle school must offer at least one high-school-level mathematics course for which students may earn high school credit.
- Three middle school or higher courses in Social Studies (SS), one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education. Beginning with students entering grade 6 in 2013-2014 school year, one of these courses must be at least a one-semester civics education course.
- Three middle school or higher courses in Science (SC).
- One semester-long course in career and education planning to be completed in sixth, seventh or eighth grade. The course may be taught by any member of the instructional staff; must result in the completion of a personalized academic and career plan, must emphasize technology or the application of technology in career fields and beginning in the 2014-15 must include information from the Department of Economic Opportunity's economic security report. Each student's plan must be signed by the student's guidance counselor and the student's parent.

If a student does not earn a passing grade in any of the core academic course required for promotion, he/she must repeat or recover all failed course(s) with a passing grade, prior to entering 9th grade.

The equivalent of one class period per day of physical education for one semester of each year is required for students enrolled in grades 6 through 8.

The requirement shall be waived for a student who meets one of the following criteria:

(a) The student is enrolled or required to enroll in a remedial course.

(b) The student's parent indicates in writing to the school:

- The parent requests that the student enroll in another course from among those courses offered as options by the school district; *or*
- The student is participating in physical activities outside the school day which are equal to or in excess of the mandated requirement.

Each school district shall notify the student's parent of the options available before scheduling the student to participate in physical education.

Required Instruction in Health Education for Grades 7-12: The health education curriculum for students in grades 7 through 12 shall include a teen dating violence and abuse component that includes, but is not limited to, the definition of dating violence and abuse, the warning signs of dating violence and abusive behavior, the characteristics of healthy relationships, measures to prevent and stop dating violence and abuse, and community resources available to victims of dating violence and abuse.

Accelerated Programs

A middle school student may take courses listed in the Florida Course Code Directory as Grades 9-12 that is taken below the ninth grade may be used to satisfy high school graduation. These courses may take place at the assigned: middle school, Highlands County high school or at a school other than a Highlands County school or as authorized by the department of Curriculum and Instruction administrator. All high school credit earned while in middle school must be reported on a high school academic history. Students taking high school credit courses on the middle school campus are required to meet all expectations for earning high school credit including taking mid-term and final examinations to meet course requirements. Scheduling conflicts, course offerings, and course prerequisite requirements may limit participation in these courses.

Four-to-Five-Year Academic Career Plan

Prior to entering 9th grade, all middle school students with parental input will develop a 4 to 5 year academic and career plan based on career interests and aptitudes. Parents and students are to become partners with school personnel in career exploration and educational decision making. The student's career plan will be updated annually thereafter. Career plans for students with disabilities may be updated with the IEP review annually.

Eligibility for Extra Curricular Activities

To be eligible for extracurricular activities, a student must maintain a 2.0 GPA. Students must be present the entire school day or have a pre-arranged, approved absence on the day of an event to participate in a school activity. Any questions concerning eligibility should be addressed with the principal of your local school.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADES 9-12

The following section contains general information concerning your child. For more detailed information on curricular program, promotion, retention, graduation requirements and reporting progress; visit: www.highlands.k12.fl.us for the **SBHC Student Progression Plan**.

A student attending Highlands County Schools may seek one of several types of diplomas: a standard diploma, a State of Florida High School Performance Based Diploma, a Special Diploma, a Special Diploma Option 2 (Work Option), a Certificate of Completion, a Special Certificate of Completion. Diplomas for a class will be issued only at a regular graduation time or at the completion of summer school. In order to participate in graduation ceremonies, a student must meet the requirements of one of the diploma options for graduation.

Florida students may choose from the following graduation programs:

- **The traditional 24-credit program**
- **Scholar Designation**
- **Merit Designation Diploma**

All of these graduation paths include opportunities to take rigorous academic courses designed to prepare students for their future academic and career choices.

Please refer to the *Florida High School Graduation Options Table and the Diploma Options and Requirements* chapters in the **Student Progression Plan**.

Readiness for Post-Secondary Education and the Workplace

Students and parents must develop academic achievement and career goals for the student's post-high-school experience during the middle grades. Parents and students are to become partners with school personnel in career exploration and educational decision making. Clear academic course expectations that emphasize rigorous and relevant coursework shall be made available to all students by allowing both student and parent choice. Every high school student will have a 4 year academic and career plan that will be updated annually with parental input.

Cumulative Grade Point Average

The cumulative G.P.A. needed for high school graduation is a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. Parents and guardians of students who have a cumulative G.P.A. of less than .5 above the cumulative G.P.A. required for graduation at the end of each semester in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 shall be notified that the student is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements.

Graduation Recognition

Recognitions will be calculated on authorized credits and weight earned by the student by the designated last day of the first semester (School Board approved district calendar.) Recognitions will be determined using the following guidelines:

- Students with a weighted G.P.A. of 4.4800 or higher in the above-defined credits will graduate with the honor of *Summa Cum Laude*
- Students with a weighted G.P.A. of 4.3200 to 4.4799 in the above-defined credits will graduate with the honor of *Magna Cum Laude*.
- Students with a weighted G.P.A. of 4.001 to 4.3199 in the above-defined credits will graduate with the honor of *Cum Laude*.

Rigorous Academics

All students are encouraged to consider and include academically challenging courses throughout their high school career. A Level 3 course is defined as honors, advanced placement, and other rigorous and advanced college-preparatory courses in the Florida Course Code Directory.

- **Advanced Placement** (AP) is a nationwide program consisting of over 30 college-level courses and exams in subjects ranging from arts to statistics offered at participating high schools. Advanced placement courses may be offered at each high school as a part of the school's program of study. The award of college credit is determined by the receiving college.
- **Honors courses** are planned to include more rigorous content in an effort to make the courses more challenging. In most honors courses a research paper will be required.
- **International Baccalaureate** (IB) is a magnet program that provides highly motivated college-bound students the opportunity to participate in a rigorous liberal arts curriculum. In grades 9 and 10 students take prep classes in core subject areas and in grades 11 and 12 students are in the IB Diploma Program. Students must complete an application to participate in the Prep program and must follow the guidelines in the application.
- **Dual enrollment** program is the enrollment of an eligible secondary student enrolls in an eligible college course at South Florida State College. The successful completion of the course results in credit that applies to high school completion and a career certificate or an associate or baccalaureate degree. Students may take a dual enrollment course during school hours, after school hours, and during the summer term. Students enrolled are exempt from the payment of registration, matriculation, and lab fees. Instructional materials assigned for use within dual enrollment courses shall be loaned to dual enrollment students and returned upon completion of the course to teacher or school designee. To be eligible for academic dual enrollment, students must complete the 10th grade with a 3.0 un-weighted grade point average or above in all high school coursework. Students that have not completed the 10th grade may be considered for dual enrollment with special permission of the Curriculum and Instruction Administrator, take the entire College Placement Test (CPT), ACT or SAT and score at or above the "college level". Students not meeting the "college level" on all sections of the CPT, SAT or ACT may only enroll in up to 12 college credit hours.
- **Early admission** is a form of dual enrollment where eligible secondary students enroll in a postsecondary institution on a full-time basis in courses that are creditable toward the high school diploma and the associate or baccalaureate degree. Students are exempt from the payment of registration, tuition, and laboratory fees. To be eligible for early admission, a student must have completed the 11th grade with a 3.0 un-weighted grade point average or above and earn a passing score on portions of the PERT, ACT or SAT.

Other Programs/Course Options

Students may experience school-to-work opportunities consisting of one or more of the following elements: school based learning consisting of classroom instruction based on high academic and occupational skill standards; work-based learning that consists of structured training and mentoring at job sites; activities which integrate classroom and on-the-job instruction; matching students with participating employers in an effort to build and maintain bridges between school and work.

The Career Academy at South Florida State College provides an opportunity for 10th, 11th and 12th grade Highlands County students to complete high school and career and technical education course on the SFSC campus. Students prepare for a career in an area of interest which will develop workplace readiness and may lead to an industry-recognized certification. The Career Academy focuses on real-life application of student learning while motivating students to graduate from high school. Students may apply to attend the Career Academy at SFSC at the end of their freshmen year. For more information, contact the Career Academy at 863-784-7209.

Currently enrolled Highlands County students have the opportunity to earn credit through various sources. One source is **Florida Virtual School**. This learning may take place outside the traditional high school classroom setting. For more information visit the FLVS website at www.flvsft.net

Prior to enrolling in credit taken at a school other than a Highlands County school, the student and parent must meet with a guidance counselor to discuss course credit, weighting, relevance to meeting graduation requirements and if applicable, provide course syllabus information and discuss the appropriateness of this method of learning and receive written authorization using MIS Form 19.00, *Authorization to Enroll/Receive Credit/Course Weighting Taken at a School other than a Highlands County School* or MIS 19.41, *School Board of Highlands County High School/College Credit*.

Florida Bright Futures

The Bright Futures Scholarship Program is the umbrella program for all state-funded scholarships based on academic achievement of high school students. There are three programs under Bright Futures: Florida Academic Scholars, Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars, and Florida Medallion Scholars. **To be considered for Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program, students must apply as required during the student's last year in high school, before graduation, or they will forfeit all future eligibility for a Bright Futures Scholarship.** The amount and type of the scholarship award is based on the student's high school grade point average (G.P.A.), the courses the student took in high school, the type of program in which the student enrolls, the number of student credit hours in which the student enrolls, and SAT/ACT scores. For more information, go to www.fldoe.org or see a high school guidance counselor.

Additional Programs

Gifted education is designed to meet the characteristics of the gifted learner. These characteristics include a need for a more rapid pace of instruction, a greater focus on higher-order thinking skills, more sophisticated products/performance, more complex tasks, an emphasis on multiple perspectives and an exposure to a broadened scope of information.

Middle School Advanced Academics

Advanced Academics is an educational and enrichment program based on a student's talents, abilities, and interests. Advanced Academics offers students higher-order thinking activities that challenge them to make connections within and across disciplines. After mastering the core curriculum, these students receive paced, in depth, and complex assignments. This permits them to gain a deeper understanding of the basic concepts studied in the classroom. For more information, contact Dr. Ruth Heckman at 863-471-5543.

Hospital/Homebound Program

Students enrolled in Highlands County Schools who experience a severe illness or injury and will miss fifteen or more consecutive school days, may meet the medical eligibility requirements for the Hospital/Homebound Program. Parents should first contact the student's guidance counselor on campus for a referral to the program and a medical eligibility form. For more information concerning this program, contact the Exceptional Student Education department at 471-5583 or 471-5594.

Exceptional Student Education (E.S.E.)

E.S.E. students may be gifted, speech and language impaired, deaf and hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, deaf/blind, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, severely emotionally disturbed, physically impaired, mentally handicapped, autistic, and/or hospital or homebound. For more information about this program, please contact Pat Landress at 471-5583. The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) provides support for the E.S.E. Department. FDLRS may be contacted at (863) 531-0444.

Highlands Virtual School

Highlands Virtual School provides a full-time virtual program for students in grades K-12. For additional information, please visit the following website: www.highlands.k12.fl.us