



Baltimore County Public Schools

Student Handbook



2011-2012

Superintendent's Message to Parents, Students, and Staff

The *Blueprint for Progress* keeps Baltimore County Public Schools focused on student achievement while maintaining safe and orderly learning environments.

This *Student Handbook* provides information about student rights and responsibilities. Parents, please review this handbook with your children and discuss why education is vital to their future. Together, we will continue to prepare all students for future success.

Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

1. Why is attendance important?

Students have the responsibility to comply with the attendance procedures of the schools they are attending in addition to those regulations established by the Board and the law of the State of Maryland.

If a student is absent for one of the lawful reasons, the teacher will allow the student to make up work missed whenever possible. The responsibility for making up work rests with the student. An absence for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy.

A student may be denied the right to make up missed work in case of truancy.

All absences must be accounted for in writing on the day the student returns to school.

2. Why is there concern over students' behavior?

You have the right to a safe learning climate. Schools should be free of disruptive behavior, drug and alcohol use. Sometimes another students' behavior may interfere with your learning. This is not fair to you. Your school system has policies that deal with behavior problems. The policies are firm and just. This handbook will review the discipline code of Baltimore County Public Schools.

3. Who helps provide a safe learning climate?

Everyone working together is the key.
Who can help me?

Names

_____ Teacher

_____ School Counselor

_____ Administrator

_____ Other

4. How do schools help prevent behavior problems?

From the time you enter school, we care about you. We care about your learning and social behavior. Many programs are offered to you. Ways to prevent problems have been built into your programs. Early identification helps to find students who need help. Programs are planned for these students. The school tries to be aware of the problems that students may meet. We want to help students make the right decisions. There are study units on drugs and alcohol. The dangers of their abuse are explained.

5. How do schools help students who are beginning to have problems?

School personnel help students in many ways. They may offer many services:

- Student Conferences
- Counseling
- Evaluations
- Home Visits
- Progress Reports
- Parent Conferences
- Program Adjustments

It is helpful to know this. If you think you are beginning to have problems, talk to the key people

listed in item number 3 on this page. Ask about their service. They are there to help!

6. Where can students learn about what is expected of them?

Your teacher has reviewed a copy of the *Student Handbook* with you. It lists your rights and responsibilities. The following school policies are discussed:

- Use of Tobacco
- Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs
- Disruptive Behavior
- Suspension, Reassignment, or Expulsion
- Student Dress Code

7. What is the discipline code?

The code is a list of rules for guiding behavior. It lists examples of behaviors that are not allowed. The list explains the penalties for offenses.

OFFENSES

8. What are the penalties for different offenses?

They are divided into three different categories. Each category has a different penalty.

Category	Penalty
I	May be suspended
II	Normally suspended, may be long-term suspended, assigned to an alternative ed. program, or expelled
III	Assigned to an alternative ed. program or expelled

9. What are some Category I offenses?

Below are examples for which a student may be suspended.

Arson/Fire/Explosives

- a. Possession and/or lighting (igniting) matches or lighters

Attacks/Threats/Fighting

- b. Fighting

Attendance (In-school suspension only)

- c. Leaving school grounds without permission
- d/e. Lateness (tardiness) to school or class
- f/g. Absence from school or class without permission

Dangerous Substances

- h. Possession of nonprescription medicines
- i. Use and/or possession of tobacco or cigarette rolling paper

Disrespect/Insubordination

- j. Failure to follow directions, such as report to office when told to do so
- k. Harassment (nuisance phone calls; unwelcomed comments, written or verbal)
- l. Refusing to cooperate with school rules and regulations
- m. Refusing to cooperate with school bus rules
- n. Refusing to do assigned work
- o. Refusing to serve detention
- p. Using foul or abusive language

Personal Health

- q. Personal health, when a student's state of health knowingly threatens the health of others

Other

- r. Cheating (or signing parents'/guardians' or teachers' signatures)
- s. Gambling
- t. Unapproved sale or distribution of items not related to school
- u. Use of electronic communication devices, such as cell phones or other wireless communication devices during school hours

10. What are Category II offenses?

Below are examples for which a student would normally be suspended and which may result in long-term suspension, assignment to an alternative program, or expulsion.

Arson/Fire/Explosives

- a. Setting off fire alarm/false fire report
- b. Possession and/or setting off explosive material, including live ammunition, such as a firecracker

Attacks/Threats/Fighting

- c. Getting money by force or threat (extortion)
- d. Physical attack on a student
- e. Threats on a person

Dangerous Substance

- f. Giving out a substance and pretending it is a drug
- g. Nonprescription violation (misuse of non-prescription medications) including not having medications administered by the school nurse or delegated personnel
- h. Possession, use, or distribution of controlled drugs and/or drug paraphernalia
- i. Prescription violation (possession)
- j. Buying a substance that was said to be a drug
- k. Use and/or possession of tobacco or cigarette rolling paper– repeated offense

Disrespect/Insubordination

- l. Planning between two or more persons to commit a Category III offense
- m. Behaviors that interfere with the normal school program, including repeated Category I and II offenses
- n. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation for any reason
- o. Interfering with another student’s right to attend school or classes
- p. Participating in and/or inciting a school disruption

Sex Offenses

- q. Inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature
- r. Indecent exposure

Weapons

- s. Possession of a look-alike weapon of any kind
- t. Possession of a pocket knife

Other

- u. Destruction and vandalism of school property, personal property of students and/or faculty; This includes receipt, sale, possession, or distribution of property stolen from Baltimore County Public Schools (Repayment is required.)
- v. Exchange of money for an illegal purpose
- w. Reckless endangerment resulting in injury to a person
- x. Theft and/or knowingly possessing stolen property
- y. Trespassing
- z. Violation of the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy*
- aa. Violation of the gang policy by confirmed involvement in gang activities.

11. What are Category III offenses?

Below are examples of offenses for which a student will be assigned to an alternative program or expelled.

Arson/Fire/Explosives

- a. Arson (expulsion only)
- b. Bomb threat

Attacks/Threats/Fighting

- c. Hitting (intentional or unintentional) a staff member who is breaking up a fight
- d. Physical attack on a staff member (expulsion only)
- e. Violent behavior which creates a substantial danger to persons or property

Dangerous Substances

- f/g. Sale and/or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs (expulsion only)
- h/i. Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol
- j. Misuse of medicine prescribed by a doctor
- k. Use of or being under the influence, or showing signs of having used illegal drugs
- l. Use of alcohol
- m. Use of any intoxicants which causes a loss of self-control, including glue and solvents

Sex Offenses

- n. Sexual assault (expulsion only)

Weapons

- o. Possession and/or use of a firearm on school property (one-year expulsion)
- p. Possession or use of any other gun or rifle (expulsion for use)
- q. Possession or use of a real weapon of any kind (expulsion for use)
- r. Use of a look-alike gun or rifle
- s. Use of a real or look-alike weapon of any kind
- t. Use of a pocket knife or any other object as a weapon

Other

- u. Robbery

12. What is the policy on smoking?

Very simply put, smoking is not permitted in schools or on school property by anyone at anytime.

13. Are there any rules about medications?

All medications, prescription or non-prescription, must be given by the school nurse or another school official. Parent permission and a doctor’s order must be on file to give the medications to a student.

14. Can students use computers and go onto the Internet?

Computers and the use of the Internet must be directed by a teacher for educational purposes. Students are to follow the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Students*.

15. What does it mean to be suspended, reassigned, or expelled?

Term	What happens?	By whom?	How long?
suspended (short-term)	sent home	principal	10 days or less
suspended (long-term) reassigned	sent home and may be assigned to an alternative education program	superintendent or designee	11 days or more
expelled	withdrawal and assigned to an alternative education program	superintendent or his designee	until readmission by superintendent or his designee

16. Where does the discipline code apply?

It applies in the school and on school grounds. It also applies on the school bus and at school activities (even if they are off school property).

17. Do these rules apply for all Baltimore County Public Schools' students?

- Students with IEPs or with 504 plans may be disciplined by the school principal for violations of the Code of Conduct.
- When the disciplinary removal is for more than 10 days, the student is entitled to a manifestation determination and must be provided with appropriate educational services while removed from school, in accordance with IDEA, Section 504, and state and federal regulations.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS

Release of Directory Information and News Photography Release

State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents/guardians and a student who is 18 years old or attending an institution of post-secondary education ("eligible student") certain rights with respect to the student's education record. In accordance with the law, the Baltimore County Public Schools (hereinafter,

"BCPS") is providing parents/guardians and eligible students with this Annual Notification of Rights. These rights are:

Confidentiality

Parents/guardians or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if there is a need to review an education record in order to fulfill a professional responsibility. Upon request, BCPS will disclose without consent a student's education record to another school or to a school district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

Directory Information

FERPA requires that BCPS, with certain exceptions, obtains written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education record. However, BCPS may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless advised to the contrary as outlined below.

The following information has been designated by BCPS as "directory information" and can be released without parental consent: student's name, address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received.

Directory information can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's/guardian's or eligible student's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws¹ require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide to *military recruiters*, upon request, name, address, and telephone listing — *unless the parent/guardian or eligible student has advised the LEA that they do not want this information disclosed without their prior written consent*.

You may refuse disclosure by completing and returning the *Parental Privacy Preference Opt Out Form for Directory Information* or by putting your request in writing and sending it to the principal by October 1 of each school year or within 30 days of your child's enrollment in school. The opt out form was mailed to you in your child's back-to-

school information packet. The form is also available to you at your child's school and may be obtained on the Baltimore County Public Schools' Web site at www.bcps.org under the Parents/Families tab, and the Office of Student Support Services. If you do not return a completed opt out form or send your request in writing, you are giving BCPS permission to publicly release your child's directory information which includes: your child's name, address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, height and weight as a member of an athletic team, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received. Additionally, if you do not return a completed opt out form or send your request in writing, if requested by United States military recruiters or institutions of higher education, your child's name, address, and telephone number will be released.

¹Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. 6301, et seq.), and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (10 U.S.C. 503), the legislation that provides funding for the Nation's armed forces

Access to Records

All BCPS students' records shall be available to parents/guardians or eligible students for review and inspection in conferences with appropriate school personnel. If a student is 18 years of age or older, rights afforded to and required of the parent/guardian shall thereafter only be afforded to and required of the student. Maryland law provides that a student's education record may be released by BCPS to other educational or specified governmental agencies, to a person involved in approved research projects, to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena, or in a health or safety emergency. School system procedures concerning the release of students' records can be found in Superintendent's Rule 5230: *Student Records*.

Request to Amend a Student's Record

If a parent or eligible student believes that a student record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy rights of the student, he/she may make a written request with the school principal to amend the records. The request must be made in writing to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record to be changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the student's privacy. If the principal denies the request, the principal will notify

the parent or eligible student of the procedures for appealing the decision.

BCPS Review of Student's Record

A parent/guardian or an eligible student has the right to inspect and review the student's education record within 45 days of the day the principal receives a request for access. A parent/guardian or eligible student should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the education record they wish to inspect. The school principal, or his/her designee, will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the student's record may be inspected.

Videotaping on School Property Including School Buses

BCPS possesses the ability to videotape students on school property and to videotape students (including audiotape) while on its school buses. At the discretion of the superintendent, or his designee, videotapes may be used for disciplinary purposes.

News/Photography

Students may be photographed, videotaped, and/or audiotaped while participating in school-sponsored activities and/or learning experiences when such activities are of interest to the news media. School staff will monitor all media activities in schools. School administrative staff will deny access to news media if their presence is deemed disruptive to the school day or to students or if photographing, videotaping, and/or audiotaping students are not appropriate, given the nature of a particular news story. **You may refuse to permit media-related photographing, videotaping, and/or audiotaping of your child by completing and returning the Parental Privacy Preference Opt Out Form for Telecommunications and Intellectual Property or by putting your request in writing and sending it to the principal by October 1 of each school year or within 30 days of your child's enrollment in school. The opt out form was mailed to you in your child's back-to-school information packet. The form is also available to you at your child's school and may be obtained on the Baltimore County Public Schools' Web site at www.bcps.org under Students, Parents, and the Office of Student Support Services. If you do not make your requests known by returning a completed opt out form or by sending your request in writing, you are giving BCPS permission to include your child's picture in media-related photographs and tapes.** Parents/guardians or eligible students who believe that

their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Students shall:

- √ Use telecommunications for educational purposes only.
- √ Communicate with others in a courteous and respectful manner.
- √ Maintain the privacy of an individual's personal information such as address, phone number, password(s), and respect the same privacy of others.
- √ Use only telecommunication accounts and passwords provided by BCPS.
- √ Report any incident of harassment to the supervising employee.
- √ Comply with copyright laws and intellectual property rights of others.
- √ Agree to the review of communications, data, and files by the Baltimore County Public Schools.
- √ Report violations of this *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy* to the supervising employee.

Students shall not:

- X Knowingly enter unauthorized computer networks or software to tamper with or destroy data.
- X Bypass the school system's filtering server.
- X Access or distribute abusive, harassing, bullying, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, pornographic, threatening, sexually explicit, or illegal material.
- X Install unauthorized software on computers.
- X Use telecommunications for commercial, purchasing, or illegal purposes.
- X Connect personal telecommunications hardware, such as laptops or PDAs, to the BCPS network.
- X Use telecommunications in any other manner that would violate the school board's disciplinary policies.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The following is a short outline of Students' Rights and Responsibilities detailed in Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5600. For the complete explanation of Students' Rights, see Policy and Rule 5600.

Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Dress and Grooming
- Respecting the rights of others.

Students' Responsibility for Attendance:

Students have the responsibility to comply with the attendance procedures detailed in Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5120, *Student Attendance and Excuses*.

Students missing 20 percent or more of the class days within each grading period are subject to a failing classwork grade. Unexcused absences, 10 percent or more, will result in failure for the marking period.

Responsibility for Dress and Appearance

The BCPS is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment that is conducive to student learning. While student dress and appearance are the responsibility of students and their parents, the Board believes that dress and appearance should not interfere with any aspect of the educational process. Standards for student dress during the school day and during other school-sponsored activities are outlined in Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5520, *Student Dress Code*.

Students have the right to:

- Due Process
- Privacy of Records
- Patriotic Exercises
- Voluntary prayer or Bible reading
- Student Governance
- Assembly
- Participation in Extracurricular Activities
- Participation in Interscholastic Athletics
- Use of School Facilities
- Personal Property
- Non-Discrimination
- Age of Majority
- Safe Learning Environment
- Free Speech and Expression
- Grievance

Safe Schools Tip Hotline

1-877-636-6332

Maryland Suicide & Crisis Hotline

1-800-422-0009

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (20 U.S.C. § 1232h) gives to parents/guardians, and students who are 18 or emancipated minors, certain rights regarding surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These rights include the right to consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”), if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the United States Department of Education. These areas are:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent/guardian
2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privilege such as with lawyers, physicians, and ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or of the student’s parents/guardians
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

The right to *receive notice* and an *opportunity* for a student to *opt out of*:

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health or safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening required under State Law, and
3. Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

The right to *inspect*, upon request, and before the administration or use:

1. Protected information surveys of students
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes, and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Baltimore County Public Schools will notify directly parents/guardians and eligible students of their rights under school system procedures at least annually. Parents/guardians or eligible students who believe that

their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Student Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation is strictly prohibited by federal law and will not be tolerated in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

Students who engage in behaviors that constitute bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be disciplined according to the procedures set forth in this *Handbook* and the *Education That Is Multicultural Bylaw* which states that “throughout Maryland in every local school system, educational efforts in curriculum, instruction, and assessment must reflect multicultural education.”

Students who believe that they are victims of harassment should report any such incidences promptly and may employ the Title IX grievance procedure. Students may report bullying, harassment, or intimidation without fear of harmful consequences. Students, parents/guardians, close adult relatives, and/or teachers may complete a **Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form**. Completed forms should be given to the principal of the school or the principal’s designee.

Gang Activity and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior

Baltimore County Public Schools prohibits gangs and gang activities in all schools, at school sponsored events, and on school grounds.

Therefore, students shall not engage in any act furthering the interest of any gang or gang activity including, but not limited to, the following:

- Soliciting, with or without coercion, membership in, or affiliation with, any gang;
- Painting, writing otherwise inscribing gang related graffiti, messages, symbols or signs on school property;
- Engaging in violence, extortion or any other discipline policies in furtherance of gang activity;
- Soliciting any person to engage in physical violence against another person in furtherance of gang activity.

Students who violate Board of Education Policy and Superintendent’s Rule 5551 shall be subject to the student discipline code, Board of Education Policy 5550, as well as any applicable criminal or civil penalties.

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011-2012 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Our school system is one of the best in the country. This is because we work as a team with you, staff, parents/guardians, and community members. You, the student, make up a large part of this team. Your cooperation shows in many ways.

- **You take responsibility for your behavior.**
- **You help create a good learning environment and school climate.**
- **You take pride in your school.**
- **You contribute to the effectiveness of your school.**

We know this and are proud of you. With your help, the Baltimore County Public Schools will continue to excel.

This form must be signed and dated by you and your parent/guardian after reviewing the *2011-2012 Student Handbook*. **You must return the signed form to your school within five school days.**

School: _____

Student: _____

Last name	First name	Middle initial	(Please print)
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I have received a copy of the Baltimore County Public Schools *2011-2012 Student Handbook*. The handbook was explained and I was given an opportunity to ask questions. I read and understand the disciplinary code listed in the handbook and the consequences for all offenses. Additionally, I understand the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Students*. I was informed that I may meet individually with my assistant principal to discuss the handbook in more detail.

Student's Signature

Date

I have discussed the *Student Handbook* with my child. I have also reviewed the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Students* and the *Annual Notification of Parents Rights*.

I understand that I must complete the *Parental Privacy Preference Opt Out Form for Directory Information, and/or the Parental Privacy Opt Out Form for Telecommunications and Intellectual Property*, or I must provide written notice to my child's principal:

IF I DO NOT WANT

- **My child to participate in the use of telecommunications;**
- **My child's intellectual property published/produced/displayed;**
- **My child photographed, videotaped, and/or audiotaped during school-sponsored activities and/or learning experiences;**
- **My child's "Directory Information" released publicly; and/or**
- **My child's name, address, and telephone number released to United States military recruiters or institutions of higher education.**

The opt out forms were mailed in the back-to-school information packet, they are also available at each school, or may be obtained on the Baltimore County Public Schools' Web site at www.bcps.org under the Parents/Families tab, or the Office of Student Support Services. I further understand that my request must be submitted to the principal by October 1 each school year or within 30 days of my child's enrollment in school. If I do not opt out, I have given BCPS permission for my child to participate in the use of telecommunications, the principal has permission to release my child's directory information, and my child may be photographed, videotaped, and/or audiotaped during school-sponsored activities and/or learning experiences.

Parent's/Guardian's/Eligible Student's Signature

Date



6901 Charles Street, Towson, Maryland 21204