

BLOUNT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD POLICY REVISION FOR
2020-2021

CHECK ONE

POLICY REVISION

SUBMITTED BY:

Jessica Martin Richmond, teacher

NEW POLICY

Name of individual submitting revision

Administration, faculty, or student representative list school name as well.

If you are patron, support, or BCEA representatives, indicate that information after your name.

CURRENT POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 5.7

NAME OF POLICY: DRESS AND DECORUM PAGES 25-32

PARAGRAPH NUMBER IF PARTIAL REVISION:

TYPE CURRENT POLICY HERE:

5.7 DRESS AND DECORUM

The policy of the Blount County Board of Education is that good grooming and personal appearances are essential elements in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is expected that students dress in such a manner that will ensure health and safety, and not detract from the learning environment. Furthermore, dress and personal appearance are not to be disruptive or interfere with the educational interest and welfare of the students or the purposes of public school education.

Any student violating the dress code may be suspended for the remainder of the school day and may receive unexcused absences in the classes missed. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to determine inappropriate dress.

Repeat offenders are subject to further disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the principal/designee. (2) Principals can specify dress code for specific events, i.e. graduation, prom, etc. (5)

A. Student Dress Code

Students must be neatly dressed, clean, and well-groomed while at school. Clothing must be suited for school activities.

Students in grades K-12 are prohibited from wearing excessively loose clothing including shirts, tops, pants, and shorts.

Pants should be of the appropriate size in the waist and inseam. Pants are not allowed that sag off the hips.

Trench coats are also prohibited.

(4)(Approved May 20, 1999)

Students in grades 4-12 are prohibited from wearing short shorts, short culottes, sheer mesh or net clothing, backless clothing, extremely tight pants, tank tops or muscle shirts, (6)shirts with sleeves cut off at the shoulder, or clothing that exposes a bare midriff. (3)Shirts must be buttoned. **For students in grades 4-12, clothing, cuts, slits, or tears in clothing should not exceed four inches above the knee.** (1) Extremely tight clothing shall be prohibited.

(7)Leggings and other tightly fitting pants must be covered with clothing that meets the four inch standard stated above.

Clothing or any item attached to or worn on clothing or on a person's body, with pictures, symbols, or writing conveying a message about alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, having a sexual connotation, containing any obscenity, or containing any foul or abusive language is prohibited on the school campus.(5) No writing on back (seat) of pants, jeans, shorts, sweatpants, etc. for K-12 grade male and female students, including cheerleaders and all athletes.

Shoes or sandals must be worn.

Hats, headwear or head coverings, and sunglasses are not to be worn inside school buildings.

Students will be prohibited from wearing any apparel which is inappropriate or disruptive to the learning environment as determined by the principal.

(7) (Revised/approved April 4, 2011)

(6) (Revised/approved April 8, 2011)
(5) (Revised April 4, 2005)
(4) (Revised May 20, 1999)
(3) (Revised May 15, 1997)
(2- Revised May 1, 1995)
(1- Revised May 14, 1991)
(Revised May 7, 1990)
(Revised May 4, 1987)
(Revised May 5, 1986)
(Revised May 6, 1985)
(Revised May 2, 1983)

B. Backpacks No restrictions on backpacks. Revised May 4, 2009

C. Hair Students' hair should be kept clean, neat and well-groomed and of a length not dangerous around equipment (hair must be secured around equipment). Spiked hair, Mohawks, designs cut in hair, or hair that disrupts the educational process will not be allowed. Hair, including highlights, that is not a natural shade of hair color is unacceptable, i.e. pink, blue, green, purple, etc. (Revised May 10, 2017)

D. Tobacco Use or possession of tobacco in any form including vapor and/or electronic cigarettes is expressly prohibited on school premises and school buses including trips at all times, regardless of whether school is in or out of session. On the first offense, the student will be given a one-day suspension. On the second offense, the student will be given a two-week placement in Alternative School. Any subsequent offenses will require the student to appear before the Blount County Board of Education with a recommendation from the principal as the suggested punishment. (Revised April 6, 2015) (Revised May 15, 1997)

E. Drugs and Alcohol Students in the possession of or under the influence of any illegal drugs or in the possession of drug paraphernalia (those drugs and paraphernalia prohibited by Federal and State of Alabama Laws) or alcoholic beverages will be suspended and subject to expulsion from school as well as subject to legal action by the appropriate legal authorities. Any student having in his/her possession any drug, prescription or non-prescription and/or gives away, sells, or attempts to give away and/or sell medication, non-prescription or prescription, will be subject to suspension or expulsion. (Revised July 29, 2003)

F. Profanity and obscenity will not be tolerated

G. Weapons Students are prohibited from bringing to the school campus, having in their possession or in their lockers, any lethal weapons or facsimile, including but not limited to firearms, bombs, fireworks, explosives, knives, hunting knives, bayonets, razors, razor blades, letter openers, ice picks, and hat pins. Any student who is found guilty of having a lethal weapon may be expelled by the Board. In addition to the above policy on weapons, the following policy statement is required by Act 94-817 as it amends Section 13A-11-72, Code of Alabama 1975. Subject to the exceptions provided in Section 13A-11-74, Code of Alabama 1972, no person shall knowingly with intent to do bodily harm carry or possess a deadly weapon on the premises of a public school. Possession of a deadly weapon with the intent to do bodily harm on the premises of a public school in violation of the subsection printed above is a Class C felony. 20 The term "deadly weapon" as used in this Act means a firearm or anything manifestly designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious physical injury, and such term includes, but is not limited to, a bazooka, hand grenade, missile or explosive or incendiary device; pistol, rifle, or shotgun; or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword or dagger; or any club, baton, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles. (Revised May 1, 1995) The following policy relative to weapons (firearms) is necessitated by the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 and by Act of the Alabama Legislature, 1995: Any student who, after due process has been accorded, is found to have brought a weapon (firearm) to school will be expelled by the Board for a period of not less than one year (365 days) subject to a case by case exception that may be granted by the Superintendent of Education for the purpose of disciplining students with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Furthermore, any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school must be referred by the principal to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency systems. The one-year expulsion requirement applies to students who bring weapons to any setting that is under the control and supervision of the Board including events held off the school campus and including school buses and other means of transportation that are under contract with the school or Board. Nothing in this policy shall be constructed to prevent the Board from providing a student who has been expelled from the student's regular school setting educational services in an alternative setting. Expulsion means removal from the student's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred. Alternative setting means one that is clearly distinguishable from the student's regular school placement. A "weapon" or "firearm" means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code. According to Section 921, the following are included within the definition: --any weapon 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 explosive incendiary, or poison gas (1) bomb, (2) grenade, (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (5) mine, or (6) 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 one-half inch in diameter. --any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. According to Section 921, the following are not included in the definition: --an antique firearm --a rifle which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes --any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon --any device, although originally designed for use as a weapon, which is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device --surplus ordnance sold, loaned, or given by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to the provisions of Section 4684 (2), 4685, or 4686 of Title 10. The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms does not include Class-C common fireworks in the definition of weapon. (Revised May 23, 1995)

H. Earrings Boys are prohibited from wearing earrings to school. Girls are permitted to wear earrings in the ear to school. Students are prohibited from wearing any other body-piercing jewelry to school.

I. Electronic Communication Devices 21 Effective at the beginning of 2015-2016 school year, the Blount County Board of Education will implement a Bring Your Own Device Policy 5.0 (BYOD) . Students may have electronic communication devices and other digital devices in their possession such as iOS devices (MacBooks, iPhones/smart phones, iPads, iWatches/smart watches, iPods), Kindles, Nooks, tablets, Androids, Blackberrys, MP3 players, and laptops to be used for instructional purposes. They must be turned off, charged, and only in use with permission. Students will not be allowed to bring chargers to charge devices. The principal, teacher, or supervising employee may approve the use of personal electronic devices for instructional purposes, after regular school hours, during medical emergencies, natural disasters, or under circumstances in which the use of the devices serves safety and convenience without disrupting academic or school operations. The principal, teacher, or supervising employee will also have the authority to further restrict the use of personal electronic devices by any student to prevent the misuse, abuse, or violation of school rules regarding the use of such devices. Electronic communication devices and other digital devices will not be allowed to be present in standardized testing situations based on State Department of Education Policy. Students and parents must sign a technology contract that outlines the terms of the policy prior to bringing any device. Neither the Blount County Board of Education nor local schools are responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items as this is a voluntary program. If students and parents do not agree to the terms, those students will not be allowed to participate in BYOD. Students will have basic technology available at school necessary to complete lessons and assignments as directed by the teacher. The purpose of the BYOD initiative is to enhance instruction and assist students in developing communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills necessary to meet the College and Career Readiness Standards. All devices must use the Blount County Schools' guest network through Wi-Fi enabled airplane mode rather than a cellular data plan in order to meet Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliance. Appropriate authorized use may include the following: research, organization of information into tables and graphs, organization of tasks using calendars, sharing information documents, and making calculations. Examples of unauthorized use or misuse, for the purpose of this policy, may include (but are not limited to) any of the following: having the device out in class, hallways, restrooms, or lunchrooms, texting, playing games, using apps, visiting websites, taking, posting, and/or sharing photographs and/or video on school campus or on the bus, without the supervising adult's permission. The consequences for unauthorized use or misuse are outlined below: First Offense: Take the phone or other electronic device, hold until the parent/guardian comes to the school and meets with an administrator to discuss the policy and the consequences of further violations of the policy. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign a verification/documentation form of the meeting. Second Offense: Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for seven (7) school days. A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone or other electronic device from an administrator and again sign the verification/documentation form. The administration may assign detention, in-school suspension or Saturday school to the student. Third Offense: Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for nine (9) weeks of school. The student will also be placed in alternative school for three days. * A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student that continues to violate this policy after the third offense. **A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student who violates the policy and refuses to give the phone or electronic device to school personnel. (Revised June 5, 2017) Cell Phone/Digital Device in a Testing Setting by Students The possession of digital devices (including but not limited to cell phones, MP3 players, cameras, mobile entertainment, social connections, navigation devices, or other telecommunication devices) is strictly prohibited in the testing setting. Local education agency (LEA) school personnel will collect such devices before students can enter the testing room. If a device is in the possession of a student in the testing setting, testing for the student will cease, the device will be confiscated, the student will be dismissed from testing, and the student's test will be invalidated. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the LEA. (Added June 15, 2011) J. Laser Pointers Students are prohibited from bringing, possessing, or otherwise using laser pointers or other devices that emit laser light at school or school sponsored activities. However, students may participate in science lab exercises or other activities using lasers when under the direction and supervision of a teacher. (Approved May 20, 1999) 22 K. Gang Symbols Clothing or paraphernalia related to or associated with gang affiliation or activity is prohibited. Any symbol of gangs, gang activity or gang membership may not be worn or displayed by students at school or while participating in any school activity including field trips. (Revised May 1, 1995) (Revised May 3, 1993) (Revised May 7, 1990) (Revised June 5, 1989) (Revised May 2, 1988) (Revised May 4, 1981) L. Rules for Specific Activities With approval of the principal, activity sponsors may establish different rules for dress and grooming as a prerequisite for membership and participation in specific activities except that nothing in this policy is meant to imply that those things prohibited in this policy manual shall be permitted except for students required to wear uniforms. (Added May 1, 1995) M. Required Actions for Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, Physical Harm, or Threatened Physical Harm The school principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when a person violates Board policies concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person. If any criminal charge is warranted, the principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. If a student violates these policies, he or she shall immediately be suspended from attending regular classes and hearing scheduled within five (5) school days before the Board of Education. If a student is found to have violated a Board of Education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, the student may not be readmitted to the public schools of this state until criminal charges, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and the student has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the Board as a condition for readmission. Any student determined to be guilty of an offense involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, may be readmitted to the public schools of this state upon such conditions as the Board of Education shall prescribe for preservation of the safety or security of students and employees of the Board, which may include, but are not limited to, psychiatric or psychological evaluation and counseling. The decision to suspend or initiate criminal charges against a student, or both, shall include a review and consideration of the student's exceptional status (students with disabilities), if applicable under Chapter 39, Code of Alabama 1975, or appropriate state and federal statutory or case law. (Act 94-784 as it amends Section 16-1- 24.1, Code of Alabama 1975) (Added May 1, 1995) N. Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination The Blount County Board of Education is committed to protecting its students and employees from bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any type. The school board believes that all students and employees are entitled to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free school experience. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment or discrimination, as defined herein, occurring on school property during the school day or at school-sponsored events is prohibited. The use of school equipment for the purpose of these actions is also prohibited. Section 1: Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited. No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision. Section 2: Definitions In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings: (a) "Bullying" means a

continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular 23 characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following: Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property. Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student. Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school. Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function. Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. (b) "Hostile environment" means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault. (c) "Violence" means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student. (d) "Threat" means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat. (e) "Threat of violence" means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student. (f) "Intimidation" means an unjustified threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student. (g) "Student" as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in Blount County Schools public school system.

Section 3: Description of Behavior Expected of Students (a) Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student, and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy. (b) Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student: Race Sex Religion National origin Disability

Section 4: Consequences for Violations A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

Section 5: Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures (a) Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a Board-approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school's office. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian. (b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system. (c) Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Section 6: Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms This policy and any procedures, rules and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the student handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year. (Revised May 22, 2019)

(Revised/approved April 4, 2011) O. Jason Flatt Act State of Alabama Youth Suicide and Prevention Section 1. Prevention of Suicide The Jason Flatt Act was passed in order to equip Alabama school districts and their personnel to recognize and act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention and postvention with students at risk, their families and the communities who may be affected. This act, which amends 16-28B-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975, includes prevention of harassment and violence.

Section 2. The Jason Flatt Act includes several elements which should be interpreted as Policy. The school system will: (1) Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention. (2) Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel. (3) Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students. (4) Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide. (5) Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide. (6) Inform students of available community suicide prevention services. (7) Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel. (8) Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom. (9) Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing. (10) Engage in any other program or activity which the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide. (11) Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence. (12) Develop a process for discussing with students local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence. (13) Provide annual training for all certified school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs or as a part or required professional development offered by the local school system.

P. Articles/Items Prohibited in Schools Knives, sharp objects, fireworks, firearms, or weapons of any kind are prohibited. If brought to school, prohibited items will be impounded and may not be returned. The Blount County Board of Education or the school will not be held responsible for any confiscated items. Added June 15, 2011

NEW OR REVISED POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: _____

POLICY TITLE (IF NEW POLICY): _____

TYPE POLICY REVISION HERE

NOTES:

This is meant to streamline expectations and further organize these sections into a logical order, as well as the following revisions/additions

-Hair color/style and earrings/piercings have been removed as it can be argued that this is a parent/child issue and thus should not be policed by the school system; however, it should be noted that teams/organizations would have the right to enforce additional regulations on their members and it is recognized in the revision.

-Leggings/shorts/dress lengths have been adjusted to account for the fact that the previous four-inch rule is difficult to enforce due to the fact that four inches on a tall person would seem much longer than four inches above the knee on a short person. By using the fingertip rule with relaxed arms, a person can immediately ascertain if the student is within regulation without measuring implements.

-Hygiene/Grooming has been added as a subcategory because it is just as important as dress code. If a student is distracted by their lack of basic hygiene, it is something that should be addressed.

Anything that was reworded has been highlighted. Everything else has just moved into a more logical order.

5.7.1 DRESS AND GROOMING

The policy of Blount County Board of Education is that being clean and appropriately dressed is essential to a positive learning experience. Therefore, the following expectations should be met in regards to clothing and grooming.

A. Student Dress Code

Appropriate dress is defined as...

- Wearing clothes that fit appropriately and are comfortable for learning and participating in school activities.

- Nothing excessively loose or tight
- All undergarments are covered
- Skirts, shorts, dresses, and anything over leggings do not extend above the student's fingertips when arms are relaxed
- Shoes or sandals

Inappropriate dress is defined as...

- Wearing clothing that has references or allusions to
 - alcoholic beverages
 - gang activity
 - drug use
 - sexual connotations
 - obscene language/imagery
 - references that are racist/sexist/homophobic
- Clothing that has writing on the seat of pants
- Clothing that reveals undergarments or that are excessively low in the front, back, or sides or is sheer
- Wearing hats or sunglasses inside (unless specifically allowed by the principal for activities (i.e. fundraisers, skits, etc.))

1A. EVENTS AND SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The principal or their designee has the authority to specify dress codes for specific events, i.e. graduation, prom, etc.

With the approval of the principal, activity sponsors may establish different rules for dress and grooming as a prerequisite for membership and participation in specific activities (i.e. specific uniforms, hair that is neatly cut and of natural color, etc.)

B. GROOMING EXPECTATIONS

Hair should be clean and should be secured around dangerous equipment (such as in a lab or career tech setting).

Students should wear clean clothing and practice good hygiene. If a student is unable to afford hygiene products, they should be referred to the school counselor.

C. VIOLATION OF DRESS CODE

Students who are found to be in violation of the dress code will face disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the school administration.

5.7.2 BEHAVIOR/DECORUM

Students of Blount County Schools are expected to treat others with respect, courtesy, and dignity, and comply with all aspects of the student code of conduct as well as any rules or expectations as established in the individual schools of Blount County.

Bullying, discrimination, harassment, and obscenities will not be tolerated in Blount County Schools.

Additionally, all technology and devices should be used responsibly and in accordance with BCS guidelines.

A. Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination

The Blount County Board of Education is committed to protecting its students and employees from bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any type. The school board believes that all students and employees are entitled to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free school experience. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment or discrimination, as defined herein, occurring on school property during the school day or at school-sponsored events is prohibited. The use of school equipment for the purpose of these actions is also prohibited.

Section 1: Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited.

No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision.

Section 2: Definitions

In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
- Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
- Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
- Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.
- Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

(b) "Hostile environment" means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.

(c) "Violence" means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.

(d) "Threat" means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in

the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.

(e) “Threat of violence” means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.

(f) “Intimidation” means an unjustified threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student.

(g) “Student” as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in Blount County Schools public school system.

Section 3: Description of Behavior Expected of Students

(a) Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student, and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.

(b) Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- National origin
- Disability

Section 4: Consequences for Violations

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

Section 5: Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures

(a) Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a Board-approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school’s office. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal’s designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal’s designee is authorized to inform the student’s parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal’s designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

(b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal’s designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal’s designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal’s designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the

complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.

(c) Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Section 6: Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms

This policy and any procedures, rules and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the student handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

(Revised May 22, 2019)

(Revised/approved April 4, 2011)

B. Jason Flatt Act State of Alabama Youth Suicide and Prevention

Section 1. Prevention of Suicide

The Jason Flatt Act was passed in order to equip Alabama school districts and their personnel to recognize and

act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention and postvention with students at risk, their

families and the communities who may be affected. This act, which amends 16-28B-8 of the Code of Alabama

1975, includes prevention of harassment and violence.

Section 2. The Jason Flatt Act includes several elements which should be interpreted as Policy. The school system will:

(1) Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.

(2) Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.

(3) Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.

(4) Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.

(5) Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.

(6) Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.

(7) Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.

(8) Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.

(9) Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.

(10) Engage in any other program or activity which the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.

(11) Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.

(12) Develop a process for discussing with students local board policies relating to the

prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence.

(13) Provide annual training for all certified school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service
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training programs or as a part or required professional development offered by the local school system.

C. Electronic Communication Devices

Bring Your Own Device Policy 5.0 (BYOD)

Students may have electronic communication devices and other digital devices in their possession to be used for instructional purposes. They must be turned off, charged, and only in use with permission.

The principal, teacher, or supervising employee may approve the use of personal electronic devices for instructional purposes, after regular school hours, during medical emergencies, natural disasters, or under circumstances in which the use of the devices serves safety and convenience without disrupting academic or school operations.

The principal, teacher, or supervising employee will also have the authority to further restrict the use of personal electronic devices by any student to prevent the misuse, abuse, or violation of school rules regarding the use of such devices.

Electronic communication devices and other digital devices will not be allowed to be present in standardized testing situations based on State Department of Education Policy.

Students and parents must sign a technology contract that outlines the terms of the policy prior to bringing any device.

Neither the Blount County Board of Education nor local schools are responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items as this is a voluntary program.

If students and parents do not agree to the terms, those students will not be allowed to participate in BYOD. Students will have basic technology available at school necessary to complete lessons and assignments as directed by the teacher.

The purpose of the BYOD initiative is to enhance instruction and assist students in developing communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills necessary to meet the College and Career Readiness Standards. All devices must use the Blount County Schools' guest network through Wi-Fi enabled airplane mode rather than a cellular data plan in order to meet Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliance.

Appropriately authorized use may include the following: research, organization of information into tables and graphs, organization of tasks using calendars, sharing information documents, and making calculations. Examples of unauthorized use or misuse, for the purpose of this policy, may include (but are not limited to) any of the following: having the device out in class, hallways, restrooms, or lunchrooms, texting, playing games, using apps, visiting websites, taking, posting, and/or sharing photographs and/or video on school campus or on the bus, without the supervising adult's permission.

The consequences for unauthorized use or misuse are outlined below:

First Offense: Take the phone or other electronic device, hold until the parent/guardian

comes to the school and meets with an administrator to discuss the policy and the consequences of further violations of the policy. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign a verification/documentation form of the meeting.

Second Offense: Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for seven (7) school days. A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone or other electronic device from an administrator and again sign the verification/documentation form. The administration may assign detention, in-school suspension or Saturday school to the student.

Third Offense: Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for nine (9) weeks of school. The student will also be placed in alternative school for three days.

* A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student that continues to violate this policy after the third offense.

**A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student who violates the policy and refuses to give the phone or electronic device to school personnel. (Revised June 5, 2017)

D. Cell Phone/Digital Device in a Testing Setting by Students

The possession of digital devices (including but not limited to cell phones, MP3 players, cameras, mobile entertainment, social connections, navigation devices, or other telecommunication devices) is strictly prohibited in the testing setting. Local education agency (LEA) school personnel will collect such devices before students can enter the testing room.

If a device is in the possession of a student in the testing setting, testing for the student will cease, the device will be confiscated, the student will be dismissed from testing, and the student's test will be invalidated. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the LEA. (Added June 15, 2011)

5.7.3 PROHIBITED ITEMS

A. Tobacco

Use or possession of tobacco in any form including vapor and/or electronic cigarettes is expressly prohibited on school premises and school buses including trips at all times, regardless of whether school is in or out of session. On the first offense, the student will be given a one-day suspension. On the second offense, the student will be given a two-week placement in Alternative School. Any subsequent offenses will require the student to appear before the Blount County Board of Education with a recommendation from the principal as the suggested punishment. (Revised April 6, 2015) (Revised May 15, 1997)

B. Drugs and Alcohol

Students in the possession of or under the influence of any illegal drugs or in the possession of drug paraphernalia (those drugs and paraphernalia prohibited by Federal and State of Alabama Laws) or alcoholic beverages will be suspended and subject to expulsion from school as well as subject to legal action by the appropriate legal authorities. Any student having in his/her possession any drug, prescription or non-prescription and/or gives away, sells, or attempts to give away and/or sell medication, non-prescription or prescription, will be subject to suspension or expulsion. (Revised July 29, 2003)

C. Weapons

Students are prohibited from bringing to the school campus, having in their possession or in their lockers, any lethal weapons or facsimile, including but not limited to firearms, bombs, fireworks, explosives, knives, hunting knives, bayonets, razors, razor blades, letter openers, ice picks, and hat pins.

Any student who is found guilty of having a lethal weapon may be expelled by the Board.

In addition to the above policy on weapons, the following policy statement is required by Act 94-817 as it amends Section 13A-11-72, Code of Alabama 1975.

Subject to the exceptions provided in Section 13A-11-74, Code of Alabama 1972, no person shall knowingly with intent to do bodily harm carry or possess a deadly weapon on the premises of a public school.

Possession of a deadly weapon with the intent to do bodily harm on the premises of a public school in violation of the subsection printed above is a Class C felony.

The term "deadly weapon" as used in this Act means a firearm or anything manifestly designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious physical injury, and such term includes, but is not limited to, a bazooka, hand grenade, missile or explosive or incendiary device; pistol, rifle, or shotgun; or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword or dagger; or any club, baton, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles. (Revised May 1, 1995)

The following policy relative to weapons (firearms) is necessitated by the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 and by Act of the Alabama Legislature, 1995:

Any student who, after due process has been accorded, is found to have brought a weapon (firearm) to school will be expelled by the Board for a period of not less than one year (365 days) subject to a case by case exception that may be granted by the Superintendent of Education for the purpose of disciplining students with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Furthermore, any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school must be referred by the principal to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency systems.

The one-year expulsion requirement applies to students who bring weapons to any setting that is under the control and supervision of the Board including events held off the school campus and including school buses and other means of transportation that are under contract with the school or Board.

Nothing in this policy shall be constructed to prevent the Board from providing a student who has been expelled from the student's regular school setting educational services in an alternative setting.

Expulsion means removal from the student's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred.

Alternative setting means one that is clearly distinguishable from the student's regular school placement.

A "weapon" or "firearm" means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code. According to Section 921, the following are included within the definition:

--any weapon 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 explosive incendiary, or poison gas
 - (1) bomb,
 - (2) grenade,
 - (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces,
 - (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce,
 - (5) mine, or
 - (6) 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 one-half inch in diameter.
- any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

According to Section 921, the following are not included in the definition:

- an antique firearm
- a rifle which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes
- any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon
- any device, although originally designed for use as a weapon, which is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device
- surplus ordnance sold, loaned, or given by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to the provisions of Section 4684 (2), 4685, or 4686 of Title 10.

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms does not include Class-C common fireworks in the definition of weapon. (Revised May 23, 1995)

D. Laser Pointers

Students are prohibited from bringing, possessing, or otherwise using laser pointers or other devices that emit laser light at school or school sponsored activities. However, students may participate in science lab exercises or other activities using lasers when under the direction and supervision of a teacher. (Approved May 20, 1999)

VIOLATION OF DECORUM OR PROHIBITED ITEMS GUIDELINES

Required Actions for Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, Physical Harm, or Threatened Physical Harm

The school principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when a person violates Board policies concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person. If any criminal charge is warranted, the principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. If a student violates these policies, he or she shall immediately be suspended from attending regular classes and hearing scheduled within five (5) school days before the Board of Education.

If a student is found to have violated a Board of Education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, the student may not be readmitted to the public schools of this state until criminal charges, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and the student has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the Board as a condition for readmission.

Any student determined to be guilty of an offense involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, may be readmitted to the public schools of this state upon such conditions as the Board of Education shall prescribe for preservation of the

safety or security of students and employees of the Board, which may include, but are not limited to, psychiatric or psychological evaluation and counseling.

The decision to suspend or initiate criminal charges against a student, or both, shall include a review and consideration of the student's exceptional status (students with disabilities), if applicable under Chapter 39, Code of Alabama 1975, or appropriate state and federal statutory or case law. (Act 94-784 as it amends Section 16-1-24.1, Code of Alabama 1975)
(Added May 1, 1995)

If brought to school, prohibited items will be impounded and may not be returned. The Blount County Board of Education will not be held responsible for confiscated items. (Added June 15, 2011)