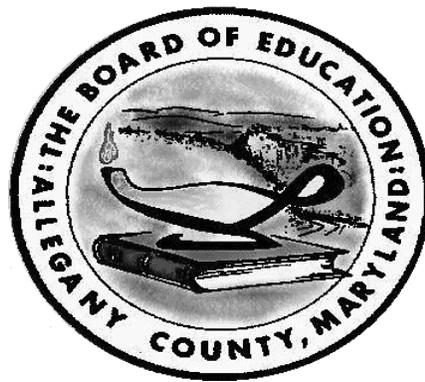


*A Student's Guide  
to Rights and  
Responsibilities in  
the Allegany County  
Public School System*



**Respect, Responsibility, and the Right to  
Learn!**

Revised September 2020

The Board of Education of Allegany County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion or disability in matters affecting employment or the provision of service, programs or activities in compliance with the American with Disability Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

## **Introduction**

This booklet serves as a guide to the rights and responsibilities you enjoy as a student of the Allegany County School System. It is not a definitive statement of your rights in any given situation and you can go to the Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS) website at [www.acpsmd.org](http://www.acpsmd.org) and look under “Elected Board” and then “Policies & Regulations” to further review specific policies. The Annotated Code of Maryland, the Code of Maryland Regulations and the policies of the Allegany County Public Schools are subject to change. Please note that students are subject to the rules and responsibilities in this guide within a Virtual Learning Environment as well. Some additional information is provided in regards to the virtual learning environment within the document. Any such changes may supersede the statements and references contained in this publication. As a student in the Allegany County School system you are guaranteed the rights and expected to accept the responsibilities contained in this document.

While the information and procedures in this document are guidelines for all schools, there is a recognized distinction among students with differing ages, maturity, and disabilities. School personnel may take these developmental differences into consideration when administering this document. In addition, action taken by school authorities shall be free from bias based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, religion or disabling condition.

We encourage you to review this handbook with your parents so that your parents are aware of your rights and responsibilities as is required by the Maryland State Department of Education.

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## **Student Records**

As a student of the Allegany County Public Schools, you have a school record that is maintained by your school principal. That record is housed at your school of enrollment. You and your parents have the right to access, inspect, and review the contents of your school record with reasonable notice. You also have the right to have any inaccuracies corrected. Your school record includes your cumulative record, health record, and discipline file. School records for some students may also include a confidential record if they received Special Education services or have a Section 504 Plan.

## **Directory Information**

Pertinent law governs confidentiality and/or disclosure of information in student records. In general, schools may not disclose personally identifiable information from your records to third parties without first obtaining parental consent. However, schools may publish “directory information” about you which is not considered harmful or an invasion of your privacy. Directory information may include your name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photographs, date and place of birth, field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, recognition awards, and recent educational agencies or institutions attended. Your parents/guardians will choose whether or not to have directory information disclosed. If they choose not to have the directory information given out, your parents must put this in writing to ACPS by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each school year.

**When the ACPS is using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), your parents/guardians will also choose whether or not their child (ren) will be recorded. Parents may opt out of their child using a webcam or microphone within the VLE. However, it is the responsibility of the parent or student to turn off the webcam and the microphone during virtual learning.**

**References:** ACPS JRB Directory Information  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
Code of Maryland Regulations, Section 13A.08.02  
Maryland Student Records System Manual  
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act  
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
Parental Rights, Maryland Procedural Safeguards Notice

# Grading Policy

## 1. Evaluation of Students

It is the philosophy of Allegany County Public Schools that grading promotes learning, achievement, and academic growth in a climate of encouragement and high expectations. ACPS strives for all students to be prepared for college and/or careers. Learning experiences, assignments, and assessments provide challenge, growth, and feedback for improvement in order to foster opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of curricular expectations. Grades reflect the extent to which the student has achieved the learning outcomes specified by ACPS and the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum. The grading and reporting system will support the learning process and student success. In consideration of this philosophy, the Board of Education is committed to maintaining rigorous performance and achievement standards for all students and to providing a fair process for evaluating and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and parents. Grades are an essential way to communicate student progress and reflect what students know and are able to do in relation to curricular expectations. Therefore, grading and reporting practices must:

1. Provide meaningful feedback on student achievement to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the school system. This feedback should provide relevant information for enhancing performance and achievement.
2. Be aligned with the State Curriculum (SC), Core Learning Goals (CLG), Essential Learner Outcomes (ELO) and the Common Core State Curriculum (CCSC).
3. Achieve consistency within content areas and among schools.
4. Be an accurate reflection of student achievement compared to curricular expectations outlined in the SC, CLG, ELO and the CCSC.
5. Be a fair and accurate representation of a student's performance throughout the course on a variety of measures as written in the syllabus for secondary schools and in the Elementary School Progress Report Teachers Guidelines.
6. Provide clear communication at the beginning of each school year or course to parents and students as to the grading criteria.
7. Reflect a commitment to school attendance as an essential component of a quality learning experience.
8. Include formative and summative assessments.
9. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate progress toward mastery of grade level curricular expectations through a variety of methods.
10. Make current information available to students and parents about the student's academic performance.
11. Hold high expectations of all students across all courses and programs.
12. Include professional development for teachers to achieve consistent and comprehensive grading practices in accordance with this policy and accompanying regulations.

## **2. Class Ranking/Grade Point Average**

A system of grading, including weighted grades for advanced placement courses, early college on-site and honors, will be applied to all school system courses and will be utilized for purposes of eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.

This grading system will be designated on all student transcripts. The student transcript will reflect a cumulative grade point average (GPA). Cumulative GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points a student has earned by the total number of credits attempted (quality points for half credit courses are worth 0.5 of the letter grade weight). Cumulative GPA is calculated and posted to the student transcript at the conclusion of each semester.

**References:** ACPS IKA Evaluation of Students  
ACPS IKC Class Ranking/Grade Point Average

## **Student Service Learning (SSL)**

All students working towards a Maryland high school diploma must complete 75 service learning hours. Service learning hours are incorporated into the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade subject areas and students will have opportunities to earn hours in creative arts, English, math, physical education/health science, and/or social studies. Details of the ACPS student service learning plan may be found at [www.acpsmd.org](http://www.acpsmd.org) or by contacting the service learning office at the Board of Education of Allegany County, 301-759-2042.

**Reference:** COMAR 13A.03.02.06

## **Attendance Policy**

Regular school attendance is expected of all students in Allegany County Public Schools. School attendance is directly related to student achievement. In order to maximize academic achievement, there must be a unified effort by all school staff, parents, students, and the community to improve overall school attendance. School administrators, teachers, and support staff are expected to make all reasonable attempts to assist students and parents in addressing those factors which cause students to be absent from school.

A student may miss no more than twelve (12) days of school per school year. Allegany County Public Schools recognizes that there are many factors which contribute to student attendance and will make every effort to work with the student and his/her parent/guardian to ensure the student is in compliance with the attendance expectation. When a student accumulates a total of twenty absences, with at least five (5) of those absences being unlawful, or ten (10) consecutive unlawful absences, the student and his/her parent/guardian will face punitive action – up to and including, referral to the

State's Attorney and/or Juvenile Services for violation of compulsory attendance laws.

**Lawful Absence:** Students presently enrolled in public schools are considered lawfully absent from school, including absence for any portion of the day, under the following conditions.

1. Death in the immediate family. The local school system shall determine what relationships constitute the immediate family. (Code 01)
2. Illness of the student. A parent may submit a note to document the illness of a child for up to and including the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) cumulative day of absences for the current school year. The principal shall only require a physician's certificate from the parent or guardian if the student accumulates more than twelve (12) absences during the current school year. (Code 02)
3. Illness of the student documented by a physician's certificate. (Code 03)
4. Court summons. (Code 04)
5. College Visit. (Code 05)
6. Vacation approved by school administration. (Code 06)
7. Hazardous Weather Conditions. Hazardous weather conditions shall be interpreted to mean weather conditions that would endanger the health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school. (Code 07)
8. Work approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the State Department of Education, accepted by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal or their designees, as reason for excusing students. (Code 08)
9. Observance of a religious holiday. (Code 09)
10. State emergency. (Code 10)
11. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the superintendent or designee constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school. (Code 13)
12. Health Exclusion. (Code 17)
13. Suspension. (Code 18)
14. Lack of authorized transportation. This shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons. (Code 19)

**Unlawful Absence:** An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy.

1. Truancy- An absence without lawful cause for a school day or a portion thereof. (Code 20)
2. Habitual Truancy- A student is a habitual truant if the student has been in membership in a school for 91 or more days in a school year and is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days in excess of 20% of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year. ACPS has the prerogative of defining a habitual truancy in a more but not less stringent manner (e.g., Unlawful absence in excess of 15% of school days).
3. Other unlawful absence (No note from parent or physician). (Code 21)

**References:** ACPS JED Attendance Policy  
COMAR 13A.08.01.03 (.04)

## **Attendance within the Virtual Learning Environment**

The Maryland State Department of Education requires that all school systems track student attendance during virtual learning. Taking attendance while students are learning from home will assist school staff in ensuring that all students have the resources and support students need to engage in learning. Tracking attendance will include a combination of measures that indicate a student is demonstrating their engagement in learning. Elementary teachers will complete a daily attendance for their students. Middle and high school teachers will take class attendance for each period. An official DAILY attendance will be completed by designated school staff members by the end of each school day.

### **Definitions**

**Lawful Absence-** Students shall be considered lawfully absent when absent from instruction with proper documentation approved by the principal/designee. Lawful absence codes were aforementioned in the document. During virtual learning, parents should call the school and provide a note (via email is acceptable) if the student will be absent from their virtual learning. Additional documentation, including a physician's note, may be required for excessive absences. \*Please understand that state auditors require a written note for lawful absences.\*

**Unlawful Absence-** Students shall be considered unlawfully absent when absent from instruction without submitting an absence note to the principal/designee. Unlawful absence codes were aforementioned in the document. A student will be documented as unlawfully absent if the parent doesn't call the school if the student will be absent from their virtual learning.

**Tardies and/or Early Dismissals-** Please contact the school if your child will be tardy or will need an early dismissal during the Synchronous Learning.

**Makeup Work-** Your child will be expected to make up any missed assignments due to an absence, tardy, or early dismissal during the Synchronous Learning. Teachers will provide students with their classroom requirements for makeup work.

**Synchronous-** "Live" or "Real Time" during the scheduled class period.

**Asynchronous-** Does not occur at the same time; Student accesses recorded lesson(s).

**Present-** A student will be marked as present when there is evidence of daily "live" engagement in their classes via the Schoology platform and/or conference tools through typical class attendance procedures.

**Absent-** A student will be marked as absent when there is **no** evidence of daily engagement in the “live” online Schoology classroom. (Please see the exceptions below.)

**The following are exceptions to the Synchronous or “Live/Real Time” attendance requirements:**

- A student has been approved for Asynchronous Learning. Please note that there is a date and time stamp when a student logs into a class/course that teachers will have access to for recording attendance. Students must log in to their classes on a daily basis to be counted present in a class.
- A student has been approved for Traditional Learning due not having any Internet connectivity and cannot log in to Schoology through ‘live’ or archived lessons. The attendance office will contact the student daily regarding engagement in the learning assignments if schools cannot provide in-person learning. If schools can provide in-person learning, the expectation is that the student will report to school.

From time to time, a student may need to log in asynchronously instead of synchronously during the Virtual Learning Phase if the student is under quarantine, has a doctor appointment, or if there is another circumstance that occurs that prevents the student from logging in to the synchronous class(es) on a specific day(s). The parent should contact the school if this occurs, so that the attendance can be updated. Please remember that there is a date and time stamp when a student logs into a class/course asynchronously.

**Dress Code**

School personnel may advise you about appropriate dress and grooming for school, in accordance with the local school discipline policy. School attire worn by you may not disrupt the educational mission of the school. It is a violation of the rules of Allegany County Public Schools for you to dress in a manner that endangers the health or safety of yourself or other students. This includes not only the hours when school is in session, but also school activities. Some examples of violations of the dress code are:

1. Attire that could be used as a weapon (e.g. chains, hats/jewelry with spikes)
2. Attire which exposes or reveals skin or undergarments.
3. Attire which depicts gang affiliation.
4. Attire that depicts the use of weapons, or that is obscene, defamatory or contains profanity.
5. Attire that promotes the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol or other illegal or harmful products.
6. Attire that contains sexually suggestive messages.

If the administration feels that you have violated the dress code policy, they will allow you to remove or change your clothing.

**Dress Code within the Virtual Learning Environment**

Students are expected to be fully dressed and appropriately dressed within the virtual learning environment. Please continue to follow the dress code regulations as described above.

**Reference:** ACPS JICA Student Dress Code

## **School Safety and Security**

One of the goals of ACPS is to create and maintain school environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning. You have the right to feel safe and secure during your educational experience. To assure your safety, schools and buses are inspected for health, fire, and safety hazards during the school year. School staff and administrators use safety practices every day to ensure your safety and security. If your parents visit the school during the school day, they must sign in at the front office and receive a visitor's tag. Also, each school has an emergency plan for crises that may occur during the school day or at school-sponsored events. Procedures are in place at your school and it is vital that you, your parents, and school staff have an understanding of these emergency procedures. Many crises require help from outside agencies in the community. Some of the procedures that your school may use include: lockdown, lock in, evacuation, shelter in place, reverse evacuation, and duck-cover-hold. Your school has a detailed plan of how these procedures are executed during emergencies. Safety drills are conducted to ensure that you have knowledge of these procedures prior to their use in a real emergency.

### **School Safety Officers**

The Board of Education desires to provide safe, orderly and caring learning environments in which all students feel comfortable. All members of the educational community share the responsibility for maintaining a positive and secure school setting. To this end, the Board of Education of Allegany County is authorized and empowered to employ School Safety Officers to work in cooperation with system administrators, and in conjunction with the existing School Resource Officers, employed through other local law enforcement agencies, to enhance the day to day safety and security of all school facilities, faculty, staff, and students.

**References:** ACPS ECA Building and Grounds Security  
ACPS ECAE School Safety Officers  
ACPS EBC Emergencies

## **Discipline**

The Board of Education expects students, parents and teachers to share in the responsibility of appropriate behavior in the ACPS system. Proper student behavior is expected in halls, classrooms, on campus, and while attending extracurricular activities. A discipline matrix is used as a guide to administer the progressive discipline policy. The policy will be implemented in conjunction with guidelines set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Rules and practices incorporated in the progressive discipline policy have been established to allow for the efficient uninterrupted education of our students and the safe operation of schools. Schools have the responsibility of developing and reviewing individual school practice by utilizing the School Improvement and/or Pupil Services Team. School administrators have the ultimate responsibility for administering student discipline. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, administrators have the authority to determine the range of severity of the disciplinary action. Without effective discipline of students, the school cannot discharge its primary responsibility – education and the development of citizenship, and students cannot realize their greatest opportunities for educational growth. The Allegany County Public Schools system aligns discipline procedures with the Maryland Guide for Student Code of Conduct.

There are additional rules for suspending students with disabilities. See the references at the end of this section for more information.

## **Discipline in the Virtual Learning Environment**

All district and school rules are in effect within the virtual learning environment. In the virtual learning environment, students and parents are reminded that they may not in any way download a recording, save, or in any way keep a recording (this includes screenshots, pictures, copies, or any distribution of an image (s) depicting another student). Disciplinary action may result if a video is shared in an inappropriate manner.

**References:** ACPS JK Student Discipline  
Parental Rights, Maryland Procedural Safeguards Notice  
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, Section 7-305

## **Weapons**

The presence of weapons in schools, on school grounds, and on school buses creates an atmosphere that disrupts the educational process and threatens the safety and well-being of our students and staff. Possession or use of any rifle, handgun, shotgun, bomb, knife, look-alike gun or firearm, or the possession of any implement that could cause or is intended to cause bodily harm is strictly prohibited in ACPS. If you bring a firearm onto

school property or to a school-sponsored activity or possess a firearm on school property or at a school-sponsored activity, you will be expelled for a minimum of 1 year in accordance with the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. If you bring other weapons onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity, you can also be expelled for 1 year. The superintendent may specify, on a case by case basis, a shorter period of expulsion or an alternative educational setting. In all cases, school officials will involve appropriate law enforcement agencies when violations occur. You may be required to participate in a risk assessment by a school psychologist before returning to school. Appropriate state and federal regulations will be followed when dealing with weapons violations.

### **Weapons in the Virtual Learning Environment**

All district rules are in effect for weapons in the virtual learning environment. See above. Possession, use, or displaying any weapon or lookalike in the virtual learning environment strictly prohibited.

**References:** ACPS JICI Weapons in School  
Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 27, Section 3

### **Substance Abuse**

The use, abuse, sale, possession or distribution of certain proscribed substances by students on school property, or at school related activities is strictly prohibited. The Board of Education supports strong and consistent disciplinary measures to ensure that students recognize that the possession, use, abuse, sale and/or distribution, of proscribed substances present health dangers and may constitute illegal acts. Violations of this policy will be treated as school disciplinary infractions and may be referred to law enforcement agencies. In all cases of suspension or expulsion, mandatory referral for an alcohol/drug assessment will be made to an appropriate mental health provider for assessment and/or treatment. Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent the proper use of medications prescribed for and taken by an individual.

### **Substance Abuse in the Virtual Learning Environment**

All district rules are in effect for the use, abuse, sale, possession, or distribution of certain proscribed substances by students during the school hours or at school related activities within the virtual setting.

**Reference:** ACPS JICH Substance Abuse by Students

## **Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior**

The Board of Education prohibits gang activity in schools or similar destructive or illegal group behavior. Furthermore, the Board of Education prohibits reprisals or retaliation against individuals who report suspected gang activity.

**References:** ACPS JLDBA Gangs Policy  
Safe Schools Improvement Act

## **Cell Phones and Other Portable Communication Devices in School**

Allegany County Public Schools prohibits student use (not possession) of portable pagers, cell phones, and other portable communication devices, and/or messaging software, including personal digital assistant systems, during scheduled instructional time unless authorized by school-based administration and/or instructional staff. If approved for use, students may use portable electronic communication devices for educational purposes, such as accessing curriculum-related and/or educational resources. In such cases, students may only access resources which have been approved by the teacher.

Use of a cell phone or any portable communication device is a privilege which can be denied, revoked, or suspended for a period of time by teachers in their classrooms or by an administrator for the school. Inappropriate use will be addressed by school-based administrative disciplinary actions. There is no expectation of privacy while connected to the ACPS network. Responsible use of information technology, including all portable communication devices, is required of students whether using personal devices and programs, school system devices, or school system programs. When students bring a portable communication device to school, they assume the responsibility for the loss, damage, theft, or use of that device by others.

In addition to use for educational purposes, limited exceptions for use of portable electronic communication devices include the following: students with disabilities who require an electronic device for medical reasons and designated student members of emergency services as verified by the chief of the volunteer fire department, ambulance service, rescue squad, and the school principal.

With regard to all use of portable electronic devices, students may not photograph or record audio and/or video on the school bus, within the school, or during any school sponsored activity in a disruptive manner and/or in a manner which violates other school policy.

## **Cell Phones in the Virtual Learning Environment**

Use of a cell phone or any portable communication device is a privilege which can be denied, revoked, or suspended for a period of time by teachers in their virtual classrooms or by an administrator for the school. With regard to all use of portable electronic devices, students may not photograph or record audio and/or video within the virtual learning environment or during any virtual school-sponsored activity in a disruptive manner and/or in a manner which violates other school policy.

**Reference:** ACPS JIK Information Technology Responsible Use

## **Student Conduct on the Bus**

The opportunity to ride the school bus is a privilege extended to students. There are 10 School Bus Regulations posted in the front of every school bus. In addition, you need to observe some simple rules before the bus arrives and after you get to school. Audio-visual cameras may be used to record your behavior on the bus. If you violate these rules, you may lose the privilege of riding the school bus.

While you are waiting for the bus, you need to act appropriately at the bus stop. Be at the bus stop on time and wait at least 10 feet away from the curb or the roadway. If there is ice or snow on the ground, be careful not to slip into the road. You must also be careful as the bus may slide. If the bus does not arrive within 10 minutes of its scheduled time, you should return home and have your parent contact the Transportation Office.

When the bus arrives at school, disembark in an orderly manner. Go directly into your school. When riding the bus home, you cannot get off at any other stop except your own, unless you have a note from your parent, which has been submitted to school officials. Walk away from the bus after you get off. If you can touch the bus, you are too close!

**Reference:** ACPS EEAEC Student Conduct on Bus

## **Student Searches and Seizure**

A principal and/or assistant principal may make a reasonable search of a student on school premises or on school-sponsored trips if the searcher has a reasonable belief that the student has in his/her possession an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under the laws of the State or a violation of any other state law or a rule or regulation of the Board. Searches shall be made in the presence of a third party. Also, a principal and/or assistant principal may make a search of the physical plant of the school and its appurtenances including the lockers of students. The right of the school official to search the locker shall be announced or published at least annually in the school. All items that are the object of a search and unlawful items found during the search will be seized by the authorized school official. As required by law or school regulations, items will be turned over to the police.

**References:** ACPS JIH Student Interrogation/Search/Arrests Annotated  
Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-308

## **Student Harassment, Bullying, Intimidation and Violence**

ACPS will maintain a learning environment that is free from any type of harassment, bullying, violence, or hate crimes based on an individual's religion, race, ethnicity, region, language, gender, national origin, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or age. ACPS will investigate all complaints - verbal or written. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any student who engages in this type of behavior. This policy is enforced on school property, at school sponsored activities or events, and on school buses for incidents which substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment, bullying, intimidation, and violence refer to any conduct, including verbal conduct, and/or electronic communications that create a hostile educational environment that substantially interfere with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being. Electronic communication includes communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, such as telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager or other device with internet access.

If any student believes that comments, gestures, or actions from any other individual violates the harassment, bullying, violence, and hate crime policy, the student should report the alleged act to a teacher, counselor, school nurse, or school administrator. Any student who is found to be responsible for harassment, bullying, violence, or a hate crime will be subject to disciplinary action.

No student will suffer reprisals for reporting any incidents of harassment and/or for participating in any investigation. In order to encourage reporting of any incidents of harassment, bullying or violence, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the complaint process. Maintaining confidentiality serves to both protect the student who files a complaint and the reputation of any student wrongfully charged with a violation of this policy.

## **Student Harassment, Bullying, Intimidation and Violence in the Virtual Learning Environment**

Harassment, bullying, intimidation, and violence refer to any conduct, including verbal conduct, and/or electronic communications that create a hostile educational environment that substantially interfere with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being. Electronic communication includes communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, such as telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager or other device with internet access.

If any student believes that comments, gestures, or actions from any other individual violates the harassment, bullying, violence, and hate crime policy, the student should report the alleged act to a teacher, counselor, school nurse, or school administrator. Any student who is found to be responsible for harassment, bullying, violence, or a hate crime will be subject to disciplinary action.

**References:** ACPS JK Student Discipline  
ACPS JBA Student Harassment, Bullying, Intimidation and  
Violence Crime Policy

## **Student Expression, Assembly, Patriotism, and Religion**

Freedom of expression, assembly, patriotism, and religion are rights of all students as long as the exercise of these rights does not substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school work, school discipline, school activities, instruction, and/or invade the rights of others.

### **Expression**

#### **1. Speech**

You have the right to talk about topics presented in class and give your opinions during class discussions. You must not interfere with the rights of others to give their views. In order to promote mutual respect, you must refrain from using vulgar and/or obscene language. You may not engage in speech (verbal, written, symbolic) that causes or is likely to cause a material disruption of school activities or that advocates dangerous or illegal behavior that is inconsistent with the mission of ACPS either at school or at a school-sponsored activity.

**References:** Tinker v. DesMoines Indep. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969)  
Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)

#### **2. School-Sponsored Publications, Productions and Other Media**

School-sponsored publications such as newspapers, yearbooks, and literary magazines as well as school-sponsored productions such as school plays designed for use within or between schools are encouraged in the ACPS. School newspapers give students a chance to express their viewpoints, and generally, students have the right to decide on the content of these publications/productions as long as the contents meet specific guidelines. The final decision as to what will be published will rest with the staff, editors, and advisors.

Publications, materials and productions may be disapproved if the content, style, or activity violates relevant law and/or ACPS policies or if they possess a potential threat to the health and/or safety of students, might reasonably be perceived to advocate illegal activities, illegal discrimination, or are inconsistent with the ACPS mission.

**References:** ACPS Policy IGDB  
Hazelwood Sch. Dist. v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U. S. 260 (1988)  
Morse v. Frederick, 127 S. Ct. 2618 (2007)

### **3. Non-School Sponsored Publications, Productions and Other Media**

ACPS students have the right to create and distribute publications, productions and other media without school sponsorship. A publication, production or other media is distributed when it is given away, sold, or put out for people to read or view. ACPS administrators *may* control the time, place, and manner in which the publications and/or productions will be distributed. Materials which encourage actions that threaten the health and safety of students, advocate illegal activities, are obscene and/or libelous (generally, the act of publishing anything false about someone that exposes him or her to public hatred or ridicule), or cause or are reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption of school activities will not be distributed.

### **4. Petitions**

You have the right to circulate petitions at all times except during classes and assemblies. School administrators may stop the circulation of a petition if it violates relevant laws, ACPS policies, poses a potential threat to the health and safety of students, advocates illegal activity or discriminates, is obscene and/or libelous, or causes or is likely to cause a substantial disruption of school activities.

### **5. Internet/Online Expression/Activities**

Students *may* be disciplined for internet activities off school grounds if such online activities create a substantial disruption and material interference with school activities and/or harass or threaten others.

**References:** *Aziz Barimani v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, MSBE Op.No.00-30 (2000)  
*Tommy Kuka v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, MSBE Op. No.00-51 (2000)

### **6. Assembly**

You have the right to meet in groups with other students to discuss issues. ACPS may permit identified groups to meet for expressive activities not directly related to the course of study offered by a school.

**References:** Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, Section 7-108  
Perry Education Assn. v. Perry Local Educator's Assn., 460 U.S. 37 (1983)

## **7. Patriotism**

You have the opportunity to participate in and/or watch patriotic exercises in school. Schools provide for a flag salute. All students and teachers stand and face the flag and recite in unison the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. If you choose not to participate, no one will be permitted to intentionally embarrass you. You may not interrupt others who are participating in patriotic exercises.

**Reference:** Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, Section 7-105

## **8. Religion**

You have the right to observe your own religious beliefs and practices in school as long as you do not violate the rights of others or interfere with school activities.

**Reference:** Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, Section 7-104

## **Technology**

Telecommunications use in the Allegany County Public Schools is for educational purposes, such as accessing curriculum-related information, sharing resources, and promoting innovation that enrich the curriculum and the instructional program. Telecommunications extend the classroom beyond the school building by providing access to information resources on local, state, national, and international electronic networks such as the Internet. The use of the Allegany County Public School network provides a Children's Information Protection Act compliant filter restricting access to non-compliant resources. This includes, but is not limited to, Allegany County Public School owned equipment. Use of the Internet for purposes of locating information and facilitating communication are critical literacy skills. There is no expectation of privacy while using the Allegany County Public School network. Telecommunications and the interconnection of computer equipment include but are not limited to:

- a. Electronic mail communication with people throughout the world through the Internet;
- b. Information and news from scientists, research institutions, and universities;
- c. Library catalogs throughout the world, controlled social networking;
- d. Common interest groups on a vast array of topics;
- e. Federal government information such as the Federal Register, NASA space link, the White House, and the Smithsonian Institute; and
- f. Community information and directories of state and local government.

**Reference:** ACPS JIK Information Technology Responsible Use

## **Service Animals**

It is the policy of the Allegany County Board of Education to permit students and/or adults with disabilities to be accompanied by a service animal in its buildings, schools, classrooms and at Board of Education functions.

**Reference:** ACPS IMG Service Animals

## **School Facilities**

### **1. School Buildings**

When determining the use of school facilities, first priority will be given to those activities which are part of the regular school schedule, and other activities which are directly school related. Otherwise, facilities will be available for any community, civic, educational, social, recreational, or religious purpose consistent with the Public School Laws of Maryland. ACPS has established administrative procedures to help with implementing this policy. You need to contact the school administrator if you or your organization wishes to inquire about using a school facility.

### **Lockers**

Use of a school locker is a privilege. In buildings where school lockers are provided, you are expected to keep your locker clean, neat and in a non-disruptive condition. In addition, lockers can be inspected periodically under the direction of the school administration. Any student can lose the privilege of using a school locker.

### **2. Textbooks**

You have the right to use appropriate textbooks, materials, and/or technology in each of your subject areas. You also have the responsibility to care for the textbooks, materials, and/or technology which has been provided to you. You and your parent/guardian shall be financially responsible for the cost of repair or replacement of any lost, damaged or destroyed materials.

### **3. Student Parking**

Procedures governing students parking on school property vary according to school.

The local school is given authority to determine appropriate disciplinary action for parking violations. You are subject to all laws and local school rules regarding driving and parking vehicles on school grounds.

## **Textbooks, Technology, and Materials in the Virtual Learning Environment**

You have the right to use appropriate textbooks, materials, and/or technology in each of your subject areas. You also have the responsibility to care for the textbooks, materials, and/or technology which has been provided to you. You and your parent/guardian shall be financially responsible for the cost of repair or replacement of any lost, damaged or destroyed textbook, technology device, and materials.

**Reference:** Annotated Code of Maryland, Educational Article, Section 7-308

## **Medication in School**

Children may not take medication in school, except that which is dispensed through the school nurse on the recommendation of the child's physician. You should take medication for minor illness at home or it is permissible for your parent to come to school to administer it to you.

If your doctor deems that it is necessary for you to take medication during the school day, the school must have complete written instructions from the prescribing physician on the form provided for this purpose ("Physician's Authorization" form, revised 4/11/08). Medications must be delivered to the school by the parent and are kept in a locked space in a designated area in the school. **Medications cannot be brought to school by a student.**

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of having auto-injectable epinephrine in the Allegany County Schools. The school nurse, or designee, is authorized to administer auto-injectable epinephrine using an EpiPen to a student who is determined to be or perceived to be in anaphylaxis. The school nurse will provide training to any school personnel acting as a designee.

**Reference:** ACPS JLCEA Epinephrine Policy

## **Student Government**

### **1. Participation**

You have the right to participate in student government. The student government is accountable to students in the school. Any student legally enrolled in a school, academically eligible, and meeting any criteria set forth in the school constitution may run for and hold office in student government. (Allegany County Association of Student Councils: Constitution)

## **2. Faculty Support**

School staff will support your right to participate in student government. The principal will ensure that the student government gives students a voice in school business. The student government will have a faculty advisor and school staff will help the student government get needed supplies and use of rooms. School staff also will excuse absences for students who miss class because of student government activities when those activities are approved.

## **3. Powers of Student Government**

One responsibility of the student government is to represent you within the school whenever issues arise that are related directly to student concerns and rights. The student government may give the school administration recommendations about issues of student interest. The principal will meet regularly with the student government faculty advisor and the executive committee to talk about student concerns. Individual schools determine which student government members will be on the executive committee.

**Reference:** ACPS JFBA Student Government

## **Student Organizations**

You may decide to join one of the many student organizations available at your school. These activities are held on school property and are subject to the supervision of the school's administration and faculty. These organizations are open to all students who qualify to fill the objectives of the organization.

Principals have the authority to place restrictions on participation in extracurricular activities for violations of disciplinary rules and regulations. Organizations which are secret, or limit who may become members may not conduct activities on school property.

**Reference:** COMAR 13A.08.01.09

## **Interscholastic Sports – Participation in Athletics**

Participation in athletics is regarded as an important privilege for students. Participation in such activities supports student personal growth and achievement. It also gives students the opportunity to be representatives of their schools. Therefore, students who desire to participate in athletics shall be expected and required to meet minimum academic standards. Failure to meet minimum academic standards will result in a student losing the privilege of athletic participation.

## Student Eligibility

State Regulations set standards which govern your eligibility to participate in high school athletics. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) and ACPS establish their own rules for participation in their athletic programs. These standards used during the regular season and state tournament play help ensure that, while you are playing on a sports team, you are also making satisfactory progress toward graduation.

Eligibility for participation shall be determined by the student's grades for the most recently completed marking period. Academic eligibility is determined by adding the number of quality points earned in the marking period immediately prior to the given sports season and dividing by the number of courses attempted by the student. Students must achieve a minimum grade point average of 2.0. All new 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are eligible to participate in the first quarter of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. If you are declared academically ineligible, you cannot practice with the team. Additionally, students may be deemed ineligible for participation in athletics due to violations of the rules of conduct. When one or more of the rules of conduct are violated, the principal, in collaboration with the coach/advisor, shall make the decision on the disciplinary action based upon the best interests of the school, the school system, the perception of the school in the community, and the desire to promote high standards of discipline in the athletic program. If you wish to play a sport, you need to have a physical examination performed by a licensed physician, certified physician's assistant under the supervision of a licensed physician, or certified nurse practitioner. A form can be obtained at [www.acpsmd.org](http://www.acpsmd.org). All athletes must follow the health and safety policies regarding concussions and skin infections.

Appeals for reinstatement in athletics may be made to the building principal with a further appeal to the Superintendent of Schools or designee. Students shall remain ineligible from participation in athletics through the conclusion of the due process.

You must be registered at the MPSSAA high school where you play and may participate three seasons in any one sport in grades 10, 11 and 12. You can participate for four seasons if you begin in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Students 19 years or older, as of August 31, and high school graduates are ineligible.

If you decide to participate in extracurricular activities, you will receive a copy of "Rules Governing Participation on Athletic Teams and Extracurricular Activities". You and your parents will sign a contract with the school system saying that you recognize this agreement and will abide by these rules. If you don't uphold this contract and abide by these rules, you may not be allowed to participate.

**Reference:** ACPS JJIC Eligibility – Minimum Standards for Participation in Athletics  
COMAR 13A.06.03 (.02)

## **Corollary Physical Education & Athletics**

The Board of Education believes in the importance of offering physical education and athletic programs to all students. It is the policy of the Board of Education that all students with disabilities have equivalent opportunities for participation in mainstream physical education and interscholastic athletic programs. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities shall be provided. The following administrative regulations set forth the procedures for providing adapted physical education programs and corollary athletic programs in Allegany County Public Schools.

**Reference:** ACPS IHBA Corollary Physical Education and Athletics

## **Complaint Procedure**

### **1. Inquiries and Complaints**

Responses to inquiries and complaints from the public should come from the local school or from the lowest possible administrative level. The first attempt at resolving a concern should be an informal process among the affected parties. A complainant who is not satisfied by the results of the informal approach should have the opportunity to pursue the matter through a formal complaint process.

### **2. Board Hearings and Appeals**

Parents, students, employees, and interested parties may have a right to ask the Board of Education to review certain decisions or recommendations of the superintendent. When provided by law, an aggrieved party may appeal to the superintendent or his designee, the local Board of Education or to the Maryland State Board of Education by following the appropriate laws and ACPS procedure. The Board of Education has authority to conduct appeals and hearings for controversies and disputes involving the rules and regulations and student suspension or expulsion for more than 10 days.

**Reference:** ACPS KE Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public  
ACPS BEE Board Hearings - Appeal Proceedings  
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Sections 4-205, 7-305

## **Collection of Money from Students – Meals Charges**

The Allegany County Public Schools recognize that school nutrition is vital part of a student's learning environment. The school system will maintain a food service program that complies with federal and state guidelines. Part of the food service program will be to maintain a free and reduced lunch program as set by federal and state authorities. When students incur charges for the meals they purchase, payment is expected. The school system will standardize the practice of extending credit and the credit collection procedures.

**Reference:** ACPS JQA Collection of Money from Students/Meal Charges