

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- I. ***Philosophy:*** The Aiken County Board of Education believes that residents desire the best possible education for their children. A positive learning environment is safe, drug free, and without disruption. Good student conduct is essential to the achievement of the school's goals and objectives. This Code of Student Conduct for High School Grades establishes guidelines for students, parents, teachers, and administrators to maintain an appropriate school environment. The provisions in this Code of Student Conduct provide for firm but fair administration of disciplinary measures with an appropriate range of discretion for the application of consequences for behavioral needs, based upon individual assessments of every case, and in compliance with the philosophy set forth below.

Disciplinary action is best resolved among teacher, student, and parent in a calm, reasonable manner. However, serious violations of the Code must be handled quickly and effectively by the Administration. The objective of disciplinary action is to encourage good choices and acceptable behavior by the students with every reasonable effort being made to keep students within the school's influence, to rehabilitate and re-direct inappropriate behaviors and to offer effective strategies for changing such behaviors and opportunities to do so except in very serious circumstances. Insuring the welfare of the greatest number of students can, in certain circumstances, and in accordance with state law, result in the dismissal of students who consistently fail to observe the required standards, or become involved in criminal or other egregious misconduct. Although this Code of Student Conduct provides for an initial recommendation of expulsion for certain Level 3 offenses listed in this Code, the Principal, Executive Director and the Tribunal or Hearing Officer, as well as the Board, reserves discretion to consider the merits of each case presented – with particular regard to extenuating, mitigating, or aggravating circumstances. Whenever alternatives to expulsion are under consideration, such matters including (but not limited to) prior conduct (disciplinary record), academic achievement, citizenship, and contributions to the regular and extra-curricular school programs by the student may be considered. Deferential treatment for the purpose of maintaining athletic or extra-curricular eligibility is not allowed. This District's disciplinary code is not considered, nor is it to be interpreted as, a *zero tolerance* policy, even though certain misconduct may be serious or disruptive enough to warrant dismissal from school.

- II. ***Legal Authority for Discipline in South Carolina:*** The regulation of student conduct and discipline in South Carolina schools is derived from the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended; from Regulations of the South Carolina State Department of Education; and by specific precedent and opinion. (For a more detailed reference to legal authority see Appendix A).

- III. ***General provisions:*** Notice of Regulations and Distribution: Copies of this Code of Student Conduct for High School Grade Levels are distributed at the beginning of the school year and to those entering after the beginning of the school year. Signed acknowledgments are required. This Code of Student Conduct is a part of District Policy and is updated yearly pursuant to Policy JICDA. Policies may also be found online at the Aiken County Public Schools website (www.acpsd.schoolfusion.us).

IV. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES – PROCESS FOR HEARINGS AND APPEALS

- A. ***Minor Infractions:*** Typical minor disciplinary actions consist of restriction of privileges, work assignments (such as picking up paper, washing desk tops, sweeping floors, etc.), detention, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension. It is recognized, however, that situations serious enough to warrant immediate suspension may arise. In such cases, a warning conference prior to suspension is not required. **See Consequences in the Matrix for Level 1**