

# Independence Elementary School



Parent/Student Handbook

2024-2025

It is with great expectations that we welcome you and your child to another great school year at Independence Elementary.

The mission statement of Rock Hill School District Three states, "Working together with the students, home, and community, the Rock Hill School District will ensure that all students have the skills, knowledge, and desire to become lifelong learners and succeed in a changing world. RHSD believes:

- ❖ All individuals have intrinsic worth.
- ❖ All individuals can learn.
- ❖ Learning depends upon basic needs (physical and emotional) being met.
- ❖ Reading is the foundation for unlimited learning.
- ❖ An environment where taking risks is encouraged promotes learning.
- ❖ Understanding diversity enriches learning.
- ❖ Adults can enable students to fulfill their potential by developing positive relationships with them.
- ❖ The community is responsible for working interdependently to ensure the welfare of students.
- ❖ School will promote lifelong learning.

The mission statement of Independence Elementary states, "Independence Elementary believes that nothing is more important than children. We are continually committed to the social, emotional, and academic development of every child. Our school is a safe, challenging, caring, and supportive environment where teachers, parents, students, and community members work together to ensure all Independence students have a solid foundation for life. We strive to make the learning experiences at Independence fun and engaging while holding everyone accountable for reaching his or her highest potential".

Vision: Independence students possess a solid foundation for the next steps in their journey through life.

Motto: Enter to Learn. Depart to Lead.

The 2024-2025 school year is going to be the best one yet!

Independence Elementary Administrative Team,  
Dr. Kimberly Odom, Principal & Emily Hyatt, Assistant Principal

## **ARRIVAL**

Students are expected to arrive on time and be ready to learn. All students should be in their seats by 7:45 AM. If your child eats breakfast at school, he/she must arrive in time to eat and be in class by 7:45 AM. Breakfast will not be served after 7:35 AM. Students are tardy at 7:45 AM. All tardy students must be signed in by an adult. Habitual tardiness will result in meeting with the attendance clerk and administrators. Excessive tardies (10 and over) will be referred to the District Attendance Office and could subsequently be turned in to Family Court. Morning arrival: You may walk your 1<sup>st</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> grade child(ren) to class on the first day of school. After the first week of school, we will have our annual Independence Day for Kindergarteners. Your child will be expected to walk to class independently from this day forward.

## **AFTERNOON DEPARTURE**

All students are expected to move in an orderly fashion to their respective areas for dismissal. In compliance with district regulations, no early dismissals are allowed after 1:45 PM.

All car riders are dismissed from the cafeteria. For safety reasons, no parent is allowed to come into the building to pick children up at dismissal. No child will be allowed to change the way he/she is dismissed unless a handwritten note is sent to school or a phone call to the front office where identity will be verified. For safety reasons, no email or Dojo messages will be accepted.

All bus riders are dismissed from the bus lot. No child may change buses without approval from the District Transportation Office.

Afterschool Daycare: If your child goes to daycare, in the event that he/she gets sick, absent or is dismissed early, please contact the daycare and inform them that they will not be attending that day.

We do recognize that emergencies arise and call for a parent to change transportation plans for their child after they have been dropped off. In the event of such an occurrence, we require that you call the main office by noon on that day and inform a member of the office staff of the change. You can only make transportation changes for your child. Under no circumstances are parents allowed to change transportation plans for another student. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety of all students. We appreciate everyone's cooperation.

It is our goal to maximize instruction for all students; therefore, we ask that you avoid picking your child up after 2:00 PM. This poses an interruption to the instructional day which ends at 2:10 PM.

## **ATTENDANCE**

No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent absences. Parents and students are encouraged to place regular school attendance as a top priority item during this school year. Every day is important. If it is necessary for a student to be absent, the following should be done:

1. If possible, notify the school before the absence;
2. Upon returning to school, send a note signed by a parent/guardian and/or doctor's note stating the exact reason for the absence. Without this written note, absences are coded unexcused; and,

3. Make up for all work missed during the absence. There are three codes for coding student absences:
  - a. excused absences,
  - b. unexcused absences, and
  - c. (3) suspensions and/or expulsions.

Excused absences are the following: student illness or injury, quarantine, medical/dental appointments, court or administrative appearance by the student, family deaths, religious observance, and certain trips. Trips must be of educational value and the principal must approve the absences in advance. Parents are encouraged to plan trips when school is not in session. Unexcused absences are defined as any reason not covered under lawful. Strict consequences are enforced when students miss an excessive amount of days without an excuse. Parents are asked to call the school office if their child has been absent for two or more days.

Perfect attendance is awarded to students with no absences. Students receiving the perfect attendance award are allowed one early dismissal or tardy each nine-week period. Early dismissals and tardies do affect student attendance report.

### **BREAKFAST**

Breakfast is served in the cafeteria between 7:00 AM and 7:35 AM every morning. Children should go from the cars or buses directly to the cafeteria before reporting to their classrooms.

Since so little time is allotted for eating breakfast, it is imperative that the students eat quickly, so they can get to their classrooms by 7:40 AM. No breakfast will be served after 7:35 AM.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Our intent is to offer safe, reliable transportation at all times. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be lost if safety rules are disregarded. The primary goal of the bus driver is to get students to school and home safely. They should be treated with respect. Bus expectations are:

- Students are expected to stay in assigned seats.
- The bus aisle should remain clear and free of arms, legs, and book bags.
- Students who live outside of our attendance zone are not permitted to ride the bus.
- By state regulations, no student is allowed to get on or off the bus anywhere other than their assigned bus stop.
- Major and minor bus offenses will result in write-ups and conferences with administration. Multiple offenses will result in parent conferences. Students who are habitually misbehaving and disrespectful to the bus driver will lose bus privileges. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from school if a student can no longer ride the bus.
- Issues with transportation should be reported to the Transportation Department and then to school administration if necessary.
- Transportation changes regarding riding the bus or changing buses must be pre approved by the Transportation Department.
- No child will be allowed to change the way he/she is dismissed unless a handwritten note is sent to school or a phone call to the front office where identity will be verified. For safety reasons, no emails or Dojo messages will be accepted.
- All district bus questions can be sent to

[BUSHHELP@RHMAIL.ORG](mailto:BUSHHELP@RHMAIL.ORG)

## **CAR RIDERS**

There is only one drop-off/pick-up lane. Students are not allowed to cross the parking lot in front of traffic by themselves. It is imperative that cars making drop-off/pick-ups remain in a single line by the sidewalk. Please observe posted no parking signs during these times. We rely on parental cooperation to ensure the safety of all students. Don't forget to cross at the crosswalk and pull forward.

### **Morning Arrival**

- All students are to be dropped off in the car line at the front of the school.
- Parents are asked to remain in line to drop off students.
- Parents who wish to escort their child into the building may park in the school parking lot and then walk across the crosswalk when instructed.
- Students must exit the car on the passenger side for safety purposes.
- Staff members and student patrol members are available to assist with morning drop-off from 7:00-7:40.

### **Afternoon Dismissal**

- School is dismissed for car riders at 2:10 PM. Car riders must be picked up by 2:40 PM.
- The afternoon car rider line is in the front of the school.
- Parents of car riders must remain in their cars. Students will not be dismissed to parents waiting outside the front doors.
- Please display the assigned decal for your child/children you are picking up in your car windshield every day for the entire year so that staff will know who you need.
- The driver should pull up as far as traffic allows in the loading zone before the car is stopped to let the child enter the car. Our staff and student patrols will be able to load more children at one time and keep traffic moving in a safe and timely manner.
- For safety purposes, please have your child enter the car from the passenger side only.

## **BE GREAT (AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM)**

Be Great is an after-school enrichment program, run by the Boys and Girls Club, for students in Kindergarten through Fifth grade. It is our pleasure to offer Be Great at all of our district's elementary schools. We look forward to our working partnership as your child enters Be Great. For more information regarding Be Great please visit the [website](#) or call the front desk.

## **CAFETERIA**

Our school district contracts with Sodexo Food Service to provide your child with breakfast and lunch. Our cafeteria staff provides balanced, nutritious meals that comply with State and Federal regulations. Lunch schedules will be shared with parents during the first week of school and menus can be found monthly online for your planning purposes. There is no cost for breakfast or lunch for our students. Our cafeteria manager is Ms. Patricia Rose.

[Online Lunch Menus](#)

## **CHANGE OF STUDENT INFORMATION**

The school office must have the current information on students at all times. Notify the school secretary or your child's teacher when a change to an address, phone number, or emergency number needs to be made. Proof of residency is required for an address change.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:00 Student arrival/Breakfast served

7:45 Tardy Bell

7:45 Instructional Day Begins

2:10 Dismissal begins

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Any parent wishing to pick up a student early must first come by the office to sign out the student. We ask that you sign your child out prior to 1:40 PM. In order for a student to be picked up by someone other than a parent, permission must be given by sending a note or making some other form of identifiable contact with the office staff. Please do not be offended if you are requested to show identification.

## **EARLY DISMISSALS DUE TO WEATHER**

In the event that school closes during the day, buses will run. We will need on file emergency plans for each child in the case of early dismissal for any reason. These dismissals are rare but may occur with bad winter weather or major facility problems. Please listen to radio/television stations, the RHSD3 app, Parent Link telephone calls for system-wide announcements. Please do not call the school, as the phone lines will need to remain open for emergencies.

## **DRESS CODE**

It is important that students wear appropriate, comfortable clothing to school. Parents will be called to bring suitable clothing if students come to school dressed inappropriately. It is suggested that sweaters or jackets be worn to accommodate the changes in temperature and the air conditioning. Please follow these dress code guidelines:

- Messages and pictures on t-shirts must be suitable and age appropriate.
- Tank tops should be at least 3 fingers wide.
- No halter tops or low-cut tops.
- No bandanas
- No short shorts, short dresses, or short skirts. (A good rule to follow regarding shorts would be that shorts should not be shorter than your child's arm length when standing and their fingertips cannot touch skin.)
- No pants below the hips. Belts are to be worn to keep pants at the hips.
- No pants with large holes or cut-outs.
- Leggings can be worn with dresses or skirts, but are not permitted to be worn with t-shirts.
- No flip flops, slides/soccer sandals or high heeled shoes as this is a safety concern. All shoes must have a strap on the back. Rubber soled shoes are needed for physical education classes.
- Head coverings are not allowed except for religious reasons (scarves, stocking caps, hoods, hats, ears, towels, sunglasses, bandanas, etc.) or for school spirit days (which will be made known to

families in advance).

- Shorts/skirts/dresses must be fingertip length without pulling and adjusting.
- Costumes and furry outfits, tails, footwear, ears, and any related accessories are not permitted on campus.

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS/ALERTS**

Our school has developed an emergency plan for a crisis which might occur during the school year. This emergency plan is devoted to the welfare and safety of your child during school hours. The Independence crisis management team reviews, updates, and trains the staff to care for your child at school. The school is one of the safest places students may be located during most crises or natural disasters.

The number of drills required is listed below. Alerts are explained to students during the first week of school. A plan is also in place in case of an emergency at the Catawba Nuclear Station. In the event we experience persons entering the school, apprehending a school occupant and/or threatening violence, we have in place an established lockdown crisis plan. We will secure the building by locking all doors (classrooms, offices, cafeteria, gym and entrances). Then we will await assistance from the police department and RHSD central office staff.

Fire drill/tornado drill plans are posted by each door in all classrooms. Each school is required to have the following drills per year:

- 7-10 Fire Drills (one each month)
- 3 Lockdowns
- 1 Reverse Evacuation
- 1 Bomb Threat
- 2 Tornado/Severe Weather Drills
- 1 Shelter-in-Place
- 1 Earthquake

You will be notified of any crisis situations through our school district's Parent Link communication system. For this reason, do not telephone the school during an emergency. Telephone lines will need to remain open for emergency communication. In the event of inclement weather, parents will be informed through Parent Link phone calls and local TV and radio stations. The information will also be posted on the Rock Hill School District website. It is critical that you provide the school with correct home telephone numbers, work numbers, cell phone numbers, etc. Providing as many telephone numbers as possible increases the chances of us being able to contact you in the event of an emergency. We are confident that we are prepared to handle a variety of emergencies.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are valuable learning experiences. Teachers plan trips away from the building that directly relate to concepts of the curriculum. Written parent permission must be received for a child to leave the school campus. Costs are kept to a minimal amount; no student is penalized because of cost. There are times when additional chaperones are needed. Grade levels/teachers will make parents aware when chaperones are needed. All chaperones must be approved volunteers by the district.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED**

The Gifted and Talented students work closely with the school's GT teacher. All students in second grade will take the CogAt test which is used for identifying gifted and talented students. However, screening is available throughout the year to all students in grades 2- 5. Second through fifth grade students work on various curriculum areas and share their work with parents throughout the school year.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

The health room provides emergency first aid and special services for students who become ill or are involved in minor accidents. If a problem warrants medical attention, the parent is contacted immediately. Students who have a temperature 100.0 degrees or above or vomiting must be picked up from school. Current phone numbers to contact you or a responsible adult at all times are essential. Once contacted, parents are encouraged to be prompt in picking up their sick child. Parents are to make the school aware of any medical problems/conditions that warrant special care. Do not send children to school if they have fever, nausea, or other symptoms of illness. The school nurse oversees screening of children for certain problems, reports findings to parents, and monitors our records.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an extension of classroom instruction and a valuable part of the learning process. Parents are asked to work with the school to see that all assignments are completed. Reading is expected to be part of every night's assignment. Major projects and book reports are assigned over a period of time, requiring students to plan ahead. Teachers who team together coordinate their assignments. Questions regarding homework should be addressed promptly to the child's teacher.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

The Lost and Found area is located in the cafeteria. Items are held for at least one month and then donated to a charity. To help minimize lost articles, students' names should be placed on lunch boxes, coats, and sweaters.

## **LUNCH**

Students are expected to have good manners while eating lunch. While we want students to socialize and enjoy their meal, we also want them to eat during the time they have in the cafeteria. Parents who wish to send in treats for special occasions must check with the teacher first due to allergies. Parents are asked to adhere to the district approved snack list. You may bring the treat in the morning and leave it to the teacher's discretion as to when to distribute them. For the safety of our students with food allergies, please send in only store-bought items with the ingredients clearly labeled. Please use this website for reference on school appropriate snacks: <https://snacksafely.com>. It is updated monthly.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

At Independence, students are taught the curriculum that is outlined for students by the state of South Carolina. The Rock Hill School District and the state have also developed additional documents that support the planning and delivering of instruction.

Teachers at Independence plan a yearlong course of study in Math, Science, Social Studies and Literacy. The grade level teams work together to develop the plan which is constantly being revised and improved, so that it meets the needs of our students. The state and RHSD provide teachers with a number of assessment tools, which help teachers to determine exactly what children know and do not know. The emphasis is on teaching the specified curriculum, but at the level that is appropriate for the students.

While the academic program is our central focus, we address the total child's needs through enrichment and cultural arts activities. Our staff includes certified teachers for physical education, art, music, theater, media, and technology.

At Open House, your child's teacher will provide you with an overview of the content covered at your particular grade and your child's daily and weekly schedule. We will share with you field trips, contests, and special academic events in which you may be involved. The PTA supports our real-life, problem-based units with cultural arts activities and field trip opportunities. We are proud of the active learning environment at Independence. We thrive on relevant, purposeful lessons every day!

## **McKINNEY VENTO RIGHTS**

The McKinney-Vento Act provides rights and services to children and youth experiencing homelessness, which is defined as children who lack a fixed, regular or adequate nighttime residence. School-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act if your family lives in any of the following situations:

- a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodations
- a car, park, abandoned building, or a bus or train station
- doubled-up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- a shelter

Please contact your child's school counselor for more information and to determine if you might qualify.

## **MEDIA CENTER**

Students visit the Media Center both with their class and independently. The Media Center is open daily for students. Overdue fines are not charged but students are encouraged to return books promptly and to take care of all materials. The Media Center sponsors two book fairs every year and the profits are used to purchase library books and materials.

## **MEDICATION**

When medication must be dispensed at school, a medical release form signed by the parent AND physician is required to be on file in the nurse's office. Students are responsible for coming to the nurse to receive the medication. All medicine is stored in a locked place and records are kept of all medication that is administered. We dispense no medication without proper documentation. This includes prescription medication and non-prescription medication (i.e.— inhalers, antibiotics, creams, eye drops, cough syrup, Tylenol).

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Independence Elementary acknowledges parents as full partners, with teachers and staff, in the education of their children. Independence maintains an open, friendly environment and welcomes parents to visit the school and their children's classrooms. Our concept of Parents as Partners goes far beyond the traditional understanding of parent involvement. An involved parent is one who is involved in their child's whole life and who has the opportunity to be active in nearly every aspect of the school's operation. Parents can support their child's learning in a number of ways. We invite parents to join us in this partnership, committing themselves in a variety of ways. In a proactive measure to ensure the safety of students in Rock Hill Schools, a nation- wide offender check will be conducted on each visitor by the district's School Check-In System. Upon entering the school, all visitors/volunteers will sign into the School Check-In System on the computer in the office. A printed visitor badge will serve as verification of approval to enter the building/event. You must **present a valid driver's license or state issued identification to visit within the school.**

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Students are not to bring toys, stuffed animals, electronic games/tablets, water guns, lip gloss, or other personal items that may result in disruption to instruction at school. Students should not bring large sums of money or other valuables to school. In the case of all of the above items, neither the school nor the district will assume liability if these items are lost, stolen, or broken. If any student brings a knife, fireworks, matches, or other dangerous items to school, he/she may be suspended or expelled from school. Clothes, buttons, or magazines with obscene, suggestive, or inappropriate messages are never to be brought to school and may lead to disciplinary action. Any items promoting alcohol are also prohibited.

If your child must bring a cell phone to school, it is to remain in the child's book bag, and off for the entirety of the school day. Again, the school does not assume responsibility if the cell phone is lost, stolen, or broken.

## **PICTURES**

The school offers individual student pictures twice a year during the fall and spring. Class pictures are made during the spring picture dates. Flyers are sent home indicating the times, dates, and costs. Checks are written directly to the photographer or can be paid online.

## **PERFORMANCES**

Unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal, siblings from other grade levels will remain in the learning environment. Out of respect for all participants and due to safety concerns, we ask that you remain seated for the entire program. You may pick up your child in the designated area at the end of the program. These guidelines will also be followed for Terrific Kid presentation.

## **PTA OPPORTUNITIES**

Parents are partners in every aspect of the school program. Independence has an active PTA that encourages all parents to join and participate in school events. The PTA sponsors a variety of programs including field trips. The PTA also sponsors fundraising events that provide monies for recess equipment, physical education equipment, and instructional materials for literacy and mathematics. The PTA will have a PTA membership drive with the cost being \$6 to join. Meetings will be held and communicated to parents in advance.

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL**

The School Leadership Team plays an active role in our school's improvement process. Parents and staff members work together to encourage, support, and create opportunities for involvement from parents and the community. This team facilitates the involvement of the school community in designing and implementing the four-year School Improvement Plan.

## **SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

School volunteers are a very important resource to our staff in support of the instructional program. You are required to register on the RHSD website to be a volunteer. Volunteers can provide support in the following ways:

- Serve as a classroom helper
- Shelving books in the media center
- School Improvement Committee
- Reading with/to students
- Gardening/Landscaping
- Become an active PTA member

If you are interested in becoming a school volunteer, please fill out the application at <http://www.rockhill.k12.sc.us/community/volunteerapplication.aspx>. You should receive an email within a week stating your volunteer status and a card will arrive in the mail. Your interest and involvement are always appreciated.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each nine-week grading period as shown on the school calendar. Parents are asked to sign and send the report card envelope back to school. Toward the latter part of the school year, teachers and/or parents will present recommendations for retention of students to the administration. The administration will make the final decision relative to retention on an individual basis and will always seek to do what is absolutely best for the student in question. If your student is a candidate for retention meetings will be held with school staff and parents.

## **REPORTING STUDENTS' PROGRESS**

Conferences for all students are scheduled at the end of the first quarter. Teachers or parents may request a conference at other times throughout the year. Teachers also send home progress reports between report cards or you can access them through Parent Portal. Check with your child's teacher to find out information about this schedule. Continuous conversations between the teacher and parent should occur for students not performing on grade level. Please do not contact the administrators concerning an academic situation until you have first talked with the teacher.'

## **SNACK LIST**

Based upon USDA Nutrition Standards and School Board Policy ADF - District Wellness, the following list of approved snacks are the only allowable snacks for classroom celebrations or parties. No homemade goods are permitted. Snacks must be individually wrapped or in a purchased container/package. Valentine's Day parties are excluded from using the list. The list was compiled by the district Health Advisory Committee using feedback from the School Improvement Councils (during the 2017-18 school year), and parent survey responses from the spring of 2018. The snacks listed meet SMART Snack guidelines recommended by USDA.

- Pretzels
- Cheddar crackers or graham crackers
- Sun chips or similar baked chips
- Frozen fruit bars (Ex. Whole Fruit, Outshine, Dole or store brand equivalent)
- Fresh fruit – Individual serving/wrapped or in purchased package container
- Fresh vegetables – Individual serving/wrapped or in purchased package container
- Low fat dips
- Fruit cups (Ex. In water, light syrup, or 100% juice) Yogurt
- Apple sauce cups
- Gelatin cups or pudding cups
- Fruit and veggie pouches
- Cheese sticks (Individually wrapped)
- Pepperoni or turkey pepperoni (In purchased package container or individual sticks)
- Water/Flavored Water

\*This list does not address allergies. Please remember to always check specific allergies with your classroom teacher for 48 hrs. prior to bringing food to the school. Accommodations will be made for students with allergies.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Parents are encouraged to follow our social media accounts. Content is routinely uploaded that contains important school news, school and student celebrations, performances, and live broadcasts of school events. We currently have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a YouTube Channel. We also encourage parents to visit our school webpage and to download the RHSD mobile app. Please contact the office if you have any questions regarding social media. IDES reserves the right to remove any comment deemed inappropriate.

## **SPECIAL AREA CLASSES**

At Independence Elementary School, students have instruction in a number of specialty areas: art, music, physical education, spanish, theater, and media. The specialists in these content areas work with the regular classroom teachers to plan instruction that supports and reinforces what is being taught in the classroom. The special area teachers at Independence are a vital component of the effort to provide a well-rounded academic experience.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

Students and staff at Independence believe every person should act in a way so that teachers can teach, and students can learn. We expect everyone to work as a team to learn and solve problems in peaceful ways. We believe students and staff can be trusted and feel safe in our building.

At Independence Elementary School students will:

Be courteous toward and respectful of all students and adults in the building.

Respect school property and the property of other students.

Keep their hands, feet and objects to themselves.

Walk quietly in the hallways and follow the directions of adults at all times.

Use good manners in the cafeteria and follow all safety rules on the bus.

Respect school property and the property of other students.

Keep their hands, feet and objects to themselves.

Walk quietly in the hallways and follow the directions of adults at all times.

Use good manners in the cafeteria and follow all safety rules on the bus.

act in a way so that teachers can teach, and students can learn.

Once the classroom discipline plan has been exhausted, school-wide discipline referrals will be used.

- Minor discipline offenses will be documented and handled by the classroom teacher. One copy of the referral will be sent home to be signed by the parent and another copy will be retained by the teacher. In addition, phone calls/emails to parents by the person who wrote the minor will be conducted.
- Major discipline offenses will be documented by the teacher and handled by the principal or assistant principal. Parents will be contacted, one copy of the referral will be sent home to be signed, and another copy will be retained by the teacher.

## **PBIS**

PBIS is an approach schools can use to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. It also helps schools decide how to respond to a child who misbehaves.

At its heart, PBIS calls on schools to teach kids about behavior, just as they would teach about any other subject—like reading or math. PBIS recognizes that kids can only meet behavior expectations if they know what the expectations are. A hallmark of a school using PBIS is that everyone knows what appropriate behavior is. Throughout the school day—in class, in the hallways, at lunch, and on the bus—kids understand what's expected of them.

PBIS has a few important guiding principles:

- Every child can learn proper behavior.
- Stepping in early can prevent more serious behavior problems.
- Each child is unique, and schools need to provide many kinds of behavior support.
- How schools teach behavior should be based on research and science.
- Following a child's behavioral progress is important.

- Schools must gather and use data to make decisions about behavior problems.

Keep in mind that PBIS is not a treatment or therapy. It's a framework for teachers, administrators and parents to follow.

It's also important to know that when a school uses PBIS, it uses it for all students. That includes kids with IEPs and 504 plans.

According to several studies, PBIS leads to better student behavior. In many schools that use PBIS, students receive fewer detentions and suspensions, and get better grades. There's also some evidence that PBIS may lead to less bullying.

Within our PBIS, we have incorporated a reward system where students are able to earn Patriot Bucks and exchange them for prizes in our PBIS Store

### **STUDENT INFORMATION**

During the first week of school, your child's teacher will be sending home an information form for you to complete. This information is kept in the school office in case you need to be contacted. Again, please be sure that all telephone numbers and addresses are accurate, and clearly written.

Remember to put the name and telephone number of a person(s) who can be contacted in case you cannot be reached. Please notify the school if you change addresses or telephone numbers during the year. It is very important that our records are kept up to date. Be sure each person listed for emergency contacts are people that are authorized to pick up your child.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

Guidance and mental health counseling are available to all students. The Resource, Gifted and Talented, and Speech- Language teachers provide instruction for certified students in Exceptional Children's programs. The multidisciplinary team also provides assessments of students to address individual academic, speech-language, behavioral, and social/emotional concerns. Limited English Proficient students are served through Independence's English as a Second Language program. Administrators, teachers, and parents routinely meet with this team to address individual student's performance and needs. If you need to discuss a concern, our team is ready to help.

### **TELEPHONES**

School telephones are business phones and student use is restricted to calls of an urgent nature. Forgetting a permission slip, a book bag, or homework are not emergencies. Students must make arrangements to stay after school or go home with friends before arriving at school. The office staff may take messages for students when it is essential for a student to receive information. Cell phones are allowed, however, they must be put away during the instructional day.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

All textbooks are loaned to students for use during the year. Textbooks are to be kept clean and handled carefully. Names are placed in books in case they are misplaced. We charge for damaged or lost books.

## **VISITORS**

Parents are welcome at school any time. When parents or other visitors wish to tour the school, we ask that you call our secretary to schedule a tour. Classroom observations are allowed. However, please make sure to contact your child's teacher to make sure the day and time you are coming are suitable. Keep in mind, your visit is one of observation. While visiting, it is requested that parents do not use classroom instructional time to engage in conversation with the teacher. Additionally, please refer to the following board policies regarding classroom observations:

- Parents/guardians may either visit their student's classroom at the teacher's or school's invitation or make a request to the principal to have a formal observation scheduled.
- Classroom visits and/or conferences by parent/guardian must be arranged in advance. Classroom visits are at the discretion of the principal.
- The building administrator or designee may remain with the parent/guardian during a classroom observation, and the administration may conduct a post observation conference with the parent/guardian.
- Classroom visits and conferences must be conducted in such a manner that the visits and/or conferences do not interfere with the classroom activities of any student in the class. Principals retain the authority to deny access to the school for any individual who has or may disrupt or disturb the learning environment.
- Classroom observations should be scheduled for no longer than 45 minutes to an hour.

We value teaching and learning time at our school. We hope parents will come frequently for lunch. All visitors are to sign-in and to wear a visitor's badge during the visit.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Rock Hill School District requires anyone who is volunteering in our schools to be an approved volunteer. To complete an application for this, please click on the link below and follow all of the steps on the application. When you complete the application, your information will go directly to the Background Investigations Bureau (BIB).

Please check the email account that you entered on your Volunteer Application during the approval process and BIB will keep you updated on the progress of your application. This process takes from 2 business days to 10 business days. If you don't immediately see an email, please check your spam or junk folder.

You will receive an email from BIB giving you the outcome of your application. If you are approved as a volunteer, they will send you a Volunteer card in the mail to the address you listed in your application within 2 weeks. Once you receive this card, take it with you to the school and the school personnel will enter you into their Check In system as a volunteer. If you are not approved as a volunteer, BIB will send you a letter in the mail giving you specific instructions on following up with them regarding your application.

Volunteers must reapply every 2 years. BIB will send you a reminder to reapply 6-8 weeks before your Volunteer status is set to expire. They will send this reminder to the email you listed on your application. If you have any questions about your volunteer status, please contact your child's school. Please make sure you begin this process early in the school year. We are not able to expedite any applications.

<http://bib.com/SecureVolunteer/Rock-Hill-School-District>

## **AR JICDA-R Code of Conduct**

*Issued 12/23*

### **Level I - Behavioral Misconduct**

Disorderly conduct includes any activity in which a student engages that tends to impede orderly classroom procedures or instructional activities, orderly operation of the school, or the frequency or seriousness of which disturb the classroom or school.

Acts of disorderly conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- classroom tardiness
- cheating on examinations or classroom assignments
- lying
- acting in a manner so as to interfere with the instructional process
- abusive or profane language between or among students
- failure to complete assignments or carry out directions
- use of forged notes or excuses
- cutting class
- leaving school without permission
- school tardiness
- truancy
- excessive unexcused absences
- cell phone violation
- dress code violation
- failure to display ID when one is required
- internet violations
- unauthorized or inappropriate use of electronic devices
- unauthorized distribution or presentation of a publication or material

The staff will follow these basic enforcement procedures in instances of disorderly conduct:

- When the staff member observes (or is notified about and verifies) an offense, the staff member will take immediate action to correct the misconduct. The staff member will use an appropriate sanction and maintain a record of the misconduct and the sanction.
- If a particular misconduct is not immediately correctable, the staff member should refer the problem to the appropriate administrator for action specified under this administrative rule.
- The administrator should meet with the reporting staff member, and, if necessary, the student and the parent/legal guardian, and should apply the appropriate disciplinary action.
- The administrator will maintain a complete record of the procedures.

The staff may apply sanctions in cases of disorderly conduct that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- verbal reprimand
- withdrawal of privileges

- detention
- in-school suspension/recovery room
- out-of-school suspension
- confiscate item
- academic penalty (cheating)

## **Level II - Disruptive Conduct**

Disruptive conduct includes those activities in which students engage that are directed against persons or property and the consequences of which tend to endanger the health or safety of themselves or others in the school. Some instances of disruptive conduct may overlap certain criminal offenses, justifying both administrative sanctions and court proceedings.

The administration may reclassify disorderly conduct (Level I) as disruptive conduct (Level II) if the student frequently engages in (Level I) disorderly conduct offenses.

Acts of disruptive conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- use of an intoxicant
- use or possession of tobacco products or materials
- fighting – Elementary Schools
- inciting others to violence or provoking a fight
- vandalism (minor)
- stealing
- threats against others
- harassment, intimidation, hazing, or bullying
- trespassing
- refusal to obey school personnel or agents (such as volunteer aides or chaperones) whose responsibilities include supervision of students
- possession or use of unauthorized substances
- possession or use of a controlled substance or paraphernalia associated with the use of controlled substances, as defined by law or local school board policy
- illegally occupying or blocking school property in any way with the intent to deprive others of its use
- noncompliance of administrative direction during a school emergency
- unlawful assembly
- failure to cooperate fully with school officials in the investigation of a Level II offense
- disrupting lawful assembly
- bus misconduct horseplay, hitting, tripping, or pushing that could cause injuries or damage to property
- gambling

The staff will follow these basic enforcement procedures in instances of disruptive conduct:

- When the administrator observes (or is notified and verifies) an offense, he/she will investigate the circumstances of the misconduct and confer with staff on the extent of the consequences.
- The administrator will notify the parent/legal guardian of the student's misconduct and related

proceedings. The administrator will meet with the student and, if necessary, the parent/legal guardian, confer with them about the student's misconduct, and apply the appropriate disciplinary action.

- The administrator will keep a complete record of the procedures.
- If appropriate, school officials should notify law enforcement authorities.

The administration may apply sanctions in cases of disruptive conduct which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- temporary removal from class
- temporary or permanent removal from bus
- alternative education program
- in-school suspension
- out-of-school suspension
- transfer
- referral to outside agency
- expulsion
- restitution of property and damages, where appropriate, should be sought by local school authorities

### **Level III - Criminal or Obscene Conduct**

Criminal or obscene conduct includes those activities in which students engage that result in violence to themselves or to another's person or property or which pose a direct and serious threat to the safety of themselves or others in the school. These activities usually require administrative actions which result in the immediate removal of the student from the school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities, and/or action by the board.

Acts of criminal or obscene conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- assault and battery
- extortion
- bomb threat
- false fire alarms
- fighting – Middle and High Schools
- possession/use of fireworks or explosive devices
- failure to report knowledge of weapons or explosive devices to school authorities
- possession, use, or transfer of dangerous weapons
- possession or transfer of look-a-like weapons
- sexual offenses
- sextortion vandalism (major)
- theft, possession, or sale of stolen property
- arson
- furnishing or selling unauthorized substances, as defined by board policy
- furnishing, selling, or possession of controlled substances (drugs, narcotics, or poisons)
- distribution, sale, purchase, manufacture, or unlawful possession of a controlled substance while in or within a radius of one-half mile of school grounds

- threatening to take the life of or inflict bodily harm upon a teacher, principal, or members of their immediate family
- profane or abusive language to staff, including School Safety officers and School Resource Officers and volunteers

The staff will follow these basic enforcement procedures in instances of criminal conduct:

- The administrator will contact law enforcement.
- When an administrator observes (or is notified of and verifies) an offense the administrator will confer with the staff involved, apply the appropriate disciplinary action, and if appropriate, meet with the student.
- If warranted, the administrator should immediately remove the student from the school environment. The administrator will notify a parent/legal guardian as soon as possible.
- The first offense by a student of Level III criminal conduct at a middle or high school shall result in an automatic five day suspension and possible criminal charges. A second offense by a student of Level III criminal conduct shall result in referral to the district's alternative learning program, possible criminal charges, or possible expulsion. The student must complete two consecutive semesters without Level II or III offenses before returning to his/her home school.
- Staff will follow established due process procedures when applicable.
- The administrator will keep a complete record of the procedures.

The administration may apply sanctions in cases of criminal conduct that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- out-of-school suspension
- assignment to alternative schools
- expulsion
- restitution of property and damages, where appropriate (should be sought by local school authorities)

#### **Extenuating, Mitigating, or Aggravating Circumstances**

Administrators are to take appropriate action when student misconduct away from school grounds or school activities has a detrimental effect on the educational environment, safety, or general welfare of students or staff of the district. Student misconduct includes any action performed in person, in writing, or electronically. The administrator should take into consideration the protection of students and staff from the effects of violence, drugs, and/or disruptions. At a minimum, administrators or their designees should meet with the student upon his/her arrival at school, give the student notice of the concerns, and allow the student an opportunity to present his/her side of the story. The administration may either permit the student to attend classes as usual or may take appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension in order to conduct an investigation into the matter. The parents/legal guardians of students will be notified of any action taken by the administration and offered the opportunity for a conference with the administration.

In the event the student is incarcerated based on his/her out-of-school conduct, the principal or his/her designee will notify the student that he/she is to meet with the administration prior to returning to school. At the conclusion of the inquiries to obtain more information on the matter, the administrator or his/her designee should take appropriate action which may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- returning the student to his/her normal class schedule and removing all evidence of suspension

- placing the student on probation and allowing the student to resume his/her normal class schedule
- placing the student on probation, allowing the student to continue classwork, but restricting the student's participation in extracurricular activities and/or designated school activities; for example, clubs, study halls, pep rallies, student government activities, and so forth
- suspending the student recommending expulsion of the student from regular school and placement in the district's alternative school
- recommending expulsion but allowing access to virtual school programs through the district's alternative school (these students are only allowed on alternative school campus for coursework and exams that require a proctor in a virtual school accessed through our district's alternative school); students not able to successfully enroll will be expelled for the remainder of the school year
- recommending expulsion of the student for the remainder of the year

## **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

### *Disciplinary process*

Students with disabilities as identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are not exempt from school disciplinary processes, nor are they entitled to remain in a particular educational program when their conduct substantially impairs the education of other children in the program. However, federal and state laws and regulations require the public schools to meet the individual educational needs of a student with a disability to the extent that current educational expertise permits.

### *Program prescriptions*

A staffing committee for students with disabilities as identified under the IDEA may prescribe or prohibit specified disciplinary measures for an individual student by including appropriate provisions in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The committee must take into consideration the student's disabling condition when deciding whether or not staff may use a particular form of discipline. Administrative authorities should observe any such provisions contained in a student with disabilities' individual education plan, except that a staffing committee may not prohibit the initiation of proceedings for suspension or expulsion that are conducted in accordance with regulation.

### *Suspensions*

The administration may suspend a student with disabilities unless a suspension is prohibited by the student's individual education plan. At the end of the suspension, the school should return the student to the same educational placement, if appropriate. The school may suspend students for up to 10 days during the regular school year for a disciplinary infraction.

The school may suspend students for up to 10 days during the regular school year for a disciplinary infraction.

However, students who bring weapons to school or a school function, knowingly possess or use illegal drugs or solicit the sale of controlled substances while at school or a school function or inflict substantial physical injury to another individual in the school environment may be removed for up to 45 days at a time. If the principal and IEP team believe that a child with a disability is substantially likely to injure self or others in the child's regular placement, he/she may petition an impartial due process hearing officer or get a court injunction to order that the child be removed to an interim alternative educational setting for a period up to 45 days.

### *Expulsions*

Expulsion of a student with disabilities is equivalent to a change in educational placement and, therefore, requires special procedures. Before a student with disabilities may be expelled, an IEP team must determine whether or not there is a connection or causal relationship between the disabling condition and the misconduct. If it is determined that there is a causal relationship between the student's misconduct and the student's disability, the student would continue to receive services in the regular school setting. If the behavior is not related to the disability then the student is subject to regular discipline. However, provisions must be made to allow the student to continue to progress in the regular curriculum and meet the goals of the IEP.

The district will continue to provide a free and appropriate education as set forth in a student's IEP to expelled students with disabilities.

Nothing contained in this administrative rule will be construed as limiting an administrator's ability to remove a student with disabilities from school immediately under emergency conditions.

Issued 5/28/90; Revised 8/26/91, 5/29/07, 4/15/11, 2/27/12, 5/23/16, 6/13/23, 12/12/23

**York 3/Rock Hill School District**

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**Notification of Rights under FERPA for  
Elementary and Secondary Schools**

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will arrange for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. 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 privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school Board; a person or company with whom the school has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer 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.
4. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]
5. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-8520

**Directory Information**

The following information is releasable upon request at the discretion of the principal of each school: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, photo, subjects' study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight, and height of members of athletics teams, dates of attendance (on both an annual and daily basis), diplomas and awards received, and the most recent/previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. Any parent or guardian of a student attending Rock Hill Schools who would prefer that any of the information designated above not be released without the parent's or guardians' prior consent should notify in writing the Office of the Superintendent, Rock Hill Schools P.O. Drawer 10072, Rock Hill SC 29731 by the Tuesday following Labor Day. If such notice is given, the school attended by the student will be notified.

### **Notificación de derechos según FERPA para Escuelas de Educación Primaria y Secundaria**

La Ley de Derechos Educativos de la Familia y la Privacidad (FERPA, por sus siglas en inglés) otorga a los padres y a los estudiantes mayores de 18 años de edad ("estudiantes elegibles") ciertos derechos con respecto a los registros educativos del estudiante. Estos derechos son:

1. El derecho a inspeccionar y revisar los registros educativos del estudiante dentro de los 45 días a partir del día en que la escuela recibe una solicitud de acceso. Los padres o estudiantes elegibles deben presentar al director de la escuela [u otro funcionario escolar apropiado] una solicitud por escrito que identifique el registro o los registros que desean inspeccionar. El funcionario escolar organizará el acceso y notificará al padre o al estudiante elegible sobre el momento y el lugar en el que los registros podrán ser inspeccionados.
2. El derecho a solicitar la modificación de los registros educativos del estudiante que el padre o el estudiante elegible consideren inexactos, engañosos o que de otro modo violen los derechos de privacidad del estudiante según FERPA. Los padres o estudiantes elegibles que deseen solicitar a la escuela que modifique un registro deben escribir al director de la escuela [u otro funcionario escolar apropiado], identificar claramente la parte del registro que desean cambiar y especificar por qué debe cambiarse. Si la escuela decide no modificar el registro según lo solicitado por el padre o el estudiante elegible, la escuela notificará al padre o al estudiante elegible sobre la decisión y les informará sobre su derecho a una audiencia en relación con la solicitud de modificación. Información adicional sobre los procedimientos de la audiencia se proporcionará al padre o al estudiante elegible cuando se les notifique sobre el derecho a una audiencia.
3. El derecho a la privacidad de la información personalmente identificable en los registros educativos del estudiante, excepto en la medida en que FERPA autorice la divulgación sin consentimiento. "Una excepción, que permite la divulgación sin consentimiento, es la divulgación a funcionarios escolares con intereses educativos legítimos." "Un funcionario escolar es una persona empleada por la escuela como administrador, supervisor, instructor o miembro del personal de apoyo (incluyendo personal de salud o médico y personal de la unidad de policía escolar); una persona que sirve en la Junta Escolar; una persona o empresa con la cual la escuela ha subcontratado servicios o funciones que de otra manera realizaría con su propio personal (como un abogado, auditor, consultor médico o terapeuta); un padre o estudiante que sirve en un comité oficial, como un comité disciplinario o de quejas; o un padre, estudiante u otro voluntario que ayuda a otro funcionario escolar a realizar sus tareas." Un funcionario escolar tiene un interés educativo legítimo si el funcionario necesita revisar un registro educativo para cumplir con su responsabilidad profesional.
4. Bajo solicitud, la escuela divulga registros educativos sin consentimiento a funcionarios de otro distrito escolar en el cual un estudiante busca o tiene la intención de inscribirse o ya está inscrito, si la divulgación es con fines de inscripción o transferencia del estudiante. [NOTA: FERPA requiere que un distrito escolar haga un intento razonable de notificar al padre o al estudiante sobre la solicitud de registros a menos que indique en su notificación anual que tiene la intención de remitir los registros cuando se soliciten].
5. El derecho de presentar una queja ante el Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos en relación con presuntas violaciones por parte de la escuela en el cumplimiento de los requisitos de FERPA. El nombre y la dirección de la Oficina encargada de administrar FERPA son:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-8520

#### **Información del directorio**

La siguiente información es divulgable a pedido a discreción del director de cada escuela: el nombre del estudiante, dirección, número de teléfono, fecha y lugar de nacimiento, foto, materias de estudio, participación en actividades y deportes oficialmente reconocidos, peso y altura de los miembros de los equipos atléticos,

fechas de asistencia (tanto en una base anual como diaria), diplomas y premios recibidos, y la agencia o institución educativa más reciente/anteriormente asistida por el estudiante. Cualquier padre o tutor de un estudiante que asiste a las Escuelas de Rock Hill que prefiera que cualquiera de la información designada arriba no sea divulgada sin el consentimiento previo del padre o tutor, debe notificar por escrito a la Oficina del Superintendente, Escuelas de Rock Hill, P.O. Drawer 10072, Rock Hill SC 29731, antes del martes siguiente al Día del Trabajo. Si se proporciona dicho aviso, se notificará a la escuela a la que asiste el estudiante.

## **Policy JICJ Possession/Use of Personal Electronic Devices or District-Owned Devices**

*Issued 6/23*

Purpose: To establish the basic rules for the board's permission of personal electronic devices or district-owned devices on school grounds, in the school buildings, on buses, or during any other time they are under the direct administrative jurisdiction of the school, whether on or off the school grounds.

### **Personal Electronic Device**

For purposes of this policy, "*personal electronic device*" includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, pagers, gaming devices, or other devices that emit an audible signal, vibrate, display a message, display or record an image, or otherwise summon or deliver a communication to the possessor. Personal electronic devices are not permitted to be on or visible during the school day and should be stored in lockers or backpacks while on campus between student arrival and dismissal bell.

Unauthorized use of a personal electronic device may include, but is not limited to, taking pictures or recording without permission, cheating, harassment or bullying, use during any emergency drill, use during unauthorized times, or use for unlawful activities.

A student in possession of a personal electronic device in conflict with this policy will be subject to discipline as provided under administrative rule JICJ-R.

Violations of this policy may result in the confiscation of the device and all its components. Students are not allowed to erase the history or remove the battery, SIM card or any other part of the device before giving it to the school official. Students will receive the phone at the end of the school day.

The district is not responsible for the loss or damage of any personal electronic device brought on school grounds, in the school buildings, on buses, or during any other time they are under the direct administrative jurisdiction of the school, whether on or off the school grounds.

### **District-Owned Device**

The district may provide students with electronic devices including, but not limited to, tablets or laptop computers in an effort to enhance students' learning experience. The district will determine the device that best suits the needs of the students.

Students will have no expectation of privacy with respect to any information contained on these devices. District-owned devices may contain tracking software to recover lost or stolen devices. Students are not allowed to erase the history or remove the battery, SIM card, or any other part of the device. Students will abide by the district's acceptable use policy (JNDB) established for the use of technology resources. Students who violate the acceptable use policy or do not follow instructions for the proper use of the device on school grounds, in the school buildings, on buses, or during any other time they are under the direct administrative jurisdiction of the school, whether on or off the school grounds, will be subject to discipline according to administrative rule JICJ-R.

Students are responsible for the care of the district-owned device. Parents/Legal guardians will cover the cost of damage to or loss of the device. Students will return the device at the end of the school year or when directed by an administrator.

Adopted 7/28/03; Revised 6/28/10, 6/25/12, 8/27/12, 5/23/16, 8/22/16, 6/13/23

Legal References:

JICJ

S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

[Section 59-63-280](#) - Requires board to adopt a policy on student use of electronic devices.

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## Policy JICFAA Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

Issued 1/16

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for maintaining a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student by students, staff, and third parties that interfere with or disrupt a student's ability to learn and the school's responsibility to educate its students in a safe and orderly environment whether in a classroom, on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises, or at another program or function where the school is responsible for the student.

For purposes of this policy, harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as a gesture, electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical, or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of either of the following:

- harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage
- insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school
- demonstrates motivation by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying is encouraged to file a complaint in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or his/her designee. Reports by students or employees may be made anonymously.

The district prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student or employee who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The district also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The board expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner. Students and employees have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules, and regulations of the school and district. Any student or employee who is found to have engaged in the prohibited actions as outlined in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion in the case of a student or termination in the case of an employee. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The district will take all other appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, and staff members should be aware that the district may take disciplinary actions for conduct initiated and/or created off-campus involving the inappropriate use of the Internet or web-based resources if such conduct poses a threat or substantially interferes with or disrupts the work and discipline of the schools, including discipline for student harassment and bullying.

The superintendent or his/her designee will be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided to students, staff, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and members of the community,

JICFAA

## TITLE I

Parents' Right to Know: A school that receives Title I funds must provide each individual parent a timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

### Independence Parent/Family/School Compact 2024-2025

Independence Elementary School Mission Statement – Independence Elementary believes that nothing is more important than children. We are continually committed to the social, emotional, and academic development of every child. Our school is a safe, challenging, caring, and supportive environment where teachers, parents, students, and community members work together to ensure all Independence students have a solid foundation for life. We strive to make the learning experiences at Independence fun and engaging while holding everyone accountable for reaching his or her highest potential.

#### **As a parent/family/caregiver, I pledge to:**

- Encourage high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior
- Make sure my child attends school regularly and on time
- Be involved in my child's education by attending conferences, looking at my child's schoolwork, calling the school, and/or volunteering my time/joining the PTA
- Respond promptly with all school communication
- Read and discuss the Independence Family Handbook with my child and follow the guidelines
- Show respect and support for my child, the teacher, and the school

Parent/Family/Caregiver Signature \_\_\_\_\_

#### **As an Independence staff member I pledge to:**

- Encourage high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior
- Provide meaningful and appropriate classwork/homework activities
- Respectfully and accurately inform parents of their child's progress
- Respond promptly to all home communication
- Help children to resolve conflicts fairly and consistently to build a positive sense of community
- Communicate weekly through progress reports and monthly newsletters
- Be available during and after school hours by voice mail and email
- Schedule and participate in parent/teacher conferences at least one time a year and as needed
- Offer opportunities to parents to volunteer and celebrate learning successes

Staff Signature \_\_\_\_\_

#### **As an Independence student I pledge to:**

- Maintain positive behavior and respect the other students, their families, and staff to provide a safe environment
- Work hard to do my best in class and complete my homework
- Ask the teacher any questions about classwork/homework
- Discuss with my parents what I am learning in school
- Treat others the way I would like to be treated
- Always do my personal best

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

#### **As Independence Principal I pledge to:**

- Represent all stakeholders of Independence Elementary School in affirming this contract
- Offer opportunities to parents and community partners to volunteer in the school
- Provide development opportunities and support for all Independence staff, students, parents, and community
- Be available to stakeholders and timely in responding to their needs and concerns

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Independence Elementary School 132 W. Springdale Road Rock Hill, SC 29730 Phone: 803-981-1135  
School Website: <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/Page/19>

## Pacto Independencia Padres/Familia/Escuela 2024-2025

Declaración de la misión de la Escuela Primaria Independence – La Escuela Primaria Independence cree que nada es más importante que los niños. Estamos continuamente comprometidos con el desarrollo social, emocional y académico de cada niño. Nuestra escuela es un ambiente seguro, desafiante, afectuoso y de apoyo donde los maestros, padres, estudiantes y miembros de la comunidad trabajan juntos para garantizar que todos los estudiantes de Independence tengan una base sólida para la vida. Nos esforzamos por hacer que las experiencias de aprendizaje en Independence sean divertidas y atractivas, al tiempo que responsabilizamos a todos de alcanzar su máximo potencial.

### Como padre/familia/cuidador, me comprometo a:

- Fomentar altos estándares de rendimiento académico y comportamiento positivo
- Asegurarme de que mi hijo asista a la escuela con regularidad y a tiempo
- Participar en la educación de mi hijo asistiendo a conferencias, viendo el trabajo escolar de mi hijo, llamando al

escuela, y/o voluntariado de mi tiempo/uniéndome a la PTA

- Responder con prontitud con todas las comunicaciones de la escuela
- Lea y analice el Manual de la familia de Independence con mi hijo y siga las pautas
- Mostrar respeto y apoyo a mi hijo, al maestro y a la escuela

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ de Padres/Familiares/Cuidadores

### Como miembro del personal de Independence, me comprometo a:

- Fomentar altos estándares de rendimiento académico y comportamiento positivo
- Proporcionar actividades significativas y apropiadas para el trabajo en clase/tarea
- Informar de manera respetuosa y precisa a los padres sobre el progreso de sus hijos
- Responda con prontitud a todas las comunicaciones en el hogar
- Ayudar a los niños a resolver conflictos de manera justa y consistente para construir un sentido positivo de comunidad.
- Comuníquese semanalmente a través de informes de progreso y boletines mensuales
- Estar disponible durante y después del horario escolar por correo de voz y correo electrónico
- Programe y participe en conferencias de padres y maestros al menos una vez al año y según sea necesario
- Ofrecer oportunidades a los padres para que se ofrezcan como voluntarios y celebren los éxitos de aprendizaje

Personal Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Como estudiante de Independence, me comprometo a:

- Mantener un comportamiento positivo y respetar a los otros estudiantes, sus familias y el personal para proporcionar un ambiente seguro
- Trabajar duro para dar lo mejor de mí en clase y completar mi tarea
- Pregúntele al maestro cualquier pregunta sobre el trabajo en clase o la tarea
- Hablar con mis padres sobre lo que estoy aprendiendo en la escuela
- Tratar a los demás como me gustaría que me trataran a mí
- Siempre dar lo mejor de mí

Estudiante Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Como Director de Independence me comprometo a:

- Representar a todas las partes interesadas de la Escuela Primaria Independence en la afirmación de este contrato
- Ofrecer oportunidades a los padres y socios de la comunidad para que se ofrezcan como voluntarios en la escuela.
- Proporcionar oportunidades de desarrollo y apoyo para todo el personal, los estudiantes, los padres y la comunidad de Independence.
- Estar disponible para las partes interesadas y responder oportunamente a sus necesidades e inquietudes.

Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Escuela Primaria Independence 132 W. Springdale Road Rock Hill, SC 29730 Teléfono: 803-981-1135

Sitio web de la escuela: <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/Page/19>



**Independence Elementary School  
Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy  
2024-2025**

Under *The Every Student Succeeds Act*, each Title I school jointly develops with parents a written parental involvement policy that describes the means for carrying out the requirements of the legislation.

It is the policy of the administration, faculty, and staff of your child's school to:

- Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs through open house, online access to student grades, newsletters, and one-one parent contacts.
- Hold an Annual Title I Meetings at the beginning of the year to inform parents their school's participation in Title I and to explain its requirements.
- Provide information to parents in a timely manner through mass phone calls, open house, online access to student grades, newsletters, weekly folders and one-one parent contacts.
- Provide parents with explanations of the school's overall student achievement and their child's individual student test results by sending information home and sharing at parent conferences.
- Provide parents a description and explanation of the school's curriculum, the assessments used to measure student progress, and the levels students are expected to meet through parent conferences, newsletters, and school/district websites.
- Offer regular meetings for parents to make suggestions, share experiences, and participate in decisions relating to the education of their child through open house, online access to student grades, newsletters, and one-on-one parent contacts.
- Provide timely responses to parents' suggestions via phone calls, newsletters, emails, and conferences.
- Develop and distribute a School-Parent Compact.
- Provide family and community involvement programs that provide materials and training to help parents work with educators to monitor and improve their child's achievement.
- Make sure that information related to school and parent programs is sent to the parents in a format and language that parents can understand.
- Provide other practical support for family and community involvement activities as requested.

# The Leader in Me™

great happens here

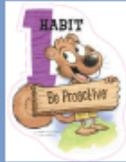
We are proud to announce that Independence Elementary School has implemented The Leader in Me framework! We have created an exceptional environment where the practices and habits of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Kids® are embedded into our daily lives and inherent in everything we do. The Leader in Me framework defines our school's operations, and is the guiding spirit behind our instructional practices, and leadership opportunities. Everyone has the opportunity to be a leader here!

Why is it good for my children?

- Teaches skills needed to be successful in a global society.
- Personal leadership - being accountable for actions and attitudes
- Initiative and self-discipline, making healthy choices
- Ability to work well with others, cross-culturally and in teams
- Effective communication and listening skills
- Ability to solve complex problems and creative thinking skills
- Inspires greater self-confidence with a belief that every child can be a "leader of their own life", has unique talents and can make a difference



## 7 HABITS



**HABIT 1**  
I'm a responsible person  
I take initiative  
I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods.  
I don't blame others for my faults  
I do good things, even when no one is around



**HABIT 2**  
I plan ahead and set goals  
I do things that have meaning  
I'm an important part of my class  
I figure out what I want to be  
I learn from inspiring people



**HABIT 3**  
I make my schedule  
I spend my time on important things  
I study first, then play  
I'm disciplined and organized  
I'm aware of the time



**HABIT 4**  
I'll try to make everyone happy  
I seek for a fair solution  
I view life not as a competition  
I have respect for everybody  
I'm not a selfish person



**HABIT 5**  
I'll listen to other people's ideas and feelings  
I listen with my eyes, ears, and heart  
I try understanding others views  
I don't interrupt whenever someone is talking  
I'm confident voicing my ideas.



**HABIT 6**  
I value other people's differences  
Being unique is cool  
I ask for other people's ideas  
I'm a good team player  
I can cooperate with anyone



**HABIT 7**  
I exercise regularly and eat healthy food  
I can learn new things everywhere  
I spend time with my family and friends  
I make time for myself  
I balance my body, mind, heart, and soul.



**INDEPENDENCE**  
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL —

Enter to LEARN  
Depart to LEAD

# LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Patriot Council
- Student Lighthouse Team
- Recycling Team
- Safety Patrol
- Morning News Crew
- Student Ambassadors
- School Chorus
- Beta Club
- Step Team
- Girls on the Run
- Let Me Run
- Bow Ties and Basketball



## OUR LEADERSHIP PLEDGE

We are the Patriot Leaders of Independence.  
We enter to LEARN and depart to LEAD.  
We practice the 7 Habits to help us succeed.  
We will Synergize, Sharpen the Saw and Be Proactive.  
Putting First Things First is the way we choose to live.  
To build positive relationships and make new friends.  
Begin with the End in Mind to think Win-Win.  
We will Seek First to Understand and listen well.  
We are LEADERS today and always we will EXCEL.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR STUDENT LIGHTHOUSE

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/9TXEGLVRMGO](https://youtu.be/9TXEGLVRMGO)



"Great LEADERS don't tell you what to do, they SHOW you how it's done"  
-Stephen R. Covey



## CONTACT US

Phone : 803-981-1135

Address: 132 W. Springdale Rd. Rock Hill, SC 29732

Website : <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/Domain/13>



"LEADERS become great not because of their power but, because their ability to EMPOWER OTHERS"

- John C. Maxwell



**Independence  
Elementary School**

Enter to LEARN



Depart to LEAD

**Leader in Me School**

# The 7 Habits® Tree

AND REMEMBER TO  
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

**Habit 7**

**SHARPEN THE SAW®**  
Balance Feels Best

THEN PLAY WELL  
WITH OTHERS

**Habit 6**

**SYNERGIZE®**  
Together Is Better

**Habit 5**

**SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND,  
THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD®**  
Listen Before You Talk

**Habit 4**

**THINK WIN-WIN®**  
Everyone Can Win

START WITH YOU

**Habit 3**

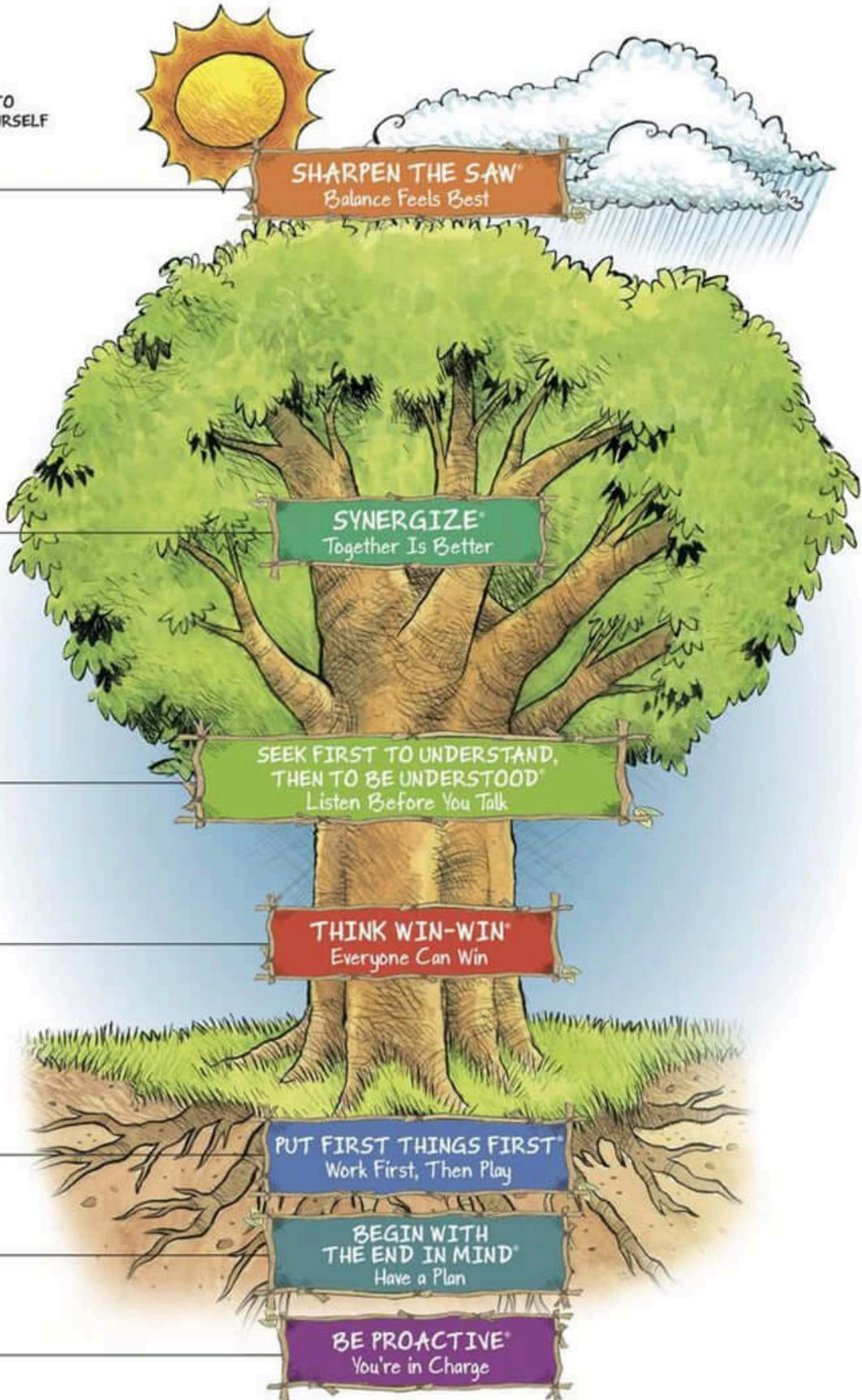
**PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST®**  
Work First, Then Play

**Habit 2**

**BEGIN WITH  
THE END IN MIND®**  
Have a Plan

**Habit 1**

**BE PROACTIVE®**  
You're in Charge



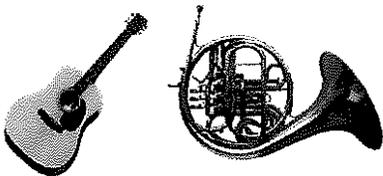
# Common Disallowed Items On School Buses

Carry-on items: Compliance with federal standards is mandatory by the State Department of Education. No animals, insects, weapons, balloons, glass or pressurized containers or class projects that are large, wooden, etc.-**none of these** are to be carried on busses by drivers, teachers or students. Up to 22x28 paper posters are allowed if driver vision is not obstructed. Band instruments or other items carried on the bus must be of such size that all must be carried in the students lap and cannot be above the seat top. Items on the seats, floor- (projectiles) or obstructing the isles endanger all passengers on the bus. Class projects and large band instruments must be transported to/from school via private vehicle. Secured oxygen tanks are approved for use on Special Needs buses only. Unsecured objects become projectiles upon sudden stops.

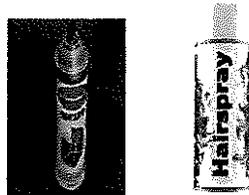
School bus drivers are instructed to stop such items from being brought onto the bus. Every item/object must be scrutinized. Students/parents must present items to the school principal for a principal's signature-note, which must be given to the bus driver prior to approaching the bus.

Some examples of disallowed items are:

Over Sized band Instruments



Pressurized/Flammable Items



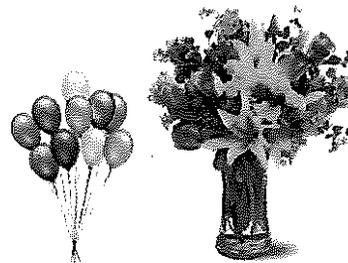
Possible Projectiles



All Glass Items



Balloons/Flower Bouquets



Possible Weapons



Large Class projects



Traveling/Camping Items



### CARRY OVER POLICIES

1. Any student who earns a suspension during the last day of the school year will be subject to serving the remainder of such suspension the following school year.
2. When in the judgment of the Director of Transportation, any bus student's behavior endangers the lives of bus students; the Director of Transportation may expel that student immediately for the remainder of that school year.
3. Misbehavior on the last day of school on the home trip will be addressed the following year and/or by legal actions.
4. A student shall be subject to transportation laws, rules, and regulations from the time that he (she) steps onto a school bus until the school bus route is completed or until the student arrives at his normal destination. Normal destinations shall either be home or school unless otherwise specified by the Asst. Director or the Director of Transportation.
5. All appeals must be made to the Director of Transportation.
6. The Director of Transportation may delegate his authority to any administrator.
7. Riding any bus when under bus suspension can result in indefinite bus suspension.

### RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

1. Parents should report all misconduct on school busses to the principal.
2. Parents should report all traffic hazards, carelessness on the part of the bus driver, etc., to the principal or Director of Transportation (980-2022).
3. Parents should encourage students to observe all safety and conduct regulations established for the efficient operation of the school bus.
4. Parents should observe extreme caution when approaching bus stops, moving busses, or stopped busses.
5. Parents should help supervise large numbers of students at bus stops.
6. Parents should see that their children are at the bus stop at the appropriate time.
7. The Transportation Department has the power to deny students the privilege of school bus transportation whose parents refuse to cooperate and comply with SC State Laws and Regulations or Rock Hill School District Three regulations.



# SUSPENSIONS

The proper conduct of students will govern their success or failure in life. With the great potential dangers involved in school bus transportation, behavior on the bus must be the best possible. The following procedures have been adopted to both instill and maintain acceptable behavior at its optimum while students are riding our school busses. It is the responsibility of each student riding a school bus to learn quickly and follow effective behavior guidelines.

## ELIGIBILITY STATUS

### I. Minor Violations

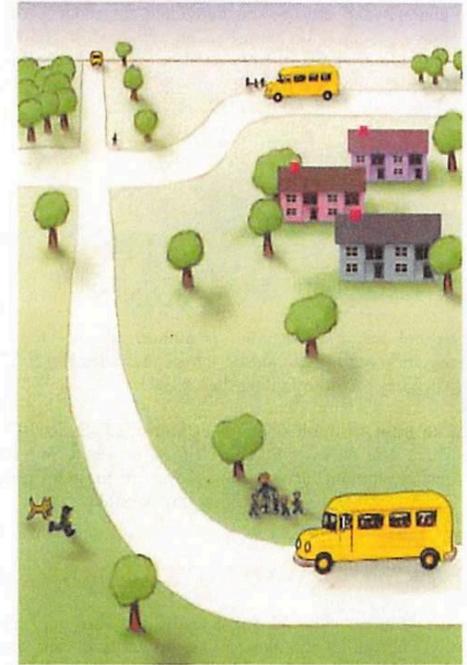
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> - Warning
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - One day off bus
- 4<sup>th</sup> - One day off bus
- 5<sup>th</sup> - Two days off bus
- 6<sup>th</sup> - Two days off bus
- 7<sup>th</sup> and up – Three days off bus each incident

### II. Major Violations

- 1. Warning
- 2. 1<sup>st</sup> suspension conditional (1 week)
- 3. 2<sup>nd</sup> suspension (1 week)
- 4. 3<sup>rd</sup> suspension (2 weeks)
- 5. 4<sup>th</sup> suspension (all year)

Missed your bus?  
Call : 980-2022

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS



Transportation Complex 980-2022

Rock Hill Schools  
PO Box 10072  
Rock Hill, SC 29731

"A Safe Child – A Safe Trip"  
IS OUR GOAL

### 59-67-245. INTERFERENCE WITH OPERATION OF SCHOOL BUS

No person shall willfully and wrongfully interfere with the operation of a school bus, either public or private, by boarding, restricting movement or using threats, either physical or verbal, to the driver or any passenger while the bus is engaged in the transportation of pupils to and from school or any lawful school activity or while passengers are entering or leaving the bus nor shall any person willfully fail or refuse to obey a lawful order of a school bus driver relating to the occupancy of a school bus. The use of threatening, obscene or profane language, leaving or waiting for a school bus is disorderly conduct and any person convicted for the use of such language shall be punished as provided in 16-17-530. Nothing contained herein shall be interpreted to infringe upon the power and duties of duly constituted authorities. (Fine up to \$200 – First Offense)

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS

School bus transportation is authorized only for pupils regularly enrolled in public school in grades K-12. This is a privilege to enjoy rather than a right.

The transportation division of Rock Hill School District Three will do everything within its power to provide the best equipment, drivers, and the safest program possible. We ask cooperation in making this possible.

### WHILE WAITING TO BOARD A BUS

1. Students should arrive at the bus stop only minutes ahead of the bus. The driver will not wait for children not at the bus stop.
2. While waiting for the bus, books, clothing, or other articles should not be placed in the roadway.
3. The roadway should be clear at all times, and students should not play in the path of traffic while waiting for the bus.
4. Students should stand well away from the road when the bus approaches.
5. Students should not damage property such as flowers, shrubbery, windows, fences, and other items while waiting for a bus.
6. Making excessive noise distracts the driver.
7. Bothering others at bus stops or on the way to and from school bus stops is not allowed.
8. Students should never run alongside the bus but should wait until it stops and then walk to the door.

### WHILE RIDING ON THE BUS

1. The driver of a school bus is in complete charge of the passengers while they are aboard. Please do as the driver asks. If you have a complaint, contact your principal.
2. Seats can be assigned or re-assigned upon a moments notice, by the driver or principal.
3. Do not sit on books; hold them in your lap. Keep the aisles clear.
4. Passengers should be seated immediately and remain seated while the bus is in motion. If it is necessary to stand, be sure to hold onto the back of a seat.
5. Never extend arms, legs, or head out of bus.
6. Refrain from talking to the driver except in an emergency.
7. Do not tamper with the emergency door, fire extinguisher, or other equipment on the bus.
8. Passengers must not mar or deface the bus, and seat coverings must not be damaged. Any damage to the bus or seats should be reported to the driver as soon as possible.
9. Only the driver, or other authorized person, should remove first aid equipment, which is to be used only for emergency treatment.
10. Passengers are not permitted to open bus windows. This should be done only by the driver when necessary or with the driver's permission.
11. Passengers must not fight, scuffle in the bus, or create any loud disturbances.
12. Passengers must not shout on the bus.
13. Waste paper, gum wrappers, etc., should not be thrown on the floor. Place trash in receptacle as provided near the entrance to the bus.
14. Smoking, eating, and drinking are not permitted on school busses.
15. The use of profanity on the school bus is prohibited, as well as obscene gestures.
16. Never throw objects on or from the bus.
17. The bus driver is the manager of the bus.
18. Proper school dress code enforced.

### PERSONAL PROPERTY & PRIVATE ITEMS

We will confiscate any personal property and/or private items that cause commotion and/or driver distraction. Leave personal property and private items at home. We will not be responsible for the loss or return of such either before or after such are confiscated.

Glass, pressurized cans, and/or large school/project items are not allowed on the bus. Transport such by your family vehicle to and from school. No balloons or party items.

Book bags/small band instruments must be kept in "student's space," on lap or between legs. These items cannot show above seat line of site. No animals, insects, hard board, or sharp objects, personalized containers or objects can be stored under seats, in aisles, or other bus nook areas. No balloons or non-academic items. No flammable items/substances or explosive items/materials. All carry-on items require approval prior to approaching the bus.

### ON THE TRIP HOME

1. Passengers are permitted to leave the bus only at regular designated stops. Any change must be made with the parent's request in writing and approved by a school official.
2. The student, after alighting from the bus (if he must cross the highway), should go around to the front of the bus and wait until the bus driver or school bus safety patrol directs him to cross.
3. NEVER cross the road at the rear of a stopped school bus.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Students are expected to ride busses making stops closest to their homes.
2. Students are not permitted to switch busses just for fun or to catch an earlier or later bus.
3. During inclement weather, bus stop locations must remain the same.
4. Complaints regarding the bus driver should be directed to the Asst. Director or the Director of Transportation.
5. Each eligible rider is afforded one seat-area of space for self and legal carry-ons.
6. All bus students are to obey the principals and teachers at each school their bus serves. Any student who, in any manner of conduct, disobeys any school official on any school ground could forfeit transportation privileges.
7. Regulations are for the protection of students, school officials, and school equipment. If a bus student has no more regard for the transportation privileges than to create problems on or off the school bus, the student will lose the privilege of riding any school bus in Rock Hill Schools.
8. While the Transportation Department of Rock Hill Schools wishes to conduct student affairs in a friendly, influential manner, students are obligated to respect school officials and the bus driver. If a bus student shows disrespect for school officials or property and equipment, the Transportation Department will take such action as necessary.
9. Your transportation is valuable to your personal needs. Protect it.

### DON'T LOSE IT!!

### WEAPONS, VIOLENCE AND GROSS MISBEHAVIOR

The possession of any weapon or object that can be used as a weapon...any act of violence at or upon another person on the way to a bus stop or at any bus stop or on any school bus or on the way home from a bus stop...and any other acts of gross misbehavior will result in loss of bus riding privileges.

Thank you for accessing your Parent/Student Handbook. Please verify in the Parent Portal by completing the eCollect Handbook Verification in Form that you have read and understand student expectations.