

# ST. MICHAELS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

K-12 Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools



Mrs. Tracy L. Elzey, Principal

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011 ~ 2012

“Setting a course towards excellence!”

# ST. MICHAELS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Accredited Member of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

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Mrs. Tracy L. Elzey, Principal  
Mrs. Ann Nilsen, Guidance Counselor

Ms. Maggie Jones, School Manager  
Mrs. Barbara Burkhardt, Secretary

August 10, 2011

Dear SMES Families,

It is a pleasure to once again welcome you to St. Michaels Elementary School. As we embark on a new school year it gives us the opportunity to begin with a new slate. The joy of a new school year affords students with a new beginning. To come with a fresh outlook toward a new teacher and a new curriculum, that will allow us to learn, grow and succeed to an even higher potential.

Please remember that my door is always open. I would be more than happy to meet with you at any time. Please stop in, email or give me a call. I am looking forward to the 2011-2012 school year, and I hope that you are as well. I hope you and your child have a great school year!

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Tracy L. Elzey*

Mrs. Tracy L. Elzey  
Principal

## ***St. Michaels Elementary School Belief System***

The faculty and staff of St. Michaels Elementary School have adopted the following fundamental beliefs about learning and schooling derived from the current research in education on how children learn.

### ***Our Vision:***

We envision SMES as an oasis of fulfilled promises and maximized potential.

### ***Our Mission:***

St. Michaels Elementary School provides our diverse community with a safe learning environment where our children can grow by becoming self-directed learners. All students will be empowered to reach a high level of personal excellence and achievement in an ever-changing, multi-cultural, and interdependent global society.

### ***Our Beliefs:***

1. Every student deserves a safe, respectful, and caring learning environment.
2. Strong partnerships between the home, school, and community are important to high quality learning.
3. Although children may learn at different rates and in different ways, all children can grow to their highest potential.
4. Decisions about educational programs and practices for students must be guided by valid, reliable data, professional judgment, state curriculum and informed stakeholders' involvement.
5. Student achievement is the first priority of the Talbot County Public Schools.

St. Michaels Elementary School has embraced character development as a means of reinforcing positive values and strong character in our students. Students will learn about the Six Pillars of Character – *trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship*. The Winners Walk Tall program brings a community volunteer into each classroom once a week to discuss character with the students. Our teachers integrate character lessons with the curriculum on a regular basis. Please call if you would like more information on our character development initiative, and if you'd like to help by becoming a Character Coach.

## **Arrival Procedures**

1. Car riders are dropped off in the parking lot facing Seymour Avenue only. Please cut through the small visitors' parking lot in front of the building. Stop in front of the main entrance (by the two large white canopies). Car riders may not be dropped off at the bus circle near the pool for safety reasons.
2. Students need to be in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m. to begin instruction.
3. Parents are not permitted to walk their child to class. It is important that all students begin their morning routines and complete the homeroom period independently. Additionally, this is not a time for parent/teacher conferencing. Teachers are extremely busy during this time and cannot discuss individual matters. Please write a note or call the office to arrange a time for a meeting.
4. When late openings are necessary and/or if school will be closed for an emergency, snow, or inclement weather, the Connect-Ed dialer will call you using the latest phone number that has been given to the school. The announcement will also be made over the following radio stations; WCEI (1460 AM, 96.7 FM), WCEM (1240 AM, 106.3 FM), and WCTD (107.1 FM). *Please do not call the school unless it is an emergency.*
5. **Pre-Kindergarten students** will attend school on delayed opening days only if the delay is less than 2 hours. If a morning delay is less than 2 hours, Pre-K students will ride their regular bus to school. They will be dismissed at 10:40, and will ride home on the same buses they ride on a normal day. If school is delayed 2 hours or more, there will be no am Pre-K.

## **Attendance - Students** **Policy 10-2**

It is important for students to attend school every day. When students are absent, class activities are missed which are very difficult to make up. The Talbot County Board of Education requires attendance of all students and charges the school administration with enforcement of student attendance regulations in accordance with Maryland Public School Law and COMAR.

Under Maryland Code, an absence shall be considered **lawful** under the following conditions:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| >Death in the immediate family                       | >Illness of the student       |
| >Court summons                                       | >Hazardous weather conditions |
| >Work approved or sponsored by the school            | >State emergency              |
| >Observance of a religious holiday                   | >Health exclusion             |
| >Other emergencies as approved by the Superintendent |                               |
| >Lack of authorized transportation                   | >Suspension                   |

Given the proven positive results of regular school attendance upon student performance and growth, parents, with the support of the school, should promote and insure the daily school attendance of their child.

## UNLAWFUL CAUSE OF ABSENCE REGULATION 13A.08.01.04

An absence for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as **unlawful** and may constitute truancy.

### CODE 20 Truant.

A Truant is a student (age 5 up to 16) who is absent without lawful cause as defined in COMAR 13A.08.01.03 from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

Habitual Truant. A student is a **habitual truant** if he or she is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days in excess of 20% of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year.

CODE 21 Other unlawful absences.

### TARDINESS CRITERIA

For the purpose of this policy, tardiness is defined as any absence of a student at the time a given class begins, provided that the student is in attendance before the close of that class. Lawful and unlawful tardiness is determined by applying the same criteria as absence. **Six (6) unlawful tardies (less than 120 minutes) equals one unlawful absence.**

### ABSENCE DESCRIPTIONS

- A. Present for a full day = student is in attendance four hours or more of the school day
- B. Present for a half day = student is in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours
- C. Absent whole day = present for 119 minutes or less of the school day
- D. Tardy to school = absent less than 120 minutes in the morning
- E. A student enrolled for less than a full day is to be counted present based on the amount of time he/she is scheduled.

#### Examples:

- A student scheduled for a 2 hour block of time will be counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for that block of time. If the student is absent for that block of time, the student will be counted absent for a full day.
  - A student scheduled for a two hour block of time will be counted present for ½ day if the student is in attendance for one hour.
- F. A student is counted present if at school or at a place at a school activity sponsored by the school and personally supervised by a member(s) of the school staff.

- G. A student is considered absent from any classes when they arrive more than halfway through the period or leave before half of the class has been completed.

#### ABSENCE CRITERIA

- A. Present for a full day = student is in attendance four hours or more of the school day
- B. Present for a half day = student is in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours

Written excuses for lawful absences by parent, guardian, medical, court, or social agency notes shall be required on the day the student returns to school. After 15 days, any unlawful absence cannot be changed to a lawful absence. Notes from parents will be accepted up to the allowable time limit of five (5) absences per semester or 10 absences per year.

Students are to make up work missed for both lawful absences and for unlawful absences. It is the student's responsibility to make up work. Students shall be allotted two (2) school days for each lawful or unlawful day absent. These make-up absence days will begin the second day after the student returns to school. This policy does not automatically extend due dates for long-term assignments unless approved by the principal.

The school strongly discourages families scheduling vacations during the school year. If a student will be absent due to a vacation, the principal must be notified of the dates in advance. While those absences will still be coded unlawful, prior notification will eliminate them from being counted towards grades being automatically affected or toward potential court action.

Any student absent for a half or whole day shall be ineligible to participate in any extra curricular activity scheduled on that day unless previously excused by the principal or the principal's designee.

#### CONSEQUENCES FOR UNLAWFUL OR EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

**A failing course grade will be given to all students in grades 6 – 12 who have more than five (5) unlawful absences in a semester course or more than ten (10) unlawful absences in a year-long course. Parents of students who are in danger of failing due to absences will be notified in writing of the possible consequences and of their right to appeal. The parents of students, K – 5 with more than ten (10) unlawful absences will be referred to District Court by the Office of Student Services.**

Students must receive a two-day prior approval for college visits from the administration and the student's teachers.

#### APPEAL PROCESS FOR UNUSUAL OR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Extenuating circumstances for absence deemed unlawful may be appealed in writing by the parent or guardian directly to the principal whose responsibility it is to assure that the due process is maintained.

Appeals must be initiated by the parent or guardian within five (5) school days after the student and parent have been notified in writing of the unlawful absence(s),

The appeal conference shall require the presence of the parent or guardian and the student as well as professional personnel involved.

#### Talbot County Truancy Court

Maryland Law requires that any child between the ages of 5 and 16 attend school on a regular basis. In April 2011, the Governor signed into law the Talbot County Truancy Reduction Pilot Program. Truant students and their families will participate in the program whose purpose is to improve attendance in children ages five to sixteen. This program is a collaborative effort involving the Talbot County Circuit Court, the Talbot County Board of Education, the Talbot County Department of Social Services, the Talbot County Department of Juvenile Services, Eastern Shore Psychological Services, The YMCA, Local Legislative Representatives, the Talbot County Health Department, the Talbot County Local Management Board and other service providers.

The program will focus on identifying the underlying causes of chronic truancy in order to improve student attendance and school success rates through referral for appropriate services and support.

#### **Bullying/Harrassment Policy 10.16**

As used in this policy, "bullying, harassment, or intimidation" means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile education environment by substantially interfering with a student's physical or psychological well being and is:

- Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or,
- threatening or seriously intimidating; and
- occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or,
- substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

“Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

### **Definitions**

- A. Assault: Intentionally causing or attempting to cause serious physical injury to another person. This includes but is not limited to making a verbal threat, making a fist, and pulling hair.
- B. Bullying: Exposing a student to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more students which adversely affect the victim’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs or activities.
- C. Discrimination: Disparate treatment based on a person’s race, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability, or age.
- D. Fighting: Physical encounters involving two or more students for the purpose of overcoming a person by blows, battery or weapons.
- E. Harassment: Perceived or actual experiences of discomfort with identity issues in regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other identifying characteristics by a student, which adversely affects the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs or activities.
- F. Hazing: Acts which subject a student to bodily injury or humiliation for the purpose of initiation into a student organization.
- G. Intimidation: Subjection of a student to intentional actions that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority which adversely affects that student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational program or activities.
- H. Retaliation: An act of reprisal or getting back at a person for an act he/she has committed.
- I. Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including requests for sexual favors, unwanted touching, stalking, and sexual jokes.

### **Standard Consequences and Remedial Actions for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and for persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation and for persons found to have made false accusations**

Consequences and remedial actions for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and for persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation and for persons found to have made false accusations should be consistently and fairly applied after appropriate investigation has determined that such an offense has occurred. The

following list of consequences and remedial actions is presented in no particular order and is provided as a guide that by no means limits Principals/designees from implementing other additional consequences and remedial actions.

### **Standard Consequences**

- Time out
- Loss of a privilege
- Verbal reprimand
- Parental notification
- Detention
- Reassignment of seats in class, cafeteria, or bus
- Reassignment of classes
- Reassignment to another mode of transportation
- Reassignment to another school.
- Completion of letter of acknowledgement of action, with apology, to victim (after review by staff and not in a case of sexual harassment or intimidation)
- Reparation to victim in the form of payment for or repair of damage to possession
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Extended suspension
- Transfer to an appropriate alternative program
- Referral to law enforcement
- Expulsion

### **Remedial Actions**

- Parent/Student Conference
- Counseling with school counselor or school psychologist
- Education about the effects of bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Behavioral contract
- Positive behavioral supports – e.g. functional behavioral assessment; behavioral intervention plan; remediation of problem behaviors that takes into account the nature of the offense, the developmental level of the student, and the students history
- Referral to an external agency
- Participation in counseling (delivered by a school or community mental health provider)
- Cooperation with a behavioral management program developed in consultation

- with a mental health professional
- Satisfactory completion of community service

**Procedures for Reporting Acts of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation**

The following procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation are presented as a guide that by no means limits Principals/designees from implementing other additional procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation.

- A. If a student complains that he/she is currently the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the staff member will respond quickly and appropriately to investigate and intervene, as safety permits.
- B. If a student expresses a desire to discuss an incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.
- C. **Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms may be obtained in the school's main (front) office, counselor's office or from the TCPS website.** The forms may be submitted by a student, parent, close adult relative, or staff member to school administration. A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the form if the student wishes. 5
- D. Reporting forms are to be submitted to the school Principal/designee.
- E. *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms* may also be obtained submitted by a student, parent or guardian, close relative, or staff member to school administration.

**Cafeteria**

Student Lunch .....	\$ 1.75
Reduced Student Lunch .....	\$ .40
Milk .....	\$ .40
Student Breakfast .....	\$ 1.00
Reduced Student Breakfast .....	\$ .30

Snacks are available to be purchased by all students who have cash or who have money on their lunch account. If you prefer for your child to not purchase these items a block can be placed on their account. Please contact Susan Clark in food services at SMES to address this issue.

\*Breakfast is available to all students. Families who find it difficult to pay for all or most of the cost of meals may qualify for Free or Reduced priced meals. An application for assistance must be completed and approved by the Food Services Dept. If you have not already filled one out, please call for an application.

## **Care of Textbooks**

Textbooks are provided to all students. They are to be cared for at all times. Students will be charged the replacement cost for lost or damaged books.

## **Computer Usage** **Policy 10.32**

Technology and the Internet - Students are expected to use technology in a manner appropriate to the academic mission of Talbot County Public Schools and in accordance with all legal and ethical standards. Technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, electronic devices, software, Internet, and all other network services. The use of computer resources is a revocable privilege. Failure to abide by this policy may render the student ineligible to use the school's computing facilities and may bring disciplinary or even legal action. Students must make available for inspection by a teacher or administrator upon request any computer, messages or files sent or received. The school has the right to review these items for appropriateness, and to limit or revoke a student's access at any time, and for any reason.

- A. General Conditions of Use: Computers and network access are provided to students for school-related purposes. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Transmission of any material in violation of Federal, State, or local law or ordinance.
  - 2. Use of technology for commercial activities by students or student groups. Commercial activity includes, but is not limited to the following:
    - a. Any activity that requires an exchange of money and/or credit card numbers;
    - b. Any activity that requires entry into an area of service for which the school may be charged a fee;
    - c. Any purchases or sales of any kind;
    - d. Solicitation of donations; and
    - e. Any use for product advertisement or political lobbying.
  - 3. Non-moderated communication methods such as instant messaging, chat rooms, and e-mail, except as explicitly authorized by a teacher or administrator.
- B. Files and File Management: The permission to store files on school system computers or computer networks is subject to responsible and ethical use.
  - 1. Images, sounds, music, video, or materials that are pornographic, obscene,

- or vulgar, or depict the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or illegal and/or violent behavior (and/or would violate school rules if in non-digital formats) may not be downloaded, uploaded, imported or used.
2. Illegal use, distribution or transfer of copyrighted material to school computers including text, music, video, images, or audio files is prohibited. Students must abide by copyright laws and download/import only music or other files to a school-owned computer that he/she is authorized or legally permitted to reproduce, or for which he/she has the copyright.
  3. File sharing must be approved and directed by the teacher.
  4. Copying, changing, reading, or using files in another user's storage area (such as hard disk space, optical media, flash media, server space, personal folders, etc.) without the user's permission and/or for the purpose of academic cheating is prohibited.
  5. Files may be stored only in locations and formats authorized for the student's use. Storing non-school related material (files) on a school system file server is prohibited.
  6. For students issued a computer for their individual use, it is the responsibility of each student to ensure that student-loaded files and programs do not consume hard drive space needed for instructional or educational requirements.
- C. Network and Internet Access: Access to the school system's computing facilities is granted with a computer account. Accounts are assigned to individuals and are not to be shared.
1. The account owner is responsible for all activity performed from his/her account. Activity on a user's account may be monitored and recorded. It is a violation of this policy to allow others to use this account or to use another person's account, with or without that person's permission.
  2. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent or assume the identity of other users.
  3. To protect students while at school and to meet the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements, access to the Internet is filtered through a commercial filtering system. Attempts to in any way bypass or negate the filtering of Internet content is prohibited.
  4. The Internet is a powerful learning tool, but must be used safely. Students are not to reveal identifying or personal information about themselves or others when using the Internet.
  5. Posting harmful material about others to make them the subject of ridicule

- or damage their reputations (so called cyber bullying) is prohibited.
6. Harassment, threats or intimidation via Internet or Local Area Network (LAN) is strictly prohibited, and subject to disciplinary action. Students should report to school administrators or other staff any such activity that they have observed or have knowledge of, particularly if these actions occurred while using school-owned technology.
- D. Security: Security on any computer system is a necessity and a high priority. All security problems must be reported to an administrator.
1. Attempts by a user to log on to the TCPS administrative network or servers using another's identity are prohibited.
  2. Bypassing or attempting to bypass the school's filtering software is prohibited.
  3. The use or attempt to connect a home computer or personal electronic devices to any part of the TCPS network unless instructed by an administrator is prohibited.
  4. Sharing passwords with another person for any reason is prohibited and every effort should be made to keep all passwords secure and private.
  5. Students must not knowingly introduce or knowingly allow the introduction of any computer virus to any school computer.
- E. Care, Service, and Repair of school-system technology: Students are responsible for all technology resources provided for their use or in their possession.
1. Any broken or malfunctioning computer component, software application, operating system, network service, or peripheral should be reported to the technicians or to a teacher or administrator.
  2. All equipment, software, and network configurations will be maintained by TCPS Technology Department.
  3. Vandalizing or defacing hardware by writing upon, placing stickers upon, etching, staining, or otherwise intentionally altering the surface of hardware is prohibited.
  4. Removing inventory and identification tags from any technology equipment is prohibited.
  5. Students issued a computer for their individual use should:
    - a. Carry their computers in the case provided by the school system, especially when the computers are taken out of school.
    - b. Have his/her computer fully charged at the start of each school day.
- F. Hacking and Electronic Trespassing: Altering or modifying the pre-installed software is prohibited. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Installing any additional software applications;
2. Changing the computer name;
3. Altering, or removing pre-installed software components including, but not limited to: productivity applications, security and/or utility software, and operating system components;
4. Altering user accounts or file permissions granted to them;
5. Taking apart the computer for access to internal parts or in an attempt to “repair” the computer.

Violations of these regulations will result in disciplinary action and may also result in criminal charges.

G. Violations of this policy: Student misbehavior in a technology setting often has a non-technology parallel and should be handled using the same progressive discipline steps as for other infractions of school rules. However, some violations are specific to the nature of electronic devices and media, and should be guided by the following.

1. Technology tools are increasingly central to teachers’ lessons and student learning. Full loss of computing privileges should be a final recourse when other disciplinary measures have failed to modify inappropriate behaviors; or in response to a serious violation that threaten the safety or wellbeing of students, the security of the school system’s servers or networks, or is a violation that could result in criminal charges.
2. Steps in a progressive discipline strategy appropriate to misuse of computing privileges may include:
  - a. Progressive restriction of permitted access (independent Internet search capabilities, use of multimedia tools, access to external ports, etc.).
  - b. Revocation of take-home privileges in the case of an individually issued computer.
  - c. Other restrictions deemed necessary to maintain the intended and appropriate uses of technology.

H. Student Agreement: This policy will be reviewed annually with students in grades 4-12 in an age-appropriate manner.

1. An *Acceptable Use Agreement* must be signed by students in grades 4-6 who will be allowed use of school system computers or networks for independent Internet searches or use not directly supervised by staff.
2. It is presumed that all computer use by students in grades K-3 will be closely and continuously monitored

## **Conduct -Students- Policy 10-14**

A school is a community of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and businesses working together to prepare students for careers, college or advanced technical training. Student behavior is an important factor in meeting with success in the classroom. Students are responsible for following school rules and regulations, which are designed to ensure a safe and orderly atmosphere where students may learn effectively. Respect for others as well as one's self is a cardinal rule at school.

- Each student will be responsible for providing a positive and healthy environment for others by maintaining order, self-discipline, and having consideration for the rights and property of others. Each student will bear the responsibility for his or her own conduct.
- Each student will be responsible for neatness and cleanliness of personal attire and hygiene.
- Each student will respect other students, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel and visitors as human beings and fellow citizens of the school community.
- Each student will respect the personal property of others and refrain from causing intentional damage or unnecessary wear and tear to books, facilities, school materials, school buildings and furnishings, and the personal property of others.
- Each student will refrain from fighting, creating disturbances, denying others the use of school facilities or buildings, using or carrying any weapon on school grounds, intentionally injuring another person or acting in such a manner as to expose others to risk or danger of harm or injury. A student will not use threats or intimidation against any other person.
- Each student will respect the health and safety of others and will refrain from using tobacco; or using, possessing, transmitting, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, narcotic substance, illegal or prohibited drug or substance; or by engaging in gambling, extortion, theft, assault, excessive noise, or any other unlawful activity.
- Each student will respect the educational process and learning environment of others by refraining from intentional or habitual tardiness, unexcused absences, or any activities that diminish the rights of others and the opportunity for other students to receive an education and obtain the maximum benefit from a public education.
- Any student suspended from school for any reason will be suspended from participating in athletics, including tryouts, practices, games, contests, meets, and team travel for the length of the school suspension. Students who regain

eligibility status may be afforded the opportunity to participate in athletics as set forth in Bayside Conference rules and regulations.

- A school suspension shall include all forms of “in school” and “out of school” suspensions, including Checkmate and long-term suspensions.

Violations of school rules or regulations will result in action by the school administration. Each school will fully cooperate with police and other authorities in an effort to maintain the school as a safe and drug free learning environment.

Weapons on school property based on and consistent with the Maryland State Department of Education’s interpretation:

Disciplinary actions for the following behaviors may result in the individual being suspended or expelled from school and/or referred to Juvenile Services or another law enforcement agency.

A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon. The penalty may range from suspension to expulsion.

The following are considered weapons and explosives:

**Firearms:** Handguns, rifles, shotguns, bomb, starter pistols, grenades, rockets, .32 caliber gun, missile, .22 semi automatic

**Other Guns:** flare gun, paint gun, glue gun, BB gun, paint ball gun, nail gun, pellet gun, look-alikes

**Other Weapons:** knife, pocket knife, stick, brass knuckles, tool knife blade, wooden club, switch blade, hammer, razor, box cutter, xacto knife, Swiss army knife, scissors, hypodermic needle, steak knife, awl, metal fingernail file, sling shot, razor blade, screw driver, lock blade knife, broom handle, metal pole, poison, Bowie knife, throwing star, pepper spray, metal knuckles, nunchakus, dart, laser pointer

**Explosives:** Exploding pen, firecrackers, gun shells, poppers, bullet, gas odor bomb, Molotov cocktail, dry ice in bottle, model rocket, fuel, butane lighters, shotgun shells, smoke bomb, stink bomb, M-80, cherry bomb

\*\*The same code of behavior is expected on Talbot County Public School buses.

### Bus Rules- Conduct- cont.

The safe and efficient transportation of students is dependent upon the consistent application of regulations directed toward safety. The following responsibilities identify those student-related responsibilities that must be adhered to in order for the safety-related objectives to be achieved.

#### A. Bus Boarding Responsibilities

1. Students should be at their assigned bus stop at least five minutes before the regularly scheduled bus arrival time in the morning.
2. Students should wait for the school bus in an orderly fashion, out of the way of traffic.
3. Students should wait at their designated bus stop until the bus has completely stopped before moving toward or boarding the bus.

4. Students who must cross the roadway to board the bus should check to see if the bus red warning lights are activated and that the roadway is clear of traffic before crossing the street.
5. The bus should be boarded in a quiet and orderly fashion. Students should always use the bus handrail and steps in a safe manner.

B. On-Board Responsibilities

1. To insure a safe and efficient bus loading process, students are to walk to their seat (assigned or unassigned) and be seated as quickly as possible.
2. Books and other materials should be held by the student or placed on the floor directly beneath the seat. No books or any other objects are to be placed in the bus aisle.  
Additional information concerning musical instruments and large objects is found in Section XI.
3. Students are to sit in their bus seat, facing forward with feet out of the aisle and hands, arms, and head inside the bus.
4. Eating, drinking, smoking, lighting matches, lighters, etc., and littering on the bus are prohibited.
5. Students shall not throw paper or any other matter out of the bus window.
6. Loud conversations, profanity, obscene gestures, rough play, and fighting are not permitted on the bus.
7. Any damage to the interior or exterior of the school bus is prohibited and will be cause for suspension of bus riding privileges. In addition, the parent(s) and student are responsible for any financial restitution necessary as a result of such damage. Continuation of privileges will only be considered after financial restitution is made.
8. THE EMERGENCY DOOR or EMERGENCY WINDOW handles should never be touched or tampered with unless directed to do so by the bus driver.
9. Students are not to sit in the driver's seat or tamper with any controls or bus equipment.
10. Students must obey all directions from the driver. The bus driver is in charge of and responsible for students on the bus unless a teacher is on the bus. When a teacher is on the school bus for functions such as field trips, the teacher is the responsible person.

C. Bus Loading Responsibilities at School

1. Students must walk to the bus loading area in a quiet and orderly manner.
2. Students are not permitted to smoke. Smoking or lighting any combustible material in or near a school bus is in violation of State Motor Vehicle Law.
3. Students must stand away from any moving buses until the bus comes to a

complete stop. It is extremely dangerous for students to attempt to retrieve papers, books, etc., that may be close to a moving bus or a bus about to move.

4. Students are to board the bus in an orderly manner following the same applicable procedures addressed in a previous section (A. Bus Boarding Responsibilities).

D. Bus Unloading Responsibilities at Bus Stop

1. All students must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before getting out of the seat.
2. Students must get off the bus only at their regularly assigned bus stop, unless permission has been previously granted.
3. To avoid mishaps and accidental tripping when leaving the bus, the handrail near the steps should be used.
4. Any students who must cross the road after leaving the bus must do so approximately ten (10) feet in front of the bus without undue delay. Traffic should be checked carefully before crossing the street. Students are NOT to attempt to retrieve dropped books, papers, etc., until the bus is gone.
5. Throwing objects, (stones, snowballs, etc.) at school bus or any other vehicle is prohibited.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

1. Students will be sent home by their usual means of travel, which we will have on file, unless we receive a note.
2. Students are not permitted to ride any other bus except the one to which they are assigned. If your child needs to ride a different bus, you must send a written note, which will need to be approved by the principal. Please include your child's name, the date, and where your child is to be dropped off. No phone requests, please.
3. Dismissal begins at 2:35 pm, with car riders and walkers. Bus riders will be dismissed at 2:40 p.m.
4. Car riders are picked up using the Seymour Avenue entrance. Please cut through the parking lot and form a double line once the turn has been made at the fence, stopping at the orange cones in front of the school. ALL cars are loaded prior to anyone being dismissed, one line at a time, this is for the safety of all families.
5. Make sure your child knows what to do if school is dismissed early for weather or unfavorable conditions affecting the building. It is impossible to contact each family when closing school for an emergency. The Connect-Ed dialer will call you using the latest phone number that has been given to the school if there will be an early dismissal that has not been planned. Please stay tuned to the local radio stations if conditions indicate a possible early dismissal due to weather conditions.

6. On early dismissal days, students are dismissed at 11:20 am. \*Pre-K students will also dismiss at this time.

### **Dress Code - 10.15**

School is a place where the entire community comes together to help students achieve their educational and career goals. Student dress should reflect the importance of that purpose. School dress can be fun and stylish without being offensive or distracting.

The Board of Education believes that student dress and grooming should be clean and neat and should not be disruptive to the educational process. Moreover, the Board believes that clear standards for student dress must be established, communicated, and enforced uniformly by school level (elementary or secondary) as appropriate. To this end, it is the responsibility of each principal to meet with his/her respective group of administrators to establish collective standards.

Standards for student dress should reflect parent, student, and staff input from each school and should be published at least three (3) months before the school year begins. With the possible exception of “dress down days” or “school spirit days”, the following minimum standards of dress will apply for all students

- A. No strappy tank tops.
- B. No clothing with obscene or inappropriate comments or pictures.
- C. No clothing that depicts drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or violence.
- D. No short shorts, or cut offs.
- E. No halters, midriffs, or tube tops.
- F. No clothing with holes above the 2” mark.
- G. No pants worn 2” or more below waist. **SMES uses the longest finger rule. Shorts must be as long as your longest finger with hands down to your side.**
- H. No skirts, dresses, or shorts worn more than 6” above the knee even when worn with leggings or tights.
- I. No jewelry or accessories that could be viewed as potentially dangerous.
- J. No flip-flops.
- K. No head coverings including but not limited to hats, bandanas, hoods, visors or sunglasses
- L. No clothing or accessories deemed gang related or promoting hatred toward a person or group based on their race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religion or disability.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

As parents and students you have rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well as state and local regulations and policies concerning

student records, their access, release, and confidentiality.

#### **Fire Drills & Safety Drills - Policy 5.4**

In compliance with Public School Laws – Subtitle 4, 7-406, it is required that every school in the county conduct at least ten (10) times during the school year, at least once every sixty (60) days, a fire drill. These drills are held to practice evacuating the building in case of an emergency. When the alarm sounds, staff and students should proceed to their designated area in a quick and orderly fashion. Students will participate in various safety drills, which may include either walking to or being transported by school bus to a secure location.

#### **Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior Policy 10.33**

It is the policy of Talbot County Public Schools to prohibit gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior on school property or school buses or at school-sponsored functions. It is the policy of Talbot County Public Schools to prohibit reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders, or others with reliable information about an act of gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior.

- A. Gang – “Criminal gang” means a group or association of three or more persons whose members:
- (1) individually or collectively engage in a pattern of criminal activity;
  - (2) have as one of their primary objectives or activities the commission of one or more underlying crimes (see page 12 of policy 10.33), including acts by juveniles that would be underlying crimes if committed by adults; and
  - (3) have in common an overt or covert organizational or command structure.
- B. Gang Activity – “Pattern of criminal gang activity” means the commission of, attempted commission of, conspiracy to commit, or solicitation of two or more underlying crimes (*see page 12*) or acts by a juvenile that would be an underlying crime if committed by an adult.
- (a) Activities on or near school vehicles or property. – A person may not threaten an individual, or a friend or family member of an individual with use of physical force or violence to coerce, induce, or solicit the individual to participate in or prevent the individual from leaving a criminal gang:
    - (1) in a school vehicle, as defined under §11-154 of the Transportation Article; or
    - (2) in, or within 1,000 feet of real property owned or leased to an elementary school, secondary school, or county board of education and used for elementary or secondary education.
  - (b) Applicability. – Subsection (a) of this section applies whether or not:
    - (1) school was in session at the time of the crime; or
    - (2) the real property

was being used for purposes other than school purposes at the time of the crime.

Disciplinary actions for the following behaviors may result in the individual being suspended or expelled from school and/or referred to Juvenile Services or another law enforcement agency:

- A. Assault: intentionally causing or attempting to cause serious physical injury to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, making a verbal threat, making a fist, and pulling hair.
- B. Bullying: language or behavior that causes a reasonable person to feel threatened, intimidated, or afraid
- C. Being forced to hand over money or possessions
- D. Being subject to assault or battery in school because of a dispute over incidents that take place outside of school
- E. Discrimination: disparate treatment based on a person's race, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability, or age
- F. Fighting: physical encounters involving two or more students for the purpose of overcoming a person by blows, battery, or weapons
- G. Harassment: unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct based on the victim's race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, or disability
- H. Hazing: acts which subject a student to bodily injury or humiliation for the purpose of initiation into a student organization
- I. Intimidation: to frighten or compel action by another as a result of verbal, written, or physical threats or actions or the use of inappropriate language (i.e., racial slurs, sexual statements). Intimidating behaviors often result from an effort to create an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim.
- J. Sexual Harassment: unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including requests for sexual favors, unwanted touching, stalking, and sexual jokes
- K. If students believe they have been sexually harassed or bullied, they should promptly report the matter to a teacher, guidance counselor, or school administrator.

### **Grading - Policy 9.25**

Report card codes and definitions that may be used are as follows:

#### **Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grades 1-2:**

B Beginning: Initial understanding. Assistance often needed.

D Developing: Some understanding. Assistance sometimes needed.

S Secure: Thorough understanding. Assistance rarely needed.

\* Percentage ranges will be equated to corresponding Standard of Learning descriptors as indicated below for grades 3 and above. Teachers are to use standard conventions of rounding to the nearest whole number:

<u>Standard of Learning</u>	<u>Percentage Range</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Excellent Learning	90% - 100%	A
Mastery Learning	80% - 89%	B
Acceptable Learning	70% - 79%	C
Unsatisfactory Learning	69% or below	U

### **Grades 3 – 12:**

I - Incomplete                      NM - No Mark

Note:

Code I must be changed to a final percent (or other code) before the next reporting period or, for end of year, by July 1. The principal may approve an extension due to prolonged illness or other EXCUSED circumstance.

WF – Withdrawn-Failed                      S – Satisfactory  
(after the 2nd week)                      U – Unsatisfactory

### **Guidance Counseling**

Our counseling program is an integral part of the total educational program for all students and is the shared responsibility of the total school staff. The elementary school counselor can assist in the development of communication skills, facilitate student personal and academic growth, assist in the development of problem solving skills, and coordinate programs for parent support to enhance student success. Please call our guidance office if you or your child is in need of services.

### **HOMEWORK - Policy 9.27**

Homework should be an integral and relevant part of every student’s instructional program. It should be used consistently throughout the grades and classes. The term “homework” refers to an assignment to be prepared during a period of supervised study in class or outside of class, which requires individual work in the

home. Parents are encouraged to assist by providing quiet time for study, checking assignments, and questioning when no assignments are brought home. The purposes of homework are: to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the pupil.

### **Illegal Alcohol/ Drug Use by Students - Policy 10.17**

#### **I. Board Philosophy**

The Talbot County Board of Education is committed to the task of maintaining a drug and alcohol free environment on school property, on school transportation and at all school sponsored activities. The Board is committed to the full and strict enforcement of “Drug Free Zones” as described in Article 27, Section 286D of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

- A. **Standards of Conduct - Drugs, Illicit Drugs:** The manufacture, possession, sale, distribution, and use of illicit drugs is prohibited by Town, City and County ordinance, State law and Federal statute by persons of any age. The unlawful manufacture, possession, distribution, or use of illicit drugs on Talbot County Public Schools' property or as part of any of its activities by students or their guests is prohibited.
- B. **Standards of Conduct - Alcohol:** Maryland law declares possession of alcohol by persons under the age of 21 unlawful. Therefore, possession of alcohol by students or their guests is prohibited.

The Talbot County Board of Education supports a policy that ensures that students recognize that alcohol and other drug abuse are both health care issues as well as illegal acts. This policy stresses the need for

- strong and consistent disciplinary as well as legal action
- supportive efforts for prevention and student assistance
- parent involvement

#### **Instructional Process**

The Board of Education endorses the practices inherent in “mastery learning and mastery teaching”. It is our expectation that all students will successfully master the core objectives for each subject. The professional staff will use an instructional process that communicates and models common expectations for student learning, motivates students to seek high achievement, reduce prerequisite skill deficits as quickly as possible, facilitate mastery of the essential subject’s objectives, and intellectually challenge all students. Further explanations of this instructional process and grading system will be offered at our Open House, PTA meetings, and at Parent Conferences.

## **Invitations**

Party invitations are not to be handed out on school property. This includes the school bus. This practice promotes exclusion and is not a fair practice to all students. If invitations are sent in, they will be returned in the child's bookbag.

## **Lost and Found**

All books and clothing that are found on the school grounds should be turned into the office. Students should look for their lost items as soon as they discover something is missing. All "lost and found" items will be placed in the "lost and found" bin so that students may check for lost items. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity or disposed of at the end of the school year or as the pile becomes unmanageable.

## **Media Center**

The Library/Media Center houses a variety of books and audio-visual materials. All students are scheduled to visit the media center weekly. They also have time throughout the day where they are able to return and check out books if they finish a book prior to their scheduled media center day.

## **Medication Administration to Students - Policy 10.26**

Students will not be permitted to take medications while at school unless certain conditions are satisfied. If medications must be administered by school personnel, it must be done under the following conditions:

1. A completed "Medication Authorization" signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner and parent must be presented to the school nurse. It is the responsibility of the parent to submit an updated authorization form each year.
2. The medication must be delivered directly to the school health staff, or designee by the parent in its original, labeled container. All containers and written messages must include the student's name. All medications will be securely stored in the health suite. Students are not permitted to have prescription or over-the-counter medications in their possession while at school or in transit to or from school with the exception of prescribed inhalers or medications.
3. Medications prescribed and dispensed by health professionals of the school's Wellness Center can be transported on the date of first issuance from school to

home by the student. The medication labels will include the student's name, name of medication, date prescribed, dosage, and practitioners name.

4. Parents may come to the school to administer medicine to their child, but must report their plan to do so in advance to the school principal.
5. It shall be required that a parent or guardian administer the first dose of the medication in order to closely monitor unexpected side effects. The first dose of medication dispensed at a school will be administered at the Wellness Center.

### **Newsletter**

*The Bluecrab*, our monthly newsletter containing current activities and other information relative to the school community, is published at the beginning of every month. This year, our newsletter can be found on our website. If you would prefer a paper copy, please notify Mrs. Burkhardt in the school office.

### **Parent Involvement Policy - Policy 11.11**

The Talbot County Board of Education recognizes that a child's education, from kindergarten through high school graduation, is a responsibility shared by the school, parents, and community. The Board believes that schools, parents, and children must work together as knowledgeable partners in order to educate all students to their potential. Building strong partnerships among home, school, and community are essential to carrying out the shared responsibility of developing the whole child.

The Board maintains a strong commitment to the role of parents and other caregivers in children's education and directs that each school, in collaboration with parents, develop and implement programs and practices that promote parent involvement. To this end, the Board supports the development and implementation of a Parent Involvement Policy (Policy 11.11 & 11.11AR).

### **Parent Conferences - Policy 9.26**

Parents are welcome to visit classrooms provided the visit is arranged ahead of time; but instructional time should never be used for parent-teacher conferences. Appointments should be made to conduct parent-teacher conferences before school convenes, after school, or at a time reasonable to the teacher and parent.

**\*\* November 10, 2011 & April 4, 2012 CONFERENCE DAYS**

## **Pictures**

Individual student pictures are taken in the fall of all students. In the spring, class pictures are taken and a special individual picture is offered. Yearbooks will also be available to order at the end of the school year.

Throughout the school year, student pictures are taken which are included in such publications as the newspaper, our county or school website or a bulletin board in the school. If you do not want your child to be included, please send in a letter stating so.

## **Portable Communication Devices - Policy 10.19**

The Talbot County Board of Education acknowledges that portable communication devices enhance learning and add to the well being of students; however, the Board also recognizes the possibility that these devices may distract or disrupt the education environment. Limited use of these devices will be permitted but must strictly follow the prescribed guidelines.

- I. **The procedures for ensuring that portable communication devices do not disrupt the learning environment in Talbot County Schools are as follows:**
  - A. Middle school and elementary school students are not permitted to possess or use portable communication devices while on Talbot County Public School property or while attending any middle school or elementary school activities. School office phones are available for those students who need to contact parents. **\*\*SMES students are able to bring phones and leave them in the office at Mrs. Burkhardt's desk if they are turned off. They can then be picked up at the end of the school day. This practice is not encouraged. However, we do realize that students sometimes need their phones for before school or after school activities and will need to be in contact with a parent or family member. If there becomes a problem, the student will be asked to no longer bring their phone. SMES and TCPS will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen portable communication devices that are brought to school or left in the office.**
  - B. Any staff member or student having knowledge or reasonable suspicion of unauthorized possession or use of a portable communication device by a student on Talbot County Public School property shall promptly report this information to the Principal/designee.

As per policy, Administration has the right to retain the phone until parents are able to pick the phone up from school; at the end of the school day. Please see the policy for the other offenses.

### **Positive Behavior Incentive Program**

A positive behavior approach is used throughout the in order to promote students' positive behaviors versus the negative. Students earn "Saints Bucks". These are saved and can be cashed in at the end of each month for prizes or incentive activities. Students are given many opportunities in all aspects of their school day to earn Saints Bucks.

### **Promotion/Retention - Policy 9.30**

The Board of Education reaffirms its belief in the mission statement that "each student will learn, grow, and succeed". It also believes that the successful learner will demonstrate exit outcomes. We further believe that success is enhanced through positive interaction of school, parents, students, and community with all accepting responsibility for the success of students.

As a result of our instructional process based on mastery learning, TCPS expects each student to master the essential objectives as outlined in the various Courses of Study to prepare them for their post-secondary experience.

**Promotion:** Student advances to the next grade level.

**Retention:** Student remains in the same grade because specified baseline expectations were not met.

**Assignment:** Student is placed in the next grade even though specified baseline expectations have not been met. Instead, the student has demonstrated progress with interventions or has previously been retained in elementary and/or middle school.

**Baseline Expectations:** The minimum skills necessary to make progress in the next grade.

**Intervention:** Additional instruction provided to students who do not meet baseline expectations in reading and/or mathematics.

**Individual Learning Plan (ILP):** Specific plan that outlines intervention strategies to ensure students meet baseline expectations in reading and/or mathematics.

**Student Services Team Plan (SST):** Specific plan which outlines intervention strategies to insure student success. This plan provides interventions for students as needed in the following areas: academic, medical, behavioral, and social.

**Promotion by Grade:** At each academic level, primary and intermediate, middle and high, the Board of Education has defined specific promotion requirements. Please refer

to Talbot County Policy 9.30 and Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.03.02.03 or consult your schools guidance counselor.

### **PTA**

Our PTA is an active organization, including teachers, parents and even student representatives. We welcome new members and invite you to become active in school affairs. Please contact Amanda McCormick with any ideas, questions or concerns.

### **School Counselor Office**

School counselors are an integral component in the education system. The school-counseling program is guided by the three state and national goals that address the needs of students for academic, career decisions making, and social/emotional success. School counseling services include counseling, advising, consulting, and coordinating programs and initiatives. School counseling achieves maximum effectiveness through the support and collaboration of parents, teachers, administrators and community members. Each school in Talbot County Public Schools has at least one counselor. You can reach your child's counselor by calling the school main office.

### **Special Education**

Programs are available for any child with special needs. Services are arranged through the IEP procedures based on the individual's educational needs. Please contact your child's Principal if you have any questions.

### **Student Insurance**

It is recommended that students purchase school accident insurance if parents do not have adequate coverage. Students participating in interscholastic athletics and certain classes are required to have insurance coverage. If a student needs to purchase insurance it is available on the Talbot County Public Schools website:  
[www.tcps.k12.md.us](http://www.tcps.k12.md.us)

### **Visitors - Policy 11.7**

All visits to a school shall be arranged through the office of the school principal, and all visitors shall proceed first to the school office. Visitors shall not solicit or offer for sale any wares, articles, stocks, insurance or other items or services on a school premises, unless written permission is first obtained from the superintendent or designated representatives, providing that such permission is also approved by the appropriate

school administrator.

Access of employee organization officers, members and/or other representatives to employees and school system work locations during work hours of employees shall be subject to regulations prescribed by the Superintendent.

No person shall willfully disturb any public school or public school meeting. Violators will be subject to arrest.

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