

Pickens Junior High School



2023-2024 Student & Parent/Guardian Handbook

**PICKENS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK
2023-20124**

Name: _____

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Our Vision

Graduation and Life Preparation for All!

Our Mission

The mission of the Pickens Junior High School Community is to prepare our students for high school graduation and future success by inspiring them to become responsible learners and productive members of society.

Our Beliefs

Excellence in student learning is the chief priority for the school.

The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.

We strive each day to reach our vision "GRADUATION AND LIFE PREPARATION FOR ALL"

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INTRODUCTION

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook have been carefully prepared so that they will help you adjust to our school and become an integral part of it. It is our aim to help you develop and accept the responsibilities and obligations of your education in order that you may become a good citizen in the world of tomorrow. We hope you will set your goals high, participate in our activities, and always do your very best in everything you attempt. Remember, your success at PJHS is directly proportional to your attitude and your efforts.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

Parents are urged to see to it that students attend school every day and are on time. **Students report to homeroom at 7:45 a.m. and are tardy if arriving after 7:45 a.m.** Excessive absences will jeopardize academic success and undermine the development of the appropriate self-discipline necessary for future success in all aspects of life.

After each absence, upon returning to school, students are required to furnish a note

which must contain the following information: A) the specific reason the student was absent; B) the number of days and dates of the absence(s); C) the student's first and last name; D) parent's or physician's signature. **It is the responsibility of the student to bring this note to the front office by 7:35 a.m. on the day the student returns to school.** Any student arriving after homeroom must check in at the front office before going to class. All notes for absences brought in by students become the property of the school and will be kept on file. If a student does not have a note, the absence is unexcused unless a note written by a parent is received within **three** days.

If medically extended absences are necessary, hospital/homebound instruction is available for students who meet the criteria.

Arrival: Parent drop-off at PJHS begins at 7:00 a.m. **No students should be dropped off at the school prior to 7:00 a.m.** Students should report directly to the gym upon arrival; if eating breakfast, students should report directly to the cafeteria.

Leaving School Early: Parents or a legal guardian must come into the school office and sign the student out. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The school must maintain knowledge of each student's whereabouts at all times. Students must be present for at least half of the day to be counted present. Any student leaving without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.

Tardy: Any student who arrives after **7:45 a.m.** is tardy and must report to the front office before going to class. Only those students who miss less than half of the school day may be considered tardy. Classes missed due to tardiness are governed by the rules for absences. Confirmed doctor and dentist appointments will not be counted toward tardy limits.

ATHLETIC CONTRACT

PJHS offers interscholastic activities in baseball, basketball, cross country, football, band, chorus, wrestling, tennis, golf, soccer, softball, cheerleading, volleyball, swimming, FFA, Math Bowl and Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl. Students from all grade levels are encouraged to participate. The primary emphasis of middle school interscholastic activities is not winning, but on developing skills, knowledge of the sport, good sportsmanship, and a sense of fair play.

Students involved in interscholastic activities in grades 7-12 must comply with the Georgia No Pass/No Play regulations by not failing more than one subject for the previous semester. Students ineligible to participate in interscholastic activities may not practice or dress out with the interscholastic team but may participate in an awards banquet, upon approval of the principal and the appropriate activity sponsor.

All students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities in grades 7-12 must have on file at the school a current, valid annual physical examination and be covered by the school athletic insurance policy or show proof of other insurance **before** trying out or beginning practice. Practices and games occurring on a school night (Monday-Thursday) cannot begin until the end of the regular school day and must end by 7:30 p.m.

Athletes are representatives of not only the sport they participate in and their coaches, but also the entire athletic program and Pickens Junior High School. Participating in athletics is considered a privilege. Each player will be held accountable for his or her actions on and off the court/field; in and out of the classroom; and on and off campus. Please read the following statements very carefully. Both players and parents need to be aware of the consequences for violating school rules.

Athletes assigned ISS or OSS cannot attend practice or games until the sentence has been served.

Students counted absent for a school day may not participate in practices or games for that day.

CAFETERIA INFORMATION

The school cafeteria provides students and faculty with a breakfast and lunch program daily. Students are offered a variety of healthy food items daily and are encouraged to eat a complete balanced meal. They may, if they choose, decline some items, but must pick up at least three (3) food items at each meal. The price of the meal remains the same whether all food is accepted or only part of it (Offer-versus-Serve policy). Students that do not wish to buy a school lunch need to bring their lunch to school. Students are not allowed to order food in or have food delivered to school during school hours by any food establishment unless prior approval has been obtained from administration.

Breakfast & Lunch prices for 2017-2018 (subject to change) are as follows:

	<u>Full Price</u>
Breakfast	\$ 1.60
Lunch	\$ 2.65

Teachers/Staff meal prices: \$2.35(breakfast) and \$4.00 (lunch).

Visitor adult meal prices: \$2.35 (breakfast) and \$4.50 (lunch).

The breakfast and lunch program offered at PJHS complies with the nutrition standards for school meals as set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid, which together summarize the best available scientific and medical knowledge on nutrition.

For lunch each day, PJHS students may choose from several different menus. These may include a choice of traditional hot lunch or salad. At breakfast, in addition to milk and fruit or fruit juice, we offer a variety of choices that may include sausage, ham, or plain biscuit, cold cereal, and sweet rolls or muffins.

The meals served at PJHS provide our students with the nourishment that is important to their immediate well being; because, it is nourishment that affects their growth, physical performance, and academic achievement.

Parents are invited to occasionally visit the cafeteria for lunch or breakfast with your children.

Students are expected to be respectful, cooperative, and courteous. Specific guidelines for cafeteria behavior can be found in this handbook under the section on Student Guidelines for Conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Pickens County Schools Code of Conduct provides detailed information regarding expected student behavior and possible consequences. If a discrepancy is found between the Code of Conduct and this PJHS Student/Parent Handbook, the Code of Conduct will prevail.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Counseling services are available to all students at PJHS. The school counselors are available for scheduled individual and group conferences or special sessions as needed. A student or parent should feel free to make an appointment with a counselor at any time. Students can contact their teachers for assistance in making appointments with the counselor. Parents may make an appointment to talk to the counselor about their child by calling the school office.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items should be reported to and/or turned in to the front office. Students needing to check for turned in lost items should contact the school office personnel, after getting permission to go to the school office. After several weeks, lost and found items will be donated.

MEDIA CENTER

The media center's purpose is to serve the students and teachers at PJHS. It provides a wide collection of books and audiovisual materials and is considered the hub for academic progress. Students will be allowed to go to the media center as needed with permission. A media center pass from their teacher is needed for each visit. Media center personnel can assist students in locating and using media center materials. Print books are checked out for a two-week period and renewable for two additional weeks unless another patron has requested the item. DUE DATES are stamped in the book at time of check out. OVERDUE NOTICES are distributed occasionally as an accommodating reminder for the students. Students are responsible for returning books on or before the due date. LATE BOOKS and overdue fees will cancel a student's privileges. Privileges will be restored once books are returned and fees are paid in full. Students could be declared ineligible to participate in certain student incentive programs such as Dragon Day Celebrations if they owe book fines. **Students must pay for any material damaged, lost or not returned.** Students are expected to be respectful both to media center materials as well as others utilizing the media center. Please remember that the media center, as is in a classroom, is a place for discovery and focus. Therefore, you are expected to be considerate of others and utilize the facility in a quiet, controlled manner.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to the growth and success of your child at PJHS, and we encourage this interaction. Parent/teacher conferences should be scheduled directly with the child's teacher. If you need assistance scheduling a conference with your child's teachers, please call the office. Conferences may be scheduled during the teachers' planning period, before school, or after school.

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

Criteria for Promotion

To be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 7-8 must pass 3 of the 4 core content area classes (English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies).

A placement committee is composed of the principal or his/her designee, a parent or guardian of the student, and an academic subject area teacher. A decision to place the student in the next grade level must be a unanimous decision of the placement committee.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of severe weather conditions or mechanical breakdowns, school may be closed or starting time delayed. The same may also necessitate early dismissal. School closing, delayed starting time, or early dismissal will be announced over local radio stations, TV, Infinite Campus robocall /eblast, and Facebook.

SCHOOL VISITORS

All parents and visitors must enter the school through the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass before going to any classroom. According to Board policy, students may not have visitors at school. Parents visiting the school for a scheduled conference with their child's teachers, should sign in and get a visitor's pass before going to the classroom for the conference. Conferences must be scheduled in advance.

STUDENT SERVICES

Pickens County Board of Education, in compliance with public law 94-142, provides all services for exceptional children. These are: speech, hearing impaired, gifted, behavior disorders, learning disabilities, psychological services, and all physical and mental handicaps.

TESTING

Group standardized tests are given annually to students at each grade level. The purpose of these tests is to help determine strengths and weaknesses in skill areas and to provide information for use in planning instructional programs. Parents who want assistance in interpreting test results may contact the classroom teacher, the Guidance Counselor, the Assistant Principal, or the Principal.

TITLE I FUNDING NOTIFICATION

Money is provided by the federal government to support student academic achievement. Pickens Junior High School (PJHS) is currently a school-wide Title I school and must specify how Title I funds are to be spent. At PJHS, Title I funds are primarily expended to support student achievement through the addition of academic coaches and tutoring after school. Remaining Title I funds are used to purchase supplemental materials and software for the content areas.

CELL PHONES, Apple Watches, Tablets, Etc.

Students are not permitted to use cell phones or other personal electronic devices such as iPods, Apple Watches, and wireless earbuds during the school day. Cell phones may be left in the student's possession, but should not be visible throughout the school day. Refusal to follow directives to put away personal technology may result in an office referral for student incivility. Consequences for unauthorized use are as follows:

1st offense: Verbal Warning

2nd offense: Silent Lunch, Documented Call home

3rd offense: After School Detention, Documented Call home

4th offense: Office Referral

**Subsequent offenses will result in an office referral and administration will follow a progressive disciplinary plan for each student

FIELD TRIP BEHAVIOR

Field trips are a privilege. Students whose behavior is not acceptable or who have had multiple discipline referrals may lose the privilege of going on field trips. Also, the administration reserves the right to refuse students' participation in a field trip as a form of discipline for misbehavior. In certain school-wide or grade-level field trips, additional discipline criteria will be in effect.

IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING DISCIPLINE

1. A student on his/her way to or from school, while being provided school system transportation, any school function or activity, (or any school related activity), or at any school event held away from the school, under the jurisdiction of school authorities is subject to rules and regulations as stated in the Pickens County Schools' *Student Code of Conduct*.
2. All disciplinary problems involving special education students will be in strict compliance with the law.
3. The principal, or his designee, has the discretion to recommend long-term suspension or expulsion, based on the seriousness of the offense. Long-term suspension or expulsion recommendations are heard by the Tribunal Panel unless the superintendent directs it to be heard by the Board of Education first.
4. School administrators are authorized to file criminal charges in their official capacity as an administrator of the school system.
7. The school board is charged with adopting rules to govern the operation of the schools within its district. (1) The courts universally recognize that it is within the power of, and indeed in the duty of, the school board to make needful regulations to control the behavior of the students. (2) In fact, even if the

school board does not have a written behavior policy or the rules do not cover the particular activity in question, the school board can still punish behavior which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools.

Pickens Junior High School Progressive Discipline Plan

Pickens County Schools Progressive Discipline Plan



Level 1 Offenses

Level 1 (Mild) discipline is used for minor acts of misconduct which interfere with orderly school procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, approved transportation, or a student's own learning process. Students may be disciplined by the professional staff member involved or may be referred directly to the principal. These acts include, but are not limited to, repeated unrelated acts of minor misconduct and misbehaviors directed against persons or property, but which do not seriously endanger the health, safety, or well-being of others. Consideration of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided.

****A student may be taken to a Disciplinary Hearing for accumulation of seven (7) or more Code of Conduct violations. This may result in long-term suspension or expulsion.**

- **Academic Dishonesty (32):** Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assignments or exams or state mandated testing.
- **Alcoholic Beverages (01):** Unintentional use/possession of alcohol.
- **Battery (03):** Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in no bodily injuries. Includes but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other intentional physical confrontations.
- **Bullying (29):** Participation in written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4 (1st offense).
- **Disorderly Conduct (06):** Creating or contributing to a moderate disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others. Including but not limited to general bus misbehavior, spitting on property or persons, encouraging disruptive behavior.
- **Drugs, except Alcohol and Tobacco (07):** Unintentional possession of prescribed or over the counter medication. Does not include the possession of narcotics or any illegal

drugs. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-776.

- **Electronic Smoking Device (42):** Possession of an electronic smoking device as defined by Disciplinary Infraction/State Code 42. All devices and/or paraphernalia found in connection with the offense will be confiscated and not returned.
- **Fighting (08):** A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in no bodily injuries.
- **Other Attendance Related (30):** Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardiness; including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions.
- **Other Disciplinary Event (24):** Violating any other Board of Education or school rule, including other minor discipline events not listed in the Code of Conduct that warrant intervention and consequences. (Includes the following offenses: Encouraging Prohibited Behavior, Providing False Information, Gambling, and Unauthorized Area)
- **Other – Dress Code (31):** Non-invasive and non-suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 1 may include but are not limited to bare feet; trousers, slacks, shorts worn below waist level; no belt; body piercings; clothing that is excessively baggy or tight; skirts or shorts that are shorter than mid-thigh; sunglasses worn inside the building; hats, caps, hoods, sweatbands and bandanas or other head wear worn inside school building.
- **Other – Possession of Unapproved Items (34):** The possession of any unauthorized item. Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous. Includes but is not limited to possession of toys, mobile devices, gadgets, person items, gum, candy, etc.; includes possession of pepper spray.
- **Other - Student Incivility (33):** Failure to comply with instructions or the inadvertent use of inappropriate language. May include but is not limited to general disrespect for school staff or students; vulgar/profanity/inappropriate language; failure to follow instructions; Minor classroom disruption that includes not following classroom or school behavior expectations. (Includes the following offenses: Behavior Detrimental to Learning and Profanity)
- **Repeated Offenses (36):** Collection of minor incidents (Collection of offenses not previously assigned a state reportable action that occurs on a single day or across multiple school days that leads to a state reportable disciplinary action (ISS, OSS, Expulsion, or Alternate placement)
- **Sexual Harassment (15):** Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes or suggestive jokes that are not directed towards specific individuals. Includes, but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes.
- **Sexual Offense (16):** Inappropriate sexually based physical contact including but not limited to public groping, inappropriate bodily contact, or any other sexual contact not

covered in levels 2 or 3. Examples include but not limited to public groping or inappropriate bodily contact.

- **Theft/Larceny (11):** The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$25 and \$100. Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception.
- **Tobacco (18):** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any tobacco product or smoking paraphernalia. **Unintentional possession of tobacco products on school property.**
- **Weapons/Knife (22):** Unintentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate.

Disciplinary Actions for Level 1 Violations: Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 1 offense can result in disciplinary action as outlined below.

1st Violation: Verbal Warning with administrative conference, or up to two days administrative detention, or In-School Suspension up to two (2) school days.

2nd Violation: Two days administrative detention, or In-School Suspension up to three (3) school days.

3rd Violation: In-School Suspension up to five (5) school days.

4th Violation: Out-of-School Suspension up to two (2) school days **and**
Initiation of chronic discipline process

5th Violation: Out-of-School Suspension up to three (3) school days.

6th Violation: Out-of-School Suspension up to five (5) school days.

7th Violation: The student will be suspended (In-School or Out-of-School) and the matter may be submitted to a Disciplinary Hearing Officer (See Level 3 Offenses).

*Subsequent Violations will repeat 3 days OSS.

Level 2 Offenses

Level 2 (Moderate) discipline offenses are serious acts of misconduct including, but not limited to, repeated misbehavior that is similar in nature, serious disruptions of the school environment, threats to health, safety, or property, and other acts of serious misconduct. These offenses must be reported to the principal. Offenses that threaten the health, safety or well-being of others may result in immediate suspension of the student from the school and/or school-sponsored activities for up to five school days, pending disciplinary investigation of the allegations. Student and parent/guardian participation in a conference with the principal/designee is a required element of all disciplinary actions in this category, even if such a conference has previously occurred.

Initiation of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided.

- **Academic Dishonesty (32):** Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a minor classroom assignment or project. Includes but is not limited to intentional dishonesty on minor classroom projects, assignments, homework, etc.
- **Alcoholic Beverages (01):** Under the influence of alcohol without possession.
- **Arson (02):** Attempt to commit arson or use of matches, lighters, or incendiary devices at school; includes but not limited to the use of fireworks and/or trashcan fires without damage to school property.
- **Battery (03):** Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries. Includes but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical confrontations that result in mild or moderate injuries.
- **Bullying (29):** Participation in written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4 **(2nd offense)**.
- **Computer Trespass (05):** Unauthorized use of school computer for anything other than instructional purposes. Includes but not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view or send inappropriate material and violation of school computer use policy.
- **Disorderly Conduct (06):** Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others; may represent a repeat action. Including but not limited to general bus misbehavior, spitting on property or persons, encouraging disruptive behavior.
- **Drugs, except Alcohol and Tobacco (07):** Any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-776.
- **Electronic Smoking Device (42):** Distribution of an electronic smoking device as defined by Disciplinary Infraction/State Code 42. All devices and/or paraphernalia found in connection with the offense will be confiscated and not returned.
- **Fighting (08):** A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries. Mild or moderate injuries may include but are not limited to scratches, bloody noses, bruises, black eyes, and other marks on the body.
- **Gang Related Activities (35):** Wearing or possessing gang-related apparel; communicating either verbally or nonverbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang. Examples include but not limited to possession or wearing of gang-related

clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or using colors to convey gang membership or affiliation; gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc. to convey gang membership or affiliation; committing any other illegal act or other violation of school policies in connection with gang-related activity.

- **Other Attendance Related (30):** Violation of Compulsory School Attendance Law and referral to School Social Worker with possible court referral.

- **Other – Dress Code (31):** Invasive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 2 may include but are not limited to depiction of profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or violence; promote the use or abuse of tobacco, alcohol or drugs; creates a threat to the health and safety of other students; creates a significant risk of disruption to the school environment; clothing worn in such a manner so as to reveal underwear, cleavage or bare skin; spaghetti straps, strapless tops, halter tops, see-through or mesh garments or other clothing that is physically revealing, provocative or contains sexually suggestive comments.

- **Other - Possession of Unapproved Items (34):** The use of any unauthorized item (i.e. toys, mobile devices, or gadgets). Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous. Includes but is not limited to use of toys, mobile devices, gadgets, personal items, etc.; Includes the use of pepper spray without injury.

- **Other - Student Incivility (33):** Blatant insubordination or the use of inappropriate language directed towards school staff or peers; intentional misrepresentation of the truth; Major classroom disruption that stops instruction for an extended period of time and requires administrative intervention or a major out of classroom disruption.

- **Robbery (13):** Robbery without the use of a weapon. Taking something by force or threat of force.

- **Sexual Harassment (15):** Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes, suggestive jokes or lewd gestures that are directed towards specific individuals or group of individuals. Includes, but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes; leering.

- **Sexual Offense (16):** Inappropriate sexually-based behavior including but not limited to sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts. Examples include but not limited to sexting; lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts.

- **Theft/Larceny (11):** The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$100 and \$250. Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception.

- **Threat/Intimidation (17):** Physical, verbal or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack. Examples include but not limited to physical, verbal or electronic threats.

- **Tobacco (18):** Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any tobacco product or smoking paraphernalia. Use of or knowledgeable possession of tobacco products on school property.

- **Trespassing (19):** Entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose.

- **Vandalism (20):** Participating in the minor destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission.

- **Weapons/Knife (22):** Intentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate.

- **Weapons/Other (23):** Unintentional possession of a weapon, other than a knife or firearm, or simile of a weapon that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Includes but is not limited to razor blades, straight edge razors, brass knuckles, blackjacks, bats, clubs, nun chucks, throwing stars, stun guns, tasers, etc.

Disciplinary Actions for Level 2 Violations

If necessary, restitution for damage to property, theft of property or harm to any property by any means will be required. If necessary, law enforcement will be notified.

1st violation during school year: Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 2 offense during a school year can result in the student being assigned up to 5 consecutive school days of In-School Suspension or Short-Term Suspension. If the student commits any Level 1 violation while serving In-School Suspension, then the student will serve the remainder of the suspension out of school.

2nd violation during school year: Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 2 offense for the second time during a school year can result in the student being assigned up to 10 consecutive school days of In-School Suspension or Short-Term Suspension. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the Level 2 violation, school administrators shall have the discretion to deviate from the progressive discipline policy. If the Level 2 violation warrants deviation from the progressive discipline policy, a student may be given other means in lieu of suspension, up to 10 consecutive days of In-School Suspension, assigned a Short-Term Suspension or be sent to a Disciplinary Hearing. If the Hearing Officer finds the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a second or subsequent Level 2 offense, the Hearing Officer may issue either a long-term suspension or expulsion from school. The student may be allowed to enroll at the alternative school.

3rd violation and any subsequent violation during school year: Any student engaged in or attempting to commit a third or subsequent Level 2 offense during a school year may result in the student being assigned to Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to a Disciplinary Hearing Officer. If the Hearing Officer finds the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a

third or subsequent Level 2 offense, the Hearing Officer may issue either a long-term suspension or expulsion from school. The student may be allowed to enroll at the alternative school provided the student complies with the enrollment rules.

Level 3 Offenses

Level 3 (Severe) discipline offenses represent the most serious acts of misconduct. These offenses must be immediately reported to the principal and are subject to referral for a disciplinary tribunal. These violations are so serious that they may require use of outside agencies and/or law enforcement. Such acts may also result in criminal penalties being imposed. Any misconduct that threatens the health, safety, or well-being of others may result in immediate suspension of the student from the school and/or school-sponsored activities for up to ten (10) school days, pending disciplinary investigation of the allegations. Student and parent/guardian participation in a conference with the principal/designee is a required element of all discipline actions in this particular category, even if such a conference has previously occurred. Initiation of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided.

- **Academic Dishonesty (32):** Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a major exam, statewide assessment or project, or the falsification of school records (including forgery). Includes but is not limited to cheating on major exams, statewide assessments, or other state-mandated academic work; Includes the falsification of school records; forgery; Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on academic dishonesty three or more times during the same school year.
- **Alcoholic Beverages (01):** Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol.
- **Arson (02):** Intentional damage as a result of arson-related activity or the use of an incendiary device; includes but not limited to setting fires to school property.
- **Battery (03):** Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack on school personnel. Physical attack on teachers should be reported as Violence Against a Teacher (44). Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on battery three or more times during the same school year. Includes but not limited to choking, pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical confrontations resulting in severe injuries. Includes any physical attack on school personnel and incidents serious enough to warrant calling the police or security.
- **Breaking/Entering Burglary (04):** Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft). (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering- Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.).

- **Bullying, Third Offense (29):** Repeated acts, as defined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, occurring on school property or school possession that is a willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, or apparent means to do so, any display of force that puts victim at fear of harm, any written, verbal or physical act that threatens, harasses, or intimidates; causes another person physical harm; interferes with a student's education; so severe and pervasive intimidated or threatens educational environment. Includes the use of electronic equipment on school property or using school equipment to harass or intimidate.
- **Breaking and Entering (04):** Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft). *Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking and Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.
- **Computer Trespass (05):** Unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, obtaining confidential information or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data; includes disclosure of a number, code, password, or other means of access to school computers or the school system computer network without proper authorization. Includes but not limited to hacking.
- **Disorderly Conduct (06):** Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the school environment or poses a threat to the health and safety of others. Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on disorderly conduct three or more times during the same school year. Including but not limited to disruptive behavior on school bus, misbehavior during a fire drill or other safety exercises.
- **Other – Dress Code (31):** Invasive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school dress code policy three or more times during the same school year.
- **Drugs, except Alcohol and Tobacco (07):** Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-776.
- **Electronic Smoking Device (42):** Possession and/or Distribution of electronic smoking devices as defined by Disciplinary Infraction/State Code 42. All devices and/or paraphernalia found in connection with the offense will be confiscated and not returned. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on electronic smoking devices three or more times during the same year.
- **Fighting (08):** A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in severe bodily injuries. Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on fighting three or more times during the same school year. Repeated physical confrontations resulting in severe injuries that require medical attention.

- **Gang Related Activity (35):** The solicitation of others for gang membership, tagging or defacing of school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang; the requirement or payment for protection or insurance through a gang. Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to gang activity.
- **Homicide (09):** Killing of one human being by another
- **Kidnapping (10):** The unlawful and forceful abduction, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will.
- **Motor Vehicle Theft (12):** Theft or attempted theft of any motor vehicle.
- **Other Attendance Related (30):** Violation of Compulsory School Attendance Law and referral to Magistrate and/or Juvenile Court
- **Other - Student Incivility (33):** Blatant and repeated insubordination or intentional misrepresentation of the truth; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to student incivility. Documentation should be made of Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions implemented and effectiveness.
- **Possession of Unapproved Items (34):** The use or possession of unauthorized items including but not limited to toy guns or other items that can be construed as dangerous or harmful to the learning environment; Includes the possession of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks. The use of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks should be coded as Arson; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to unapproved items. Includes but are not limited to matches, lighters, or the possession of fireworks, bullets, sting bombs, CO2 cartridges; includes the use of pepper spray with injury.
- **Repeated Offenses (36):** Collection of seven or more level one offenses that occur within a single academic year, or two or more level two offenses that occur within a single academic year.
- **Robbery (13):** Robbery with the use of a weapon. Weapons may include but are not limited to guns, knives, clubs, razor blades, etc.
- **Serious Bodily Injury (27):** The term “serious bodily injury” means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.
- **Sexual Battery (14):** Sexual misconduct against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent; touching of private body parts of another person either through human contact or using an object forcibly or against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent. Includes, but is not limited to rape, fondling, child molestation, indecent liberties, and sodomy.
- **Sexual Harassment (15):** Physical or non-physical sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on sexual harassment three or more times during the same school year.

- **Sexual Offense (16):** Engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or during school activities. Examples include but not limited to sexual misconduct; prostitution; indecent exposure of private body parts
- **Theft/Larceny (11):** The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value exceeding \$250. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on larceny/theft three or more times during the same school year. Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception.
- **Threat/Intimidation (17):** School-wide physical, verbal or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack; Note: Students that display a pattern of behavior that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm, threat of harm or visible bodily harm may be coded as bullying. Includes but not limited to bomb threats or unauthorized pulling of the fire alarm.
- **Tobacco (18):** Distribution and/or selling of tobacco products; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on tobacco three or more times during the same school year.
- **Trespassing (19):** Entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose. Refusing to leave school grounds after a request from school personnel; Level 3 may be used for students who violate the school policy on trespassing three or more times during the same school year.
- **Vandalism (20):** Participation in the willful/malicious destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on vandalism three or more times during the same school year.
- **Violence Against a Teacher (44):** Intentional physical attack against a teacher with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack against a teacher.
- **Weapons/Knife (22):** Intentional possession, use or intention to use a knife or knife-like item with the intent to harm or intimidate.
- **Weapons/Handgun (25):** Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a handgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Examples are pistols or revolvers
- **Weapons/Other (23):** Intentional possession and/or use of any weapon, other than a knife or firearm, in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Includes, but is not limited to razor blades, straight-edge razors, brass knuckles, blackjacks, clubs, nun chucks, throwing stars, stun guns, tasers, etc.
- **Weapons/Rifle/Shotgun (26):** Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a rifle or shotgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm.

• **Weapons/Other Firearms (28):** Includes any weapon (including starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e. bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. (Note: This does not include toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or Class-C common fireworks). [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act – Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]

Disciplinary Actions for Level 3 Offenses

If necessary, restitution for damage to property, theft of property or harm to any property by any means will be required. If necessary, law enforcement will be notified.

Engaging in or attempting to commit any Level 3 offense during a school year will result in the student being assigned Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being submitted to a Disciplinary Hearing Officer. If the Disciplinary Hearing Officer finds the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a Level 3 offense, the Hearing Officer may issue either a long-term suspension or expulsion from school. In accordance with 20-2-751.6, a student who is found by a disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal to have committed any act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee may be disciplined by expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension and shall be referred to juvenile court.

If the Hearing Officer finds that the student has engaged in or attempted to commit a second or subsequent Level 3 offense during a school year, the Hearing Officer will issue either a long term suspension or expulsion from school.

**For more information, please see the PCS student handbook, which is available on the district website

NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I could not be more excited for the 2023-2024 school year here at Pickens Junior High School. We have assembled a world-class faculty and staff and take the opportunity to serve the community and our families very seriously. We look forward to collaborating with you and your students to make this year an amazing year!

Sincerely,
Dr. Josh Heath