



Hart County *Charter System*

Elementary School Student Handbook

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Hartwell, Georgia 30643
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Student: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher: _____ Phone: _____

Mission: The mission of the Hart County Charter System is to prepare all individuals to meet tomorrow's challenges by providing quality educational opportunities today.

Vision: Hart County Schools will be recognized for educational excellence.

Guiding Principles/Beliefs:

- Schools provide safe, secure, and nurturing environments for all.
- Stakeholders promote a positive atmosphere that fosters confidence and self-worth for all.
- Each individual is valued and treated with respect.
- Each individual has the right to be educated and the responsibility to learn.
- Quality education requires partnership, which is the responsibility of the school system, the students, the parents, and the community.

The Hart County Charter System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices, student programs and dealings with the public. It is the policy of the Hart County Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and all accompanying regulations.

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Update on Measure of School Success

As of March 30, 2012, Georgia was one of only 10 states to have been granted a waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB). No longer will Georgia be bound by the narrow definitions of success found in NCLB. The waiver enables the state to hold schools accountable and regard them for the work they do in all subjects and with all students. In the past, a school either simply met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or did not all while the requirements to meet AYP narrowed each year. Under Georgia's new system, stakeholders will have a complete and comprehensive picture of whether a school or district is meeting performance expectations. The Georgia ESEA Flexibility Waiver will continue to require schools to raise the bar for performance of all students and will hold schools accountable for the academic growth and gain of all students. When schools fall short, parents can be assured that school leaders will adopt strategies focused on school needs and targeted towards the students most at risk.

Using 2010 – 2011 school year assessment and graduation rate schools will be rated as either: Reward, Priority, Focus, or Alert. Beginning in December of 2012, every school in the state will receive a numerical index score based on 100 points. This score will be considered the school's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) number and will provide a more complete and comprehensive look at a school's performance.

Purpose for Student Agenda/Planners

- To provide general information regarding the operation, procedures, and practices of our school.
- To provide information about Georgia law regarding Discipline, Code of Conduct, and Compulsory Attendance law.
- To provide a daily means of communication with your child's teacher.

This agenda is an excellent tool of communication between you and your child's teacher on a daily basis. Make it a DAILY habit to look over your child's assignments and other information in the agenda. Your child's agenda should travel back and forth EVERYDAY with your child.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THE FOLLOWING PAGES:

- Pages 3-17 for general information regarding the operation, procedures, and practices of our school and information about our specialized programs.

Important inserts are also included: Title I Notifications, Non-Discrimination Notice, Acceptable Use Policy, School Improvement Status, FERPA and PPRA, Updates in Student Discipline, Updates in Georgia Law of Attendance.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to feel connected to the school and are more likely to perform better in the classroom. Attendance in school is considered so important that Legislators have written Georgia laws pertaining to attendance. The State of Georgia requires parents to ensure that children between the ages of six (6) to sixteen (16) attend school. As permitted under state law, State Board of Education rules and Hart County Board of Education policy, pupils may be excused for the following reasons:

- Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others
- A serious illness or death in their immediate family
- Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces or by a court order
- Celebrating religious holidays
- Registering to vote or voting, for a period not to exceed one day
- Conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety
- A parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting
- Students in foster care who attend court proceedings relevant to their placement

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or from any other required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, except upon written permission of the teacher, Principal, or their duly authorized school official. No student shall encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this policy.

Parental Responsibility for Attendance

When students live with both parents or share joint custody, the law considers them to be equally responsible for their children's attendance at school. Children should have received sufficient sleep the night before, be awakened, and readied to attend school each morning.

Excuses are to be submitted within **two (2) days following the student's absence** from school. The note should include the reason for the absence and be signed by the parent with the phone number where the parent may be reached during the day. Emails to teachers and documentation in the student's agenda will be considered acceptable forms of writing so long as it contains the required information. As with submitting hand written notes to the teacher, the student should let the teacher know when their parent wrote a note about the absence in their agenda. Communication via the agenda is accepted at the elementary level. Medical documentation to support the reason for the absence may be requested at any time by the principal or designee.

After five (5) excused absences per semester, the principal of the student's school may require medical

or appropriate documentation in support of each and every further absence which the student claims is excused. All excuses will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

Appointments for physical or mental health reasons should be scheduled to ensure students miss minimal instructional time from the classroom. Notes from the provider verifying the student was in their office, when requested, will be necessary to count the absence as excused.

A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.

Parents are encouraged to check on their child's attendance at school. Access to review their student attendance records is through the Parent Portal of the student data system. The internet link to the portal can be found on the district's website, www.hart.k12.ga.us

Student Responsibility for Attendance

Students are permitted to make up work when absences are excused, provided they contact the teacher(s) within two (2) days of returning to school to make arrangements for making up missed work. The student must make up the work according to the schedule set by the teacher; otherwise, make-up credit may be withheld at the discretion of the teacher.

All out of school suspensions shall be temporarily excused. A student under suspension will be allowed to make up work according to Board of Education Policy JBD.

Pre-Arranged Absence Request

When a student or parent is aware of a forthcoming need for the student to be absent from school, they should request a *Pre-Arranged Absence* form. The form is to be completed and submitted to the school Principal or designee, at least three (3) days in advance of the absence. Pre-arranged absences will not be approved during the exam schedule at the end of grading periods. In order for educational trips to be approved as pre-arranged absences, the student must complete and turn in a trip-related project by the due date set by the administrator approving the absence. Examples of pre-arranged absences include college visits for juniors and seniors (no more than two per year) and educational trips as determined by the school Principal or his or her designee.

Hospital/Homebound Instruction

Students may be eligible for Hospital-Homebound (HHB) Instructional Services while hospitalized or confined at home when the absence is expected to be 10 or more consecutive school days. Students may also be eligible for Intermittent Instructional Services if the student has a chronic condition which is expected to result in at least 10 days of absence from school during the school year with at least three

consecutive school days for each occurrence. In either situation the parent requests the instruction and it must be based upon certification of need by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is treating the student for the presenting diagnosis. An Educational Service Plan is to be written by the appropriate team which outlines the subjects to be included in the HHB instruction (Response to Intervention team, Section 504 plan or Individualized Education Program team. The members of the team should develop a re-entry procedure upon return to school. Each school has an administrator assigned to coordinate HHB services and the district coordinator is Pam Gordon.

Tardy to School

Late arrival to school and early checkout from school will both be considered as a tardy. For safety reasons parents are required to accompany all late arriving students to the area inside the school building designated for late arrivals to school. Parents are required to sign the student in either in a computer system or on a log sheet and state the reason for the tardiness.

Prior to the end of the school day students shall only be released to a parent (or other authorized pick-up person) when the parent has telephoned their permission to appropriate school personnel. The parent (or other authorized pick-up) shall be required to come inside the school to the designated area to sign the student out. Anyone picking up a child from school must show a picture ID before the child will be released to them.

Tardy to Class

When students arrive to class after the roll has been called or instruction has started it is considered to be a classroom disturbance. The teacher should discipline according to classroom rules for the initial occurrences. After the student arrives late three (3) or more times within a month a referral to the attendance administrator is to be made. If problems continue to exist, the principal will send a letter to the parents and express concern and help the parent set goals that promote getting their student to school on time.

BUS SAFETY

Students being transported by school bus are expected, regardless of the type of weather, to be at their designated bus stop before the bus arrives. Drivers will not wait on students. In order for students to maintain the privilege of riding the bus, they must:

1. Observe the same code of conduct as in the classroom.
2. Be courteous and use no profane language.
3. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
4. Cooperate with the driver. Disrespectful conduct toward the driver or other persons will not be tolerated.
5. Do not smoke.
6. Do not be destructive.
7. Stay in your seat and facing the front with feet on the floor.
8. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus and to yourself.
9. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats.
10. Do not engage in any unruly behavior.

11. Do not use any electronic device during the operation of the bus, including but not limited to, cell phones; pagers; audible radios, or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the bus communication equipment or the bus driver's operation of the bus.
12. Do not use mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the bus.

COUNSELING SERVICES

The school has the services of a guidance counselor. The counselor's time is focused on providing the following services: classroom guidance, small group counseling/guidance, limited individual counseling with situations such as peer relationships and academic components, and coordinating/consulting with parents and staff. Interested or concerned parents should contact the school principal or assistant principal for information regarding these services.

CURRICULUM

Hart County Charter System implement the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved curriculum or standards of excellence. Schools along system personnel work together to ensure that the curriculum utilized for instruction is up to date and will help prepare students for their future. The state curriculum can be located at www.georgiastandards.org.

Effective implementation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence requires support on multiple fronts, including strengthening teacher content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and contextualized tasks for students that effectively engage 21st Century learners. The standards create a foundation to work collaboratively across states and districts, pooling resources and expertise, to create curricular tools, professional development, common assessments, and other instructional materials.

CUSTODIAL PARENT/GUARDIANSHIP

The Hart County Charter System will abide by state and federal laws regarding custody issues involving students enrolled in our schools. Change of custody (visitation swap) shall not occur on school campus. The parent who enrolls a child is the parent who is entitled to the custody of the child at all times and has the authority to make decisions regarding his/her child. If a natural parent contests the right of the other natural parent to make decisions affecting their child, whoever has custody/enrolled the child is empowered to make decisions for the student.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) both parents have a right of access to their child's educational records. Both parents are allowed to discuss at reasonable times and intervals with teachers and administrators their child's progress in school and any problems requiring parental intervention. The non-custodial parent may visit their child at school unless specifically prohibited by the custody order. School visits are limited to specialized school sanctioned events or upon written approval of the custodial parent. Mail, telephone calls, or gifts of a personal nature will not be accepted. If sent, they will be returned.

A stepparent does not, by law, have any authority to make educational decisions or obtain information from his/her stepchild's educational records, unless under FERPA the natural parent has given written authorization. The natural parent also may grant specific permission for the stepparent to be present at school events or conferences with teachers and administrators and to pick up the child at school. However, only the natural parent is empowered to sign documents, which require parental signature.

If you as a parent have custody of your child and there are circumstances specifically stated in the court order that affect the child at school, you are required to provide a certified copy of the order and complete the Custodial Parent Request Form providing specific instructions and permissions given to the non-custodial parent. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to keep the school informed of any changes in the custody order or changes in the Custodial Parent Request Form.

DISCIPLINE

Board Policy: Student Behavior Code

Descriptor Code: JCDA

It is the desire of the Hart County Board of Education that all students have every possible opportunity to take advantage of instructional programs that will allow them access to the best possible education. Any distractions from a favorable teaching and learning environment lessen this opportunity. Students are expected to adhere to standards of behavior that will facilitate a positive learning environment for themselves and other students. Respect for each other, system employees, and school property is a requirement for all students. They are also expected to comply with student behavior policies adopted by the Board of Education, and to obey student behavior rules established by individual schools.

Parent involvement is the most desirable avenue for correcting behavioral problems and will be used when possible. Parent conferences may be used in conjunction with other forms of discipline. Parents shall be involved in periodic revisions of the Code of Student Conduct.

Because of these factors, punishment imposed may vary from student to student for the same offense. School systems are required to have progressive punishment policies. Students accused of violating this Code should be advised of the violation and given a reasonable opportunity to present their position. Any student in excess of ten (10) cumulative days of out of suspension per semester for disciplinary reasons may be recommended to the tribunal panel for possible expulsion.

This Code of Student Conduct shall be available to each student and parent in the district, including newly enrolled students. Parents shall sign an acknowledgement of the receipt of the Code. This Code shall be available online and a printed copy will be provided upon request.

Federal and state laws and regulations that are in conflict with this Code or its application shall take precedence.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support PBIS

Starting at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, Hart County Charter System elementary schools will implement Positive Behavior Intervention Supports or (PBIS) to support student growth. PBIS is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. More than 1,000 Georgia schools and 27,000 nationwide have been trained in PBIS. Implementation of PBIS is saving countless instructional hours otherwise lost to discipline. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety and learning. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students.

Please be on the lookout for additional information about PBIS throughout the school year.

Standards of Behavior

School-Wide Behavior Expectations

- To respect adults and each other
- To respect the school's and each individual's property
- To be courteous to others
- To avoid violation of the student code of conduct
- To attend class regularly
- To behave in a responsible manner
- To be prepared for class
- To dress appropriately
- To cooperate with school officials
- To move quietly and in an orderly manner in the building at all times

School-Wide Rules

- Refrain from disruptive behaviors in class.
- No physical contacts – keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
- Stay in your seat or assigned area.
- Listen, follow directions, and complete all work.
- Respect all adults in your school just as you would want to be treated!

Classroom Rules

All teachers develop a formal discipline plan at each grade level showing steps they will take to handle disciplinary problems. Discipline procedures are designed to teach two very important concepts:

Certain behaviors are undesirable and should be avoided.

Certain behaviors are desirable and should be repeated.

The foundation of this plan is a set of school-wide classroom rules and consequences drawn up by a parent, teacher, and administrator committee. The superintendent supports the authority of the principal and teachers to remove a student from a classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738.

Student Support Process

Acknowledging discipline problems and the need to reduce them does not solve the problem for the school. The school uses the resources available to establish and maintain student control and to teach student responsibility. The responsibility for school discipline cannot be vested in one segment of the community alone. Each member of the educational system and the school staff is part of a team performing his or her role in the disciplinary process with a commitment to firmness and fairness.

ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

Every student is expected to maintain the level of personal hygiene necessary to ensure a healthy school environment. Students are encouraged to observe a standard of grooming and dress code with the level of formality of the school situation. By school board policy, the administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of dress in cases not covered by the dress code.

1. All jeans/slacks must fit snugly at the waist or small of the back and may not be worn sagging below the waistline. In the event the student DOES NOT comply, he/she will be required to TUCK IN his/her shirt.

2. Jeans/slacks/shorts with writing on the buttocks area or with holes are inappropriate and may not be worn at school.
3. Leggings and Jeggings may be worn only when an accompanying top is at the appropriate length (the end of the fingers when the arms are held to the side should not touch the leggings/jeggings, only garment (leggings/jeggings) material).
4. Shoes should cover the feet and must be worn with shoestrings tied.
5. Flip-flops and high-heeled shoes hinder safe student transition at school; therefore, we discourage these shoes being worn by students.
6. Shorts must be an appropriate length (the end of the fingers when the arms are held to the side should not touch skin, only short material). Bermuda shorts, capris or shorts of similar length may be worn.
7. All sleeveless tops must have straps that pass the THREE-finger test.
8. All shirts and t-shirts must be long enough to completely cover the midriff and back and skin should not show.
9. Clothing with gang/cult-related symbols, offensive messages, vulgar language, or advertisements for alcohol, tobacco or drugs are inappropriate, therefore, shall NOT be worn.
10. Hats, skullcaps, bandanas, etc. are not appropriate and may not be worn at school. Special occasions or school-sponsored fundraisers may allow for specific hats to be worn.
11. When extremes with hair color and/or jewelry are determined to be disruptive to classroom instruction administration will contact parent/guardian.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS – SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS

In the case of severe weather (snow, ice, severe cold, etc.), the official announcement for school closing will be via Blackboard Connect calling system, Hart County Schools Facebook, Hart County Schools Website and through the following media outlets: WKLY 980AM, WLHR 92.1FM, and television stations, WYFF TV4 and WSPA TV7. **Please check these outlets instead of calling school officials. It is the responsibility of the students' families to keep contact information updated at each school. When contact information has changed, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the school with the necessary changes.** If announcements are not made before 7:30 a.m., you should assume school will be in session as usual. If the weather should become severe during the school day, and school is going to be dismissed early, announcements of the school's closing will be made over the same radio stations.

If you are not at home, your child must know an alternate place to go in the event of an emergency school closing. (Remember, like any other day, our buses run only their normal daily routes and cannot provide special transportation services on emergency closing days). Please be sure to discuss emergency closing directions with your child. The child should know what you expect in these situations.

FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES

Our school faculty and staff support and encourage field trips that are educationally sound. Field trips are grade level specific. Students not enrolled in the school or the particular grade level for which the trip is planned shall not attend. If your child is scheduled for a field trip, the parent or legal guardian will be required to sign a slip granting permission for participation. These permission slips are maintained on file at the school. Teachers planning field trips may request a monetary donation to help defray the cost of the trip. Field trip experiences will not be denied to a student whose parents do not make a donation. Note that our policy does not allow anyone other than the enrolled child and teachers in our school to ride the bus during a field trip. All students and school staff are provided transportation to ride to and from the field trip destination in county approved transportation vehicles, unless prior written approval

has been obtained from the administration. Children may be signed out with their own parent/legal guardian only. Smoking by staff or chaperones is prohibited while on field trip.

GEORGIA S.H.A.P.E. FITNESSGRAM®

House Bill 229 requires all students enrolled in a physical education course in grades 1-12 to have an annual fitness assessment. The Georgia Student Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) Initiative will consist of an annual fitness assessment program for all students in grades 1 – 12. For more information go to www.fitnessgram.net

GRADING PRACTICES

The following charts outline the grading practices of the Hart County Charter System. Progress reports are sent home at the middle of each nine weeks and report cards are sent home at the end of each nine weeks to notify parents of their child’s current academic and social development. Teachers may schedule conferences during the school year at specially scheduled school conference days to discuss a child’s progress with his/her parents. Other conferences may also be requested. Please make every effort to attend conferences requested by school personnel. Your child’s academic and social growth depends upon strong support and encouragement from you!

Grading System for Grades 4-5

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- F = Below 70

Grading System for Grades K-3

The student exceeds the standard.	The student consistently and independently meets the standard.	The student is making progress towards the standard.	The student needs extensive support at school and at home to meet the standard.
4	3	2	1

The Hart County Charter System utilizes a standards-based reporting for kindergarten, first, second and third grade. For each grading period, parents will receive a report listing the standards to be covered and the level of mastery for their child. Please note that while all of the standards are listed, some standards will not be taught and/or mastered until later in the year. Training and more information about the reporting process will take place throughout the school year

HEALTH SERVICES

Hart County School Nurses may make contact with parents regarding any health issues. The nurse will NOT take responsibility for evaluating signs of illness or injury that have occurred at home. These should be referred to your family doctor or an emergency room. Nursing services will be provided if a medical release has been signed, completed and returned to school. Judgment in such cases is at the discretion of school authorities, and parents assume financial responsibility.

Parents will be contacted immediately should a situation warrant when their child becomes ill or has an accident at school. In serious situations when a parent cannot be contacted, the Principal or Principal's designee will request the assistance of local emergency medical personnel. **Please keep your current telephone number, the name of a contact person for emergencies, and a current number on file in the office. Please be sure to return to the teacher the emergency authorization form at the beginning of the year.**

Medications

If your child requires the administration of medicine(s) during school hours, you must send the medication(s) in the original prescription container(s). All medications must be delivered by the student, parent or guardian to the school office immediately upon arrival at school and must be in original pharmaceutical containers, clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the times for dosage. Include a note to the school stating at what time the medication(s) should be administered to your child. Prescription medication will be administered according to Hart County Board of Education policy. As long as prescribed and/or over-the-counter medicine is administered in accordance with the schedule/directions as described by the parent/guardian, the Hart County Board of Education is released from any liability in the event of injury or adverse effects to the child as a result of the administering of such medication. Any student possessing prescription or over-the-counter medication not in accordance with these guidelines will be considered in violation of the system's drug policy and shall be subject to the discipline set forth in the student code of conduct and/or student/parent handbook. Students are not allowed to bring medication to school by bus unless the medication is delivered to the bus driver and then delivered to a staff member at the school.

A student for whom the school has on file supporting medical documentation may carry at all times with parental/guardian permission inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine for allergic reactions and medical needs for diabetes. Students authorized to self-administer such medications shall be instructed not to permit any other student to handle, possess, or otherwise attempt to use his/her medication and shall be informed that violations of such instructions will be dealt with in accordance with the student code of conduct.

In order for the student to carry and self-administer such medications, or in order for the school to store and administer the medication for students who are unable to self-administer because of age or any other reason, parents must provide a written statement from a licensed physician confirming that the student is able to self-administer the medication, if applicable, and written permission from the parent for the nurse or designated employee to consult with the doctor regarding any questions that may arise concerning the medication. Such permission shall release the system and its employees and agents from civil liability for administering such medication to students, or if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of self-administration of such medication. Parents are encouraged to provide to the schools duplicate medication and supplies in the event a student is unable to self-administer or fails to bring the medication or equipment to school.

Nurses or other school employees are authorized to administer an auto-injectable epinephrine, if available, to a student who is having an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse (allergic) reaction, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for epinephrine. Any school employee who in good faith administers or chooses not to administer an auto-injectable epinephrine to a student in such

circumstances, shall be immune from civil liability.

Communicable Diseases

Children having any contagious or infectious disease should not return to school unless cleared by the family physician or Health Department. A written note from a physician and/or the Health Department must accompany the child.

Head Lice

Students who have head lice (pediculosis) will be sent home from school. Before re-entering school, it will be necessary for parents to obtain a statement from a physician or the Hart County Health Department or school nurse stating that the student is free of ALL infestation and any remnants, including dead nits. When the student's head is still suspect, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter school. However, if your child has not been cleared to re-enter on or before the second (2nd) school day from the date he/she was sent home, the absences will be marked unexcused. Referrals will be made to the School Social Worker for repeated cases of head lice.

Immunizations

The Hart County Charter System, in accordance with the Georgia Department of Public Health, requires all students entering a Georgia public school to have up-to-date immunizations. A certificate of immunization must be submitted to the school. The record of immunizations must be on a form provided by the Department of Public Health (Form 3231). Should a parent not have the immunizations record (or the student not have completed required immunizations for age) the school may grant a 30 calendar day waiver for a justified reason. The waiver may be extended up to 90 calendar days when provided documentation by a physician or local health department that the sequence has been started and that the immunizations needed can be completed in 90 calendar days. The waiver may not extend past the 90 calendar days. The student shall not be permitted to attend school when either (30 or 90) waiver expires.

Exceptions:

1. When the school is presented a certificate from a physician or local board of health which has examined a child and found the child to have any physical disability which may make vaccination undesirable. (see last column on Form 3231)
2. When parents present a notarized affidavit (Department of Public Health Form 2208) which swears or affirms that the immunization required conflicts with the religious beliefs of the parent or guardian.

Legal ramifications:

1. Any reasonable official permitting a child to remain in a school or facility in violation of the law requiring immunizations could be found guilty of a misdemeanor.
2. Any parent or guardian who intentionally fails to comply with the law requiring immunizations could be found guilty of a misdemeanor.

HONOR ROLL/MERIT LIST

Fourth and fifth grade students are eligible for Honor Roll/Merit List recognition at the end of each quarter. The **Honor Roll** contains the names of students who have achieved a grade of “A” in all academic subjects. The **Merit List** contains the names of students who have achieved letter grades of “A” and “B”. To qualify for the Merit List at least three academic A’s must be earned. Students in kindergarten, first, second and third grade are recognized for their individual achievements on a continuing basis instead of an Honor Roll listing. It is our belief that young children should not be placed in situations that promote undesirable competitive stress. Early childhood is a time to develop and strengthen a child’s academic, social, and emotional growth. Development of strong self-esteem is of primary importance during these years.

Year End Recognition

The below awards are for fourth and fifth grade students who meet the criteria at the end of the school year. The Principal’s Award requires a student to earn a 95%-100% on their final report card in each subject. The Academic Excellence, Award of Achievement, and Award of Merit combine all subjects to create a cumulative average for all subjects. All averages will be verified by administration and the grade level teacher submitting the information.

Principal’s Award	Students who have a 95-100 in ALL subject areas at the end of the year.
Academic Excellence	Students who have a year-end average that results in a cumulative average of 95 or higher.
Award of Achievement	Students who have a year-end average that results in a cumulative average of 90-94.
Award of Merit	Students who have a year-end average that results in a cumulative average of 85-89.

MAIL, TELEPHONE CALLS, GIFTS

In order to maintain a school climate focused on learning, the school discourages disruptions of any kind. **Disruptions in the school and safety concerns on the bus are the reasons receiving or distributing items is prohibited.** Mail, telephone calls, or gifts (including flowers, balloons, etc.) for students will not be accepted at school. If these items are sent to the school, they will be returned to the sender at that individual’s expense.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT TIPS

Parents may assist teachers in ensuring that their child experiences success and happiness in school by following the suggestions listed below.

- **ASK FOR, READ AND SIGN YOUR CHILD’S AGENDA!!**
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and communicate often with your child’s teacher.
- Limit television-viewing time and establish regular work/study times.
- Listen to your child. Encourage your child to read, discuss and tell stories
- Play educational games with your child.
- Read to and with your child each day.
- Become familiar with school procedures and how to address your concerns.
- Volunteer time by tutoring at school, creating learning materials at home, assisting with school activities, joining the PTO or becoming a room parent.

- Let the teacher know in writing if your child is to go to a different address in the afternoon.
- Check-in at the office first before visiting anywhere in the school.
- Return papers (medical authorization, pupil information, insurance forms, progress reports, notes, etc.) to the school in a prompt manner.
- Be positive in communication to and about school and school personnel.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

At least twice during the year you will be contacted by your child's teacher to come to school for a conference. Please make every effort to attend these conference appointments. Remember your child's success in school greatly depends upon your involvement and concern. We look forward to meeting with you during these conference periods. School administrators and teachers are also available throughout the year, if additional conferences are needed. Please call ahead for an appointment for a conference.

PREPARATION FOR THE SCHOOL DAY

Before the student leaves home for school each day, please be sure he/she has THIS AGENDA and all necessary daily instructional materials. This will avoid undue disruption of instruction. If an emergency arises and it is necessary for you to notify your child, leave a message with the school secretary. The office staff will relay the message to your child's teacher at the appropriate time.

Should it become necessary to change the regular daily transportation or destination for your child, please contact the school no later than 1:45pm that day. When the change is known in advance parents must provide in writing to the school their contact information (phone number), name of adult taking responsibility for their child (with contact information) and address to where the child will go after school. Emergencies do arise, we do understand, this same information should be provided when you call the school to request the change. It is very important that everyone involved in transporting the child cooperate and be able to communicate.

PROGRAMS

Gifted Education

The Hart County Charter System offers educational services for identified gifted students through the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program. TAG services are available for students who meet the state eligibility requirements. Teachers and/or parents may refer students for consideration for TAG placement.

Special Education

The Special Education Department provides a complete range of programs and services for students with identified special needs. Special services are available from kindergarten through fifth grade for eligible students with disabilities of an emotional, and/or intellectual, and/or physical nature. Eligibility procedures include initial screening and further educational or psychological testing to determine program eligibility and the type and amount of help needed when eligible.

Title I Program

Title I is a federally funded program designed to provide additional educational services to students. The school will provide, upon request, the professional qualifications of your child's teachers. Questions regarding Title I program services may be directed to the school Principal or Assistant Principal.

Early Intervention Program

The Early Intervention Program is a state funded program for students in grades kindergarten through fifth. This program is designed to help young learners who need additional instruction in academic areas, especially language arts and mathematics. Teacher checklists as well as test scores are used to determine a student's need for early intervention. The goal of the program is to bring the student up to or beyond grade level as quickly as possible.

Hospital/Homebound Students

Students may be eligible for Hospital-Homebound Instructional Services while hospitalized or confined at home when the absence is expected to be 10 or more consecutive school days. Students may also be eligible for Intermittent Instructional Services if the student has a chronic condition which is expected to result in at least 10 days of absence from school during the school year with at least three consecutive school days for each occurrence.

In either situation the parent requests the instruction and it must be based upon certification of need by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is treating the student for the presenting diagnosis. An Educational Service Plan is to be developed by the appropriate team of school personnel and the student's parent/guardian. The Parental Request for Hospital Homebound Instruction and Medical Certification may be obtained from an administrator or school nurse. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to return the completed forms to a school administrator as soon as possible.

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

The Hart County Board of Education adopts this policy in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-282 through 20-2-285 (Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy) that bases the placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class or program on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the education setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

The Superintendent and appropriate staff shall develop rules and regulations governing promotion, placement, and retention of students in grades K-12. Such rules and regulations shall include the following requirements: More information can be found in Board Policy IHE

FOOD SERVICE

Educational research has shown that students learn more effectively when they are properly nourished. Nutritious breakfasts and lunches that meet USDA nutritional requirements may be purchased at all Hart County Schools. Free and reduced meals are available to children from families qualifying under federal government regulations. Applications are mailed to families in July two weeks before school begins. Applications for new students or students whose address has changed may be picked up at each school or at the School Nutrition (SN) office located at 145 Cleveland Avenue, Hartwell, GA 30643. If any family's income changes considerably during the year, they should notify the School Nutrition office so that another application can be made.

Applications for Free/Reduced Meals will be FAMILY APPLICATIONS, one application per household.

For your convenience, menus are sent home monthly and are also on each school’s website in addition to www.hart.k12.ga.us/nutrition. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay their child’s meals. Pre-paid amounts are listed on each menu. As an additional prepayment option and convenience to parents, on-line payments may be made at www.myschoolbucks.com. This is an on-line system that allows parents/guardians to make deposits into student’s meal account or view cafeteria purchases. A \$2.00 transaction fee covers the cost of processing online transactions. This fee goes directly to the payment processor not the Hart County Charter System.

Breakfast is available daily and is served in the classroom. Breakfast may not be charged. No more than three lunches may be charged. Students that have over three charges will be served an alternate meal of a peanut butter or cheese sandwich and milk. This cost of .95 will be added to their existing charges. Fast foods and carbonated beverages are not permitted in the lunchroom.

Meal Prices are as follows:

	Breakfast	Lunch
Regular	\$ 1.25	\$ 2.00
Reduced	\$.30	\$.40
Free	\$.00	\$.00
Adult	\$ 2.00	\$ 3.25

Parents that have children who have a special nutritional or feeding need due to a disability must contact the school and complete the appropriate form. This must be completed and on file with the School Nutrition Manager of each school before any modifications are made. This is a separate form from what is turned into the school nurse and must be completed each year. These forms may be picked up from the SN manager or at www.hart.k12.ga.us/nutrition.

SAFETY DRILLS

Fire and tornado drills are held during the year according to the school’s safety plan. Teachers will instruct their students on the procedures to be followed during fire, emergency lockdown and tornado drills. Students are carefully evacuated from the building during a fire drill. Students are escorted to a designated place during a tornado drill. Students will remain in rooms with teacher during emergency lockdown.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Hart County Charter System has local school governance teams at each school. The teams are comprised of teachers, parents, and business members. More information about governance teams can be found on the system website.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Students in the Hart County Charter System experience various forms of standardized and teacher made tests. Discuss the importance of the tests your child will encounter during the school year and how the information from the assessments will be used by teachers, parents and administration to make educational decisions about each child. The State of Georgia has a mandatory testing program that includes testing for all elementary students in grades 3-12 called the Georgia Milestones. Kindergarten children are tested with the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS), which is an ongoing performance assessment based on the Georgia Performance Standards for kindergarten.

Elementary students in grades one through five take part in multiple assessments such as Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), common assessments created by all schools, and progress monitoring that help determine present level of performance and annual academic achievement in specific content areas.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

The Student Support Team (SST) is a joint effort of regular education and special education to identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for children prior to or in lieu of a special education referral. Each building level team is comprised of such persons as administrators, classroom teachers, requesting teacher, special education teacher, counselor, school psychologist, school social worker or central office personnel. Parental involvement is also a critical part of the SST process.

The SST plans for modification in a student's education program and includes a six step process: (1) identification of needs, (2) assessment, if necessary, (3) educational plan, (4) implementation, (5) follow-up and support, and (6) continuous monitoring and evaluation. The SST functions under the auspices of regular education curriculum services and is based upon the child study team concept.

PYRAMID OF INTERVENTION

The Hart County Elementary Response to Intervention (RTI) is the process of aligning appropriate assessment with purposeful instruction for all students. Response to Intervention is based in the general education classroom where teachers routinely implement a strong and rigorous standards-based learning environment. The tiered approach to providing layers of intervention for students needing support requires a school wide common understanding of the Georgia Standards of Excellence, assessment practices, and instructional pedagogy. The RTI process includes several key components:

- A 4-Tier delivery model designed to provide support matched to student need through the implementation of standards-based classrooms.
- Evidence-based instruction as the core of classroom pedagogy.
- Evidence-based interventions utilized with increasing levels of intensity based on progress monitoring.
- The use of a variety of ongoing assessment data to determine which students are not meeting success academically and/or behaviorally.
- Data Teams in each school serve as the driving force for instructional decision making in the building.
- Purposeful allocation of instructional resources based on student assessment data.

All students participate in general education learning. Students requiring interventions to meet individual learning expectations will receive support through a systematic and purposeful process.

The tiers are differentiated by different levels of learning:

- Tier 1. Standards Based Classroom Learning- Universal screening for reading math and/or behavior for all students at all levels (general education learning where all students start)
- Tier 2. Needs Based Learning – Involves progress monitoring based on school data and benchmarks. Collaboration between the intervention teacher and the general teacher team is required.
- Tier 3. SST Driven Learning – Closer progress monitoring based on intervention designed by the Student Support Team
- Tier 4. Specially Designed Learning – Interventions involve deep, systematic and formalized progress monitoring, data collection and targeted instruction.

The success of any SST relies on the foundation of Tiers 1 and 2. Success is attainable when schools analyze their data to identify school-wide, classroom, and individual student needs. The research-based strategies and interventions led by ongoing professional learning, coaching, and measurement of student response support the RTI process.

SECTION 504

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in Section 7(20), shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Additionally, Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, including public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools, regardless of whether they receive federal financial assistance.

Any parent, teacher or administrator may request an evaluation of their child to determine eligibility for accommodations under Section 504. Requests are to be made to the school based 504 coordinator or the school system coordinator. Initial evaluations may not be conducted unless the parent has given permission for the evaluation. Evaluations are to be conducted by a team of individuals who know the student and the determination of eligibility is to be a team decision. Parents are to be informed of the decision made by the team.

Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant’s failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing form. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system’s central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are supplemental resources that may be issued to each student or can be requested by parents. All books, including library books, should be treated as borrowed school property and given the appropriate respect. In case of loss or damage to textbooks or library books, the parent/guardian must pay for the lost or damaged book according to a fixed scale. If a lost book is found, money paid will be refunded.

VISITORS

Adult visitors and small children accompanied by an adult are welcome in our school. For the safety of all, visitors are required to come by the school office for a visitor’s pass upon entering the school building. We respectfully request appropriate supervision of small children visiting the building to prevent disruption in the instruction of our school children. REMEMBER...when visiting our building; please **PROUDLY display your visitor’s pass to ensure safety protocols are in place.**

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

Please contact your child's teacher or the school secretary before your child's last day at our school. Also inform the teacher or secretary of your future destination. All outstanding fees must be paid and your child must return all textbooks and library material before his/her withdrawal is complete. Your child will take a copy of the withdrawal slip to his/her new school. All records will be forwarded at a later date upon notification of enrollment from the receiving school.