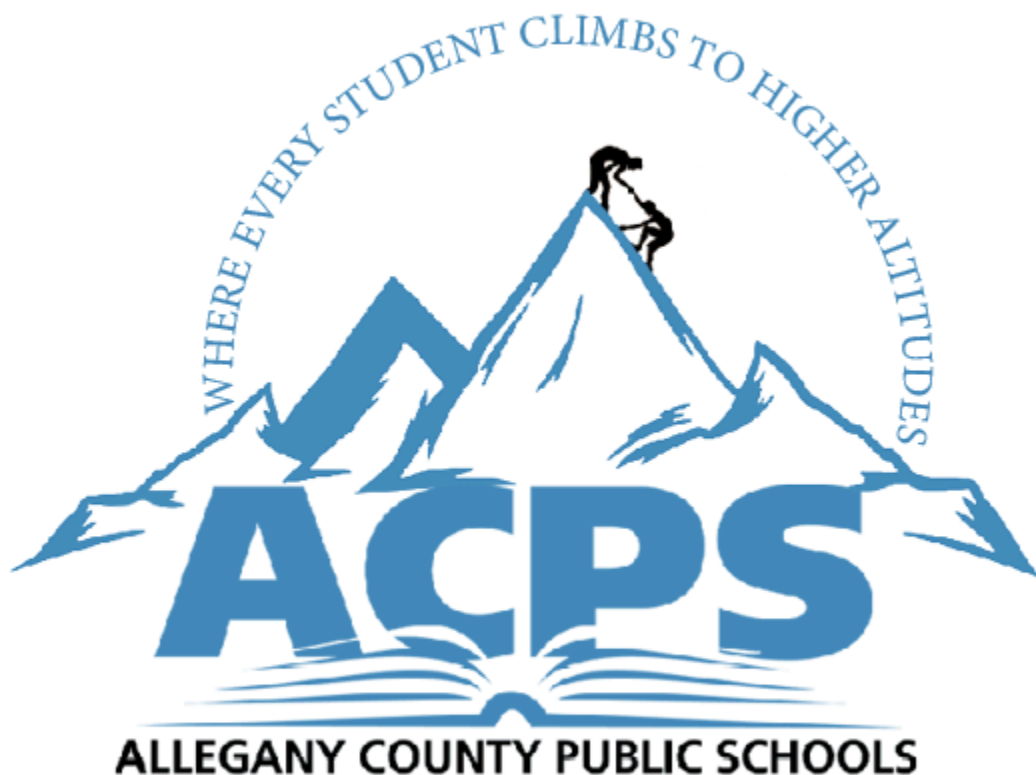


A Student's Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in the Allegany County Public School System



Respect, Responsibility, and the Right to Learn!

Revised August 2026

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2026-2027 ACPS Quick Reference Calendar

AUGUST 2026

17 (M)	Teachers' 1st Day - AM-Staff Dev/PM-Teacher Work Time
18-19 (Tu-W)	PowerSchool/School Based Staff Dev/Teacher Work Time
20 (Th)	AM- School Based Staff Dev/PM-Collaborative Planning
21 (F)	Supervisor Systemwide Professional Development
24 (M)	Teacher Work Time
25 (Tu)	Students' 1st Day (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
31 (M)	PK-K Begins Last Name A-L

SEPTEMBER 2026

01 (Tu)	PK-K Begins Last Name M-Z
02 (W)	All PK-K Students Start School
07 (M)	Labor Day (Schools & Offices Closed)

OCTOBER 2026

05 (M)	Parent Conference Day (Schools Closed) Elem.- 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. & 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.; Sec.-11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
16 (F)	Principal Staff Development (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
29 (Th)	End of 1st Marking Period
30 (F)	Teacher Work Time (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)

NOVEMBER 2026

02 (M)	Supervisor Staff Development (Schools Closed)
03 (Tu)	General Election Day (Schools & Offices Closed)
13 (F)	Report Cards Released
25 (W)	Thanksgiving Break (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
26-27 (Th-F)	Thanksgiving Break (Schools & Offices Closed)
30 (M)	Thanksgiving Break (Schools Closed)

DECEMBER 2026

22 (Tu)	Christmas Break (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
23 (W)	Christmas Break (Schools Closed)
24-31 (Th)	Christmas Break (Schools and Offices Closed)

JANUARY 2027

01 (F)	New Year's Day (Schools & Offices Closed)
12 (Tu)	Principal Staff Development (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
18 (M)	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Schools & Offices Closed)
22 (F)	End of 2nd Marking Period/Teacher Work Time (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)

FEBRUARY 2027

05 (F)	Reports Cards Released
12 (F)	Principal Staff Development (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Student)
15 (M)	Presidents' Day (Schools & Offices Closed)
22 (M)	Parent Conference Day (Schools Closed) Elem.- 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sec.-10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. & 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

MARCH 2027

16 (Tu)	Principal Staff Development (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
24-29 (W)	Easter Break (Schools Closed; Offices Closed March 26 & 29)

APRIL 2027

02 (F)	End of 3rd Marking Period/Teacher Work Time (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
13 (Tu)	Principal Staff Development (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
16 (F)	Report Cards Released

MAY 2027

13 (Th)	CCTE Certification Ceremony
14 (F)	Last Day for Seniors
17 (M)	Mountain Ridge High School Graduation
18 (Tu)	Allegany High School Graduation
19 (W)	Fort Hill High School Graduation
31 (M)	Memorial Day (Schools & Offices Closed)

JUNE 2027

03*(Th)	Last Day for Students (3-Hr Early Dismissal for Students)
04* (F)	Last day of Teachers - Principal Meeting/Teacher Work Time

Reminder: Snow make-up days for students will be determined by the April 2027 Board Meeting. End of year professional development & teacher work days will follow the designated snow make-up days. The Board of Education reserves the right to request the use of legal holidays due to emergency closings, if deemed necessary.

*MSDE requires the school district to extend the school year beyond the previously scheduled closing dates in the event of additional inclement weather days needed. Three built-in days are added to the end of the calendar. Calendar approved 05/12/2026.

Quick Community References

CRISIS

CALL OR TEXT 988

[CHAT.988lifeline.org](https://chat.988lifeline.org)

MD Crisis Hotline 240-964-1399

Trevor Project (LGBTQ safe space) 1-866-488-7386 or text 678 678

Allegany County Department of Social Services

1 Frederick Street

Cumberland, MD 21502

301-784-7000

- Child Support 301-784-7260 (Walk-ins welcome)
- Child Protective Services 1-800-917-7383
- In-home, out-of-home services 301-784-7122
- Energy Assistance
- Homeless Prevention Program
- Medicaid / Medicare
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Emergency / Safety Reporting

Child Abuse/Neglect 1-800-91Prevent

ACPS MD Safe Schools 1-833-MD-B-SAFE / 1-800-632-7233

www.safeschoolsmd.org

Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation - acpsmd.org click Report Bullying link or <https://acpsmd.org/offices/safety-security/report-bullying/>

Allegany County Sheriff's Office 301-777-1585

Cumberland City Police 301-777-1600

Hospital / Medical

UPMC Western Maryland 240-664-0844

12500 Willowbrook Road

Cumberland, MD 21502

upmc.com/locations/hospitals/western-maryland

ACM Dental Clinic 301-759-5580 (dental services for ages 3 to adult)

Allegany County Health Department (ACHD)

12501 Willowbrook Road

Cumberland, MD 21502

myalleganyhealth.org

301-759-5000

- Behavioral/Mental Health 301-759-5280 (walk-in eval M-F 8:30-3:00)
- Birth Certificates
- Dental Programs - Maryland Healthy Smiles 301-759-5030 (M-F 8:00-5:00)
- H.E.A.L. Mobile - Mobile health care
- <https://myalleganyhealth.org/calendar/> (calendar of events)
- Healthy Families (parenting, accessing local resources) 301-759-5079
- Immunizations - 301-759-5138 (Walk-ins Wednesdays 1:00-4:00)

Local Higher Education

Allegany College of Maryland

12401 Willowbrook Road SE

Cumberland, MD 21502

allegany.edu

Frostburg State University

101 Braddock Road

Frostburg, MD 21532

frostburg.edu

Introduction

Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS) strives to provide a teaching and learning community designed to foster intellectual development, citizenship, responsibility, and mutual respect among students and staff. As members of the ACPS learning community, all students have rights, responsibilities, and privileges as set forth in the Allegany County Board of Education policies, regulations, and state and federal laws. Every member of our school community shares the responsibility to create, honor, and support an environment that nurtures learning while honoring the dignity of all students, parents and staff.

Students have a responsibility for their own learning, personal conduct, and manner in which they exercise their rights and privileges. This handbook is a guide to the rights and responsibilities you enjoy as a student of the Allegany County School System and provides a general overview of some state and federal laws, Board policies, regulations, and guidelines relevant to students. It is not a definitive statement of your rights in any given situation. Brief summaries are provided and students and parents interested in topics may read specific laws, policies, regulations included in each section. Board policies and regulations are available on the ACPS website at www.acpsmd.org under Elected Board and Policy Manual. The Annotated Code of Maryland, the Code of Maryland Regulations and the policies of the ACPS are subject to change. All legal and policy changes made between the editions of this publication shall supersede the statements and references in this publication.

ACPS Nondiscrimination Statement

The Board believes that each and every student matters, and that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Board is committed to providing an educational and work environment that is free from discrimination, fosters equitable opportunities, and values diversity. To that end, all students and staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect of all individuals regardless of individual characteristics such as race, ethnicity, color, national origin, nationality, religion, sex, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, socioeconomic status, cognitive, emotional, physical ability, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes. ACPS prohibits the use of language and/or display of images and symbols that promote hate and can reasonably be expected to cause substantial disruption to schools, district operations, or activities. ACPS recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases and practices that have an unjustified disparate impact and create barriers to educational or employment opportunities. ACPS operates in compliance with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Attendance

Residents of Allegany County who are 5 years of age or older by September 1, and not yet age 21 on the first day of school, have a right to attend ACPS. This right extends through graduation from high school or the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 years of age, whichever occurs earlier. Daily attendance is essential to student achievement and required for course mastery and credit for courses. Students are required to attend school, arrive at school and to class on time at school and during virtual synchronous instruction due to weather. In order to maximize academic achievement, all parents, school staff, students, and the community must strive to improve overall school attendance. School administrators, teachers, and support staff are expected to make all reasonable attempts to assist students and parents in addressing barriers to good attendance.

Except when lawfully excused, students must attend all classes and required activities during the school day. A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for 50 percent or more of the school day. A student is counted present for a half day if the student is in attendance for 10 percent or more, but less than 50 percent of the school day. Students participating in interscholastic athletics are required to attend all of their scheduled classes on the day of practice or event. For further inquiries related to absences or tardiness, student-athletes should contact their coach or athletic director for further assistance.

Excused Absences

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recognizes the following as lawful absences:

- Work approved or sponsored by the school, ACPS or MSDE
- Death in the immediate family
- Student illness (with a parent or physician note)
- Pregnancy and parenting-related conditions (including absences due to an illness or medical appointment of the male or female student's child and absences due to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody, visitation)
- Court summons
- Hazardous weather conditions (that would endanger a student on the way to and from school)
- Doctor/Medical appointments
- Behavior/Mental health needs certified by behavior health professional
- Health exclusions
- Observance of a religious holiday
- State emergency
- Lack of authorized transportation (e.g., if the school bus does not show up)
- Out-of-school suspension

If students are absent from school for one of the above reasons, they must bring a note from a parent/guardian upon returning to school for the absence to be excused. Otherwise, the absence will be unexcused. Family vacations are typically not excused without prior authorization from the principal. Students enrolled in a school for at least 10 days and are absent, excused or unexcused, for 10 percent of school days (2 days per month) are considered chronically absent.

Unexcused Absences

An absence not excused for one of the above reasons is unexcused/unlawful. Students may be denied the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and school incentives when unlawfully absent. ACPS recognizes that there are many factors which contribute to student attendance and will make every effort to work with the student and his/her parent/guardian to ensure the student is in compliance with the attendance expectation. Elementary, middle, and

high school absences and/or tardies, both excused and unexcused, will be referred for appropriate intervention with school staff and/or outside agencies.

Work Missed During an Absence

It is important for students to make up missed work regardless of whether the absence is excused or unlawful. Teachers may deny credit for missed coursework due to unexcused/unlawful absences.

References: [ACPS JED Attendance Policy](#)

COMAR 13A.08.01.03

COMAR 13A.08.01.04

Maryland Student Records Manual (2020)

Class and Coursework Completion

Grading and Reporting

It is the philosophy of the Allegany County Public Schools that grading promotes learning, achievement, and academic growth in a climate of encouragement and high expectations. ACPS strives for all students to be prepared for college and/or careers. Learning experiences, assignments, and assessments provide challenge, growth, and feedback for improvement in order to foster opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of curricular expectations. Grades reflect the extent to which the student has achieved the learning outcomes specified by ACPS and the Maryland State Standards for the content areas. The grading and reporting system will support the learning process and student success.

In consideration of this philosophy, the Board is committed to maintaining rigorous performance and achievement standards for all students and to providing a fair process for evaluating and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and parents. Grades are an essential way to communicate student progress and reflect what students know and are able to do in relation to curricular expectations. Therefore, grading and reporting practices must:

1. Provide meaningful feedback on student achievement to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the school system. This feedback should provide relevant information for enhancing performance and achievement.
2. Be aligned with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) and other content area Standards and Frameworks.
3. Achieve consistency within content areas and among schools.
4. Be an accurate reflection of student achievement compared to curricular expectations outlined in the MCCRS and Content Area Standards.
5. Be a fair and accurate representation of a student's performance throughout the course on a variety of measures as written in the syllabus for secondary schools and in the Elementary School Progress Report Teachers Guidelines.
6. Provide clear communication at the beginning of each school year or course to parents and students as to the grading criteria.
7. Include formative and summative assessments.
8. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate progress toward mastery of grade level curricular expectations through a variety of methods.
9. Make current information available to students and parents about the student's academic performance through the district's Student Information System.
10. Hold high expectations of all students across all courses and programs. Ensure that an equity lens is used for lesson planning and instruction, instructional materials, and assessment design. Individual student circumstances should be taken into consideration.
11. Include professional development for teachers to achieve consistent and comprehensive grading practices in accordance with this policy and accompanying regulations.

Class Ranking/Grade Point Average

A system of grading, including weighted grades for advanced placement courses, early college on-site and honors courses, will be applied to all school system courses and will be utilized for purposes of eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. This grading system will be designated on all student transcripts. Student transcripts will reflect the weighted cumulative grade point average based on earned credits (GPA).

References: [ACPS IKA Evaluation of Students \(Grading Policy\)](#)
[ACPS IKC Class Ranking/Grade Point Average](#)

Student Service Learning

All students in the state of Maryland must complete 75 service-learning hours in order to graduate. Students in Allegany County will start earning hours in Grade 6 in a variety of courses. Students will have the opportunity to receive hours in Creative Arts, Health, PE, English, Math, Science and/ or Social Studies.

Students will receive hours in the following ways:

- 6th Grade - 15 hours
- 7th Grade - 30 hours
- 8th Grade - 15 hours
- High School - 15 hours

Pass will appear on the report card in high school when all hours are met. The credit will be a Pass (P) grade only and will not be averaged with the GPA.

Students wishing to work toward one service learning elective credit must complete a total of 132 hours beyond the initial 75 required service-learning hours. To earn a Service Learning Elective Credit please refer to the ACPS High School Programs of Study.

Reference: COMAR 13A.03.02.05

Dress and Grooming

Students have a responsibility to be dressed and groomed for school, including virtual instruction, in accordance with ACPS standards in a manner that is not disruptive to the learning environment or school activities. Student clothing may not:

- Endanger or potentially threaten the health and/or safety of self or others
- Fail to meet a reasonable requirement of a course or activity
- Display messages of hate or bias, or depict discriminatory symbols or images
- Be associated with gangs
- Be lewd, vulgar, obscene, or revealing or of a sexual nature
- Promote tobacco, alcohol or drugs

References: [ACPS JICA Student Dress](#)

Discipline and Student Conduct

All students have a right to a safe place in which to learn. The Board is committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive school environment where all students feel a sense of belonging. Schools shall foster positive school climates to help engage all students in learning and intervene appropriately to support struggling students. The Board expects the use of a continuum of behavioral supports and interventions to meet student behavioral, emotional, and developmental needs. Clear expectations for positive behaviors must be communicated, taught, and modeled. ACPS philosophy includes principles of continuous improvement, equity, fairness, and restorative practices. Restorative practices and positive behavioral interventions and supports shall be used in conjunction with disciplinary measures.

A discipline matrix aligned with the Maryland Guidelines for a State Code of Discipline and the Code of Maryland Regulations shall be used as a guide to administer the progressive discipline policy. School administrators have the ultimate responsibility for administering student discipline as set forth in the matrix and in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

References: [ACPS JK Student Discipline](#)
COMAR 13A.08.01.11

Bus Conduct

Riding a school bus is a privilege that requires appropriate student behavior at bus stops, on the bus, and while disembarking. Regulations are posted at the front of every bus, and cameras may be used to record behavior. Violating bus rules can result in the loss of riding privileges and disciplinary action. Additionally, students must stand at least 10 feet away from the curb or roadway and must exit at their scheduled stop unless a parent or guardian provides a written note to a school official.

School Bus Rules:

- Obey the school bus driver.
- Sit properly and remain seated at all times.
- Keep head and arms inside the bus.
- Do not damage the bus; keep it clean.
- No tobacco use, eating, or drinking.
- No yelling, bullying, or fighting.
- No profane language.
- Do not throw objects.
- No cell phone use without the driver's permission.
- Do not block the aisle.

References: [ACPS EEAEC Student Conduct on the Bus](#)
[ACPS EEAEC-RI Student Conduct on the Bus](#)

Gangs, Gang Activity, Disruptive or Illegal Group Behavior

The Board prohibits gang activity and/or destructive illegal group behavior in schools, on school property and at school sponsored events. Furthermore, the Board of Education prohibits reprisals or retaliation against individuals who report suspected gang activity.

References: [ACPS JLDBA Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior](#)

Student Search and Seizure, Arrest, and Questioning on School Property

Authorized staff members may conduct a search of a student's person or property and/or seize student property. Effort will be made to conduct searches and seizures in a manner that minimizes disruption to school routine and minimizes student embarrassment. A locker, storage cubicle, or other such school supplied item is not considered a student's personal possession, and search of school supplied items does not require reasonable belief of a violation. Student possessions within the locker or storage cubicles (e.g., backpacks, purses) and vehicles on school property (e.g., cars, bikes) may be searched when there is a reasonable belief of a violation. A student may be searched when an authorized searcher has a reasonable belief that the student possesses an item which violates state law and/or ACPS policy. An additional ACPS staff member will be present during searches of students and student possessions.

References: [ACPS JIH Student Search & Seizure Arrest & Questioning on School Property](#)
COMAR 13A.01.14

Substance Possession, Use, and Distribution

The possession, use, abuse, sale, and/or distribution of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco by students on school property or at school related activities is strictly prohibited. The Board supports strong and consistent disciplinary measures to ensure that students recognize that the possession, use, abuse, sale and/or distribution of proscribed substances present health dangers and may constitute illegal acts. Violations of this policy will be treated as school disciplinary infractions and may be referred to law enforcement agencies. In all cases of suspension or expulsion, mandatory referral for an alcohol/drug assessment will be made to an appropriate mental health provider for assessment and/or treatment. Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent the proper use of medications prescribed for and taken by an individual.

References: [ACPS JICH Substance Abuse by Students](#)
COMAR 13A.08.01.08

Weapons in School

The presence of weapons in the schools, on school grounds, and on school buses creates an atmosphere that disrupts the educational process and threatens the safety and well-being of our students and staff. Possession or use of any rifle, handgun, shotgun, bomb, knife, look-alike gun, firearm, or the possession of any implement that could cause or is intended to cause bodily harm is strictly prohibited. Students who bring a firearm on school property or to a school sponsored event shall be expelled for a minimum of one (1) year. In all appropriate cases, school officials will involve appropriate law enforcement agencies when violations occur.

References: [ACPS JICI Weapons in School](#)
COMAR 13A.08.01.12.1

Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Intimidation

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation will not be tolerated. All students have the right to be free of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. The Board is committed to providing a safe, productive, and inclusive learning environment. ACPS staff shall encourage students to treat others with respect and kindness to build a supportive learning environment which fosters academic and personal growth for all students.

Any student who believes that actions, gestures, comments, writings violate ACPS policy should report the behavior(s) to a school administrator, counselor, teacher, school nurse. Additionally a Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation form should be completed by the student, parent/guardian, close relative of a student, another student, or a school staff member to report the incident(s). Forms are available online at www.acpsmd.org and link to "Report Bullying." All reports will be submitted to the school principal for investigation. A school administrator will

promptly conduct an impartial, adequate, and reliable investigation and notify parents/guardians. Upon completion of the investigation, a school administrator will implement interventions and consequences as appropriate. The administrator will notify parents/guardians and take steps to prevent the recurrence of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. ACPS is further committed to prohibiting retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation, including witnesses, bystanders, or students. Students and parents should contact the school for any assistance with form completion or additional information.

ACPS prohibits:

1. Intentional verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that occurs on ACPS property, which includes schools, school grounds, buses, or the grounds of ACPS sponsored activities involving students, or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of school;
2. Conduct that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's education or performance or with a student's physical and/or psychological well-being and;
3. Conduct motivated by actual or perceived personal characteristics identified by the ACPS antidiscrimination policy.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides the following definitions:

- **Bullying** - Unwanted, demeaning behavior among students and includes
 - 1) an imbalance of power (individuals who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, harm others) and;
 - 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are likely to be repeated). Behavior may include hitting, pushing, shoving, teasing, threats, derogatory comments, spreading rumors, exclusion, and ostracizing.
- **Cyberbullying** - Bullying and prohibited conduct that is transmitted through any means of electronic communication that allows others to view or share content. Sending, posting, sharing personal or private information about someone causing embarrassment or humiliation. Cyberbullying may occur when there is a connection back to the school setting, whether the school setting is virtual or in-person.
- **Harassment** - actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another person with regard to actual or perceived personal characteristics defined in the ACPS antidiscrimination policy.
- **Intimidation** - Any communication or action directed toward another person that threatens or induces a sense of fear or inferiority. Retaliation may be considered a form of intimidation.

References: [ACPS JBA Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Report Bullying Form](#)

Freedom of Expression, Assembly, Patriotism, Religion

Speech

Students have the right to be presented with and share their opinions about a variety of topics during classroom discussions. Students shall be respectful of different opinions and refrain from using vulgar and/or obscene language which detracts from a positive learning environment. Further, the Board prohibits the use of language or the display of images or symbols that promote hate and can reasonably be expected to cause a material disruption of school activities or that advocates dangerous or illegal behavior inconsistent with the ACPS mission or policies.

References: Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969)
Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)

Internet/Online Expression/Activities

Students *may* be disciplined for internet activities off school grounds if such online activities create a substantial disruption and material interference with school activities and/or harass or threaten others.

References: *Aziz Barimani v. Montgomery Co. Board of Education*, SBE - Op.No.00-30 (2000)
Tommy Kuka v. Montgomery Co. Board of Education, MSBE - Op. No.00-51 (2000)

School-Sponsored Publications, Productions, and Other Media

School-sponsored publications such as newspapers, yearbooks, and literary magazines as well as school-sponsored productions such as school plays designed for use within or between schools are encouraged in ACPS. School newspapers give students a chance to express their viewpoints, and generally, students have the right to decide on the content of these publications/productions as long as the contents meet specific guidelines. The final decision as to what will be published will rest with the staff, editors, and advisors. Administrators may halt or reject the publication, production, or distribution of publications, materials that are obscene, libelous, slanderous, profane, vulgar, lewd, an invasion of privacy, create a substantial disruption, or violate federal or state law and/or ACPS policies or if they possess a potential threat to the health and/or safety of students, and/or might reasonably be perceived to advocate illegal activities, illegal discrimination, or are inconsistent with the ACPS mission.

References: Hazelwood Sch. Dist. v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U. S. 260 (1988)
Morse v. Frederick, 127 S. Ct. 2618 (2007)
[ACPS JICE School-Sponsored Student Media](#)

Non-School Sponsored Publications

Students have the right to distribute or display publications without school sponsorship provided the publication bears the name of the sponsoring individual or organization and is displayed on designated areas used for posting. Materials which encourage actions that threaten the health and safety of students, advocate illegal activities, are obscene and/or libelous (generally, the act of publishing anything false about someone that exposes him or her to public hatred or ridicule), or cause or are reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption of school activities will not be distributed or displayed.

Petitions

Students have the right to circulate petitions at all times except during classes and assemblies as long as they do not disrupt school operations. School administrators may stop the circulation of a petition if it violates relevant laws, ACPS policies, poses a potential threat to the health and

safety of students, advocates illegal activity or discriminates, is obscene and/or libelous, or causes or is likely to cause a substantial disruption of school activities.

Assembly

Students have the right to peacefully meet in groups with other students to discuss issues of importance to you. ACPS may permit identified groups to meet for expressive activities not directly related to the course of study offered by a school. Students are responsible for consulting with a school administrator to determine if the activity will be allowed during the school day and the type of supervision required.

References: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-108
Perry Education Assn. v. Perry Local Educator's Assn., 460 U.S. 37 (1983)

Patriotism

Students have the opportunity to participate in and/or watch patriotic exercises in school. All schools provide for a flag salute as part of the morning program. All students and teachers stand and face the flag and recite in unison the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Students who wish to be excused from patriotic exercises may do so. Exempt students may not interrupt or disrespect, by words or actions, others who are participating in patriotic exercises.

References: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-105

Religion

Students have the right to observe personal religious beliefs and practices in school as long as it does not violate the rights of others or interfere with school activities.

References: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-104

Health and Wellness

Student Emergency Information

At the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment, parents/guardians must complete Student Emergency Information to provide ACPS with emergency contact information. Updates should be made throughout the school year as necessary.

References: Md. Ann. Code, Educ. Art. Section 7-426
COMAR 13A.05.05.09

Hearing and Vision Screening

Maryland law requires school children to have their hearing and vision screened. Healthy vision and hearing are important for a child's success in school. Unless a student has been tested within the past year, screenings will be given the first year a student enters school, Grade 1, Grade 8 and Grade 9. Screenings will be completed with trained staff of the Allegany County Health Department.

References: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-404
COMAR 13A.05.05.07

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

The Board of Education is committed to the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures for the control of pests which may present human health hazards, cause damage to school structures or property, or affect the quality of life for students, staff, and the community.

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program employed by Allegany County Public Schools uses inspection, monitoring, employee education, and sanitation practices to minimize the use of pesticides in our schools.

Service Procedures

1. Routine Monthly Service Visit
The pest control technician will review the pest observation log, communicate with appropriate staff members, and conduct a visual inspection of the interior and exterior of the building. Pest monitoring devices will be checked during this tour and all observations, recommendations, and actions noted on the service record. The technician will identify the particular pest and determine action thresholds based on the site and the biology and habits of the organism, as well as evaluating previous actions.
2. Emergency Service
The pest control contractor will respond immediately to situations where there is a severe threat to human health. Response to all other requests will occur within 48 hours. Calls for emergency or non-typical service should be placed to the Plant Operations office.
3. Exterior Pests
If the problem involves pests on the grounds of the building, contact should be made with the Operations Department to determine the appropriate action. This includes ground bees and large mammals such as ground hogs and skunks.

References: [ACPS EBAD Integrated Pest Management](#)
Annotated Code of Maryland (Agriculture § 5-208.1)
COMAR 15.05.02

Medication Administration and Student Healthcare Needs

ACPS discourages the administration of medication to students during the school day. Parents should administer medication for minor illnesses at home. School personnel will administer medication as authorized by a prescribing physician with instructions provided on the Physician's Authorization form. Emergency medication such as inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors must be authorized by a medical provider. Medications that must be administered at school must be brought to school by a parent/guardian.

Parents are responsible for notifying schools of student special healthcare needs as well as changes to student medical needs. Food allergies and sensitivities shall be documented by a healthcare professional on the Food allergies and sensitivities form. Anaphylaxis medication (epinephrine / epi-pens) must be provided by the parent and will be kept in the school health room. School staff members are trained to recognize the signs of anaphylaxis. Designated staff members will administer epinephrine auto-injectors in case of an emergency whether or not a student has been identified as having an anaphylaxis allergy or has a prescription for epinephrine.

Parents should inform the school if their students have other healthcare needs (e.g., diabetes, other allergies). Complete, accurate, and up-to-date medical information related to healthcare needs must be provided. Parents must supply the school with health-care provider plans and orders and other routine and emergency medications, devices, and equipment.

References: Md. Ann. Code, Educ. Art. Section 7-426
COMAR 13A.05.05.09
[ACPS JLCEB Food Allergy](#)
[ACPS JLCEA Epinephrine Policy](#)

Service Animals

Students and/or adults with disabilities may be accompanied by a service animal in ACPS buildings, schools, classrooms and at Board of Education functions subject to ACPS regulations.

References: [ACPS IMG Service Animals](#)

Sunscreen

Students may possess and apply sunscreen to ensure protection from ultraviolet rays.

References: [ACPS JLCCE Sun Safety](#)

Telehealth

ACPS middle and high school students may participate in a limited number of telehealth appointments during the school day in accordance with ACPS regulations. Parents must contact the school in advance to schedule an appointment and be present during telehealth appointments. Students must use their own personal electronic device for telehealth appointments.

General Guidelines

1. Middle and High School students may have access to telehealth appointments with their Health Care Practitioner during the school day, provided all requirements of this policy can be met.
2. School personnel, parents, guardians, and students will be made aware of this Regulation and its accompanying policy.
3. A parent/guardian must be present in the school building or virtually during the telehealth appointment. Whether or not they sit in on the appointment or simply remain

in a waiting area is at the discretion of the parent/guardian and student and with approval of the Health Care Practitioner.

4. School staff are not expected to monitor the student before, during, or after the appointment.
5. If the student requires assistance following the appointment, the parent/guardian shall make the administration aware so that the appropriate staff member can provide assistance.
6. The student shall be provided a private, ADA compliant physical space where they can attend the telehealth appointment. Parents shall sign a waiver stating that they understand the limits to privacy and confidentiality, as well as Wi-Fi access, that may be available due to the nature of the school building.
7. Students shall be expected to return to class immediately following the telehealth appointment, unless a situation arises that requires crisis intervention.
8. Access to telehealth services in school may be limited or discontinued if the student refuses to participate, becomes overly upset, disruptive, or cannot successfully transition back to class following a scheduled telehealth session.
9. Students shall not be marked absent from class during their telehealth appointment. Additionally, make-up work shall be provided, upon request made by the student or parent/guardian in accordance with Regulation JED-R1.
10. ACPS cannot guarantee that the platform being used by the Health Care Practitioner is supported by the school system's network. Parents/ guardians should communicate with ACPS about the Health Care Practitioner's requirements in advance of the telehealth appointment in order to confirm the network's ability to access the appointment.

References: [ACPS JHCG Telehealth for Students](#)
[ACPS JHCG-R1-R2 Telehealth for Students](#)
[ACPS JHCG-E1 Telehealth for Students](#)
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article Section 4-143

School Safety and Security

Emergency Management

The safety of students and staff is essential to maintaining a positive learning environment. The safety and security of our schools is everyone's concern. ACPS takes a proactive approach to school safety, planning, and training for emergency preparedness. Each school has an emergency plan for crises that may occur during the school day or at school-sponsored events. Emergencies may include, but are not limited to fire, weather-related incidents, accidents, hazardous materials incidents, medical incidents, bomb threats, or other criminal activity. Safety drills are conducted to ensure that you have knowledge of these procedures prior to their use in a real emergency.

ACPS understands that any emergency situation may be upsetting to the school community; therefore, ACPS complies with state mandates to conduct drills consistent with national best practices and the advice of mental health professionals. As required by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), ACPS adopted the "I Love U Guys" protocol: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter to respond as appropriate to emergency conditions. It is vital that students, parents/guardians, staff members understand these procedures:

Hold is a term used to alert students and staff that an event is occurring inside or near the building and all students and staff must remain in place. Instruction and learning continue.

Secure is a term to alert students and staff that a critical event is taking place in the community and for everyone's safety, students and staff will be brought inside the building and exterior doors will be locked. Instruction and learning may continue.

Lockdown is a term used to describe one type of response to an emergency at an ACPS facility. It alerts students and staff that imminent danger exists inside or outside the building and requires moving to an immediate lockdown mode. Students and staff quickly move to a secure location, remain quiet, and follow staff member instructions.

Evacuate is a term used to describe an emergency inside the school building. It requires all students and staff members to exit the building as directed by school administrators.

Shelter is a term used to alert students and staff that they need to take shelter inside the building due to environmental hazards (severe weather, hazardous materials, dangerous animals).

References: Student Response Protocol at <https://iloveuquys.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html>

School Security

All members of the educational community share the responsibility for maintaining a positive and safe school setting. Further, the Board employs *School Security Employees* (SSE's) staffed at schools to work in cooperation with school administrators and *School Resource Officers* (SRO's), who are employed by local law enforcement to enhance the day-to-day safety and security of all school students, staff, and school facilities.

References: [ACPS ECA Buildings and Grounds Security](#)
[ACPS EBC Emergencies](#)

Student Organizations and Extracurricular Activities

Athletics Participation and Eligibility

Athletic participation is regarded as an important privilege for students. Participation supports students' personal growth and achievement and provides them with the opportunity to represent their schools. State regulations establish standards that govern eligibility for participation in high school athletics. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) and ACPS establish their own rules for participation in athletic programs. These standards, used during the regular season and state tournament play, help ensure that students make satisfactory progress toward graduation while participating on a sports team. Students who participate in athletics are expected and required to meet minimum academic and conduct standards.

Minimum Academic Standards

Students must have a minimum 2.0 GPA for the most recent marking period. Incoming 9th graders may participate in 1st-quarter athletics. Academically ineligible students cannot practice with the team.

Student Athlete Conduct

Additionally, students may be deemed ineligible for participation in athletics due to violations of the rules of conduct. Misconduct includes: inappropriate behavior on school property or at school functions, arrests outside of school, the possession, use, sale, or distribution of proscribed substances, insubordination, use of profanity to school staff, coaches, or game officials, and absences and tardies from school, practices, and required meetings. Suspensions for misconduct at school or in the community or substance possession, use, sale, or distribution may result in nonparticipation during the entire season, or the period of suspension, or suspension for 20% of remaining games. For substance violations, student athletes must provide a negative substance screening to the school administrator prior to returning to the team. If student athletes are insubordinate, disrespectful, or are absent or late to school or practices, the principal, in collaboration with the coach/advisor, shall make the decision on the disciplinary action based upon the best interests of the school, the school system, the perception of the school in the community, and the desire to promote high standards of discipline in the athletic program.

Health and Safety of Student Athletes

If you wish to play a sport, you need to have a physical examination performed by a licensed physician, certified physician's assistant under the supervision of a licensed physician, or certified nurse practitioner. A form can be obtained at www.acpsmd.org. All athletes must follow health and safety policies regarding concussions and skin infections.

References: [ACPS JJIC Academic & Conduct Standards for Participation in Athletics](#)
COMAR 13A.06.03.02

Corollary Physical Education & Athletics

The Board of Education believes in the importance of offering physical education and athletic programs to all students. It is the policy of the Board of Education that all students with disabilities have equivalent opportunities for participation in mainstream physical education and interscholastic athletic programs. Schools provide corollary or intramural programs specifically designed to combine groups of students with or without disabilities in physical activities. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities shall be provided. Criteria for eligibility is set forth in ACPS regulations.

References: [ACPS IHBA Corollary Physical Education & Athletics](#)
COMAR 13A.06.04, et.seq.

Student Government

Participation

Students have the right to establish, maintain, and participate in student government. Students have a responsibility to work toward creating an effective student government that is accountable to the students. Any student legally enrolled in a school, and meeting eligibility criteria may run for and hold office.

Faculty Support

School staff will support your right to participate in student government. The principal will ensure that students have a voice in school affairs. The student government will have a faculty advisor and help in obtaining needed supplies and use of rooms. Students will receive an excused absence for approved student government activities and will be responsible for missed assignments.

Powers of Student Government

Student government is responsible to represent students when issues arise that relate directly to student rights and concerns. The student government may make recommendations about issues of student interests to school administration. The school principal will meet regularly with the faculty advisor and executive committee to discuss student concerns.

Other Student Organizations

Students have the right to participate in student organizations and extracurricular activities at school. Activities held on school grounds are subject to the supervision of school administration and faculty. Other secret, exclusive, self-perpetuating organizations are prohibited from conducting activities on school property.

References: [ACPS JJJ Minimum Standards for Participation in Extracurricular Non-Athletic Activities](#)

COMAR 13A.08.01.09

Technology

Responsible Use

ACPS provides computer equipment, computer services, network access to schools and students for purposes consistent with the mission of ACPS. Technology is provided for educational purposes, such as accessing curriculum-related information, sharing resources, and promoting innovation that enriches instruction. Technology extends the classroom beyond the school building by providing access to information resources on local, state, national, and international electronic networks such as the Internet. Use of the Internet for purposes of locating information and facilitating communication are critical literacy skills.

In schools, online activity is monitored by staff through systemwide technology protection measures. The use of ACPS System network shall be compliant with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). CIPA requires the use of filters restricting access to non-compliant resources which are deemed unacceptable for use by staff or students. ACPS information technology operations shall include back-up and caching of data and communications, logging of activity, monitoring of general use patterns, and other such activities that are necessary to comply with CIPA. CIPA compliance extends to ACPS owned equipment and to Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) equipment utilizing the ACPS Network.

It is the shared responsibility of school staff and parents/guardians to educate students about appropriate behavior when using technology. Information technology use is a privilege which can be denied, revoked, or suspended for a period of time by teachers in their classrooms or by an administrator for the school. Inappropriate use will be addressed by school-based administrative disciplinary actions. There is no expectation of privacy while connected to the ACPS network. Responsible use of information technology is required of students whether using personal devices and programs, school system devices, or school system programs. All ACPS students must comply with responsible use of information technology which includes but is not limited to:

1. Accessing ACPS information technology and social media for instructional purposes and ACPS-sanctioned activities consistent with instructional requirements.
2. Personal use of information technology and social media in a way that does not interfere with student work, cause disruptions to the school or classroom environment, result in additional costs to ACPS or violate ACPS policies or applicable laws.
3. Practicing responsible, ethical, and legal behavior, in compliance with federal, state and applicable copyright and fair use laws.
4. Exercising special care with ACPS-owned devices.
5. Practicing good digital citizenship through safe, supportive, effective learning environments which is dependent on students demonstrating respect for themselves and others.
6. Accessing information technology on the ACPS network for instructional purposes beyond the regular school day. In these cases, use must be in accordance with the educational goals of the school system.
7. Taking responsibility to safeguard usernames and passwords which help protect personal and confidential data. The use of sound recordings, video recordings, photos, and personal observations in a supportive positive educational environment in accordance with directory information and for approved educational purposes.
8. Participating in the Internet Safety instruction program provided by the school system at every grade level.

References: [ACPS JIK Information Technology Responsible Use](#)
[ACPS JIK-R1 Information Technology Responsible Use](#)

Student Records, Directory Information, Privacy

Schools will maintain student records for all students. Your record contains cumulative education records, health records, and discipline files. Specific content of student records is prescribed by the Maryland Student Records System Manual. Certain circumstances may require the creation of a confidential folder as well (e.g., special education and section 504 services). Generally, schools must have permission in order to release information from a student's education record. However, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows schools to disclose those records, without consent under specified circumstances. *Directory Information* is a category of records defined by FERPA that may be disclosed without consent. Directory information may include name, address, phone numbers, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in recognized activities and sports, height and weight of members of athletic teams, recognition of awards, educational agencies or institutions attended, and other similar information. Parents/guardians will receive notice at the beginning of each school year and will choose whether or not to have directory information disclosed.

As parents/guardians of ACPS students, you have certain rights regarding your child's education records under (FERPA), applicable federal regulations, and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.02. Students reaching the age of 18 are "eligible students" and share these rights with parents/guardians. These rights are summarized as follows:

1. **Review of Student Records.** You have the right to inspect and review your child's education records no later than 45 days after the school receives your written request. Schools will make arrangements for access and notify you of the time and place where your child's records may be inspected.
2. **Amendment of Student Records.** If you believe your child's records are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of your child's privacy rights, you have a right to make a written request for the school to amend the records. Parents requesting an amendment should make a written request clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, parents will be informed of their right to a hearing.
3. **Disclosure of Student Records.** You have the right to provide written consent before ACPS discloses personally identifiable information from your child's education records, unless federal law or state law specifically authorizes disclosure without consent. You will receive notice about the release of directory information, and the opportunity to opt-out of release. In addition, please note that consent is not required for disclosures to school officials with legitimate educational interests, including administrators, teachers, or other staff employed by ACPS, as well as others acting on behalf of ACPS who need access to fulfill their job responsibilities, such as: School Health Services Staff and other health professionals who work with schools; school security personnel; an Allegany County Board of Education member; a person, organization, or company under contract with ACPS to perform a service or function for which ACPS would otherwise use its own employees (such as attorneys or auditors); or a parent/guardian or other volunteer serving on an ACPS committee or helping other school officials perform their tasks.

Upon request, ACPS also discloses education records without consent to officials of other schools, school districts, or institutions of postsecondary education, if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment in or transfer to that school, school district, or institution of postsecondary education. In addition, ACPS may lawfully disclose personally identifiable information from student records, without your prior written consent, for other reasons authorized by FERPA, including to specified governmental agencies, for approved research projects, in compliance with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena, or in a health or safety emergency.

4. **Complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.** If you believe your rights under FERPA have been violated and efforts to resolve the situation through ACPS complaint channels have not proved satisfactory, you have the right to file a complaint with the Student Privacy Office in the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920 or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).

References: [ACPS JRB Directory Information](#)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Code of Maryland Regulations, Section 13A.08.02 *et seq.*

Maryland Student Records System Manual (2020)

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act 20 U.S.C. Section 1232

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

The Board values instructional time and seeks to create a focused educational environment where distractions are minimized and learning is maximized. While cell phones and personal electronic devices (PEDs) may be brought to school they shall be silenced and stored during the instructional day. No cell phone or PED will be used to record, store, or transmit any type of image, sound, or video. Failure to comply with the cell phone policy will result in progressive disciplinary action. ACPS assumes no responsibility for the loss, damage, theft, or charging cell phones and PED's brought to school. Additional regulations include:

- **Before and After School:** Students in all grades may use cell phones and PED's before the school day begins and after it ends.
- **School Buses:** Students are permitted to use cell phones and PED's on the bus as long as the use does not impact the safe operation of the bus and is compliant with other ACPS rules. Cell phones should be silenced or silenced with the use of headphones.
- **Elementary Schools:** It is recommended that elementary age students refrain from bringing cell phones to school or on the bus. If brought to school, cell phones and PED's must be silenced and stored upon entry to school until after exit from school.
- **Middle Schools:** Cell phones and PED's must be silenced and stored in lockers for the entire school day. School administrators may permit non-disruptive cell phone and PED use during lunch.
- **High School:** Cell phones and PED's must be silenced and out of sight during the school day except during lunch. Students may use cell phones and PED's before and after school in a non-disruptive manner, unless directed otherwise by a school administrator.
- **Medical and Learning Accommodations:** Students with documented IEP's, Section 504, Medical Plans will have access to cell phone use as required by their plans.

References: [ACPS JICJ Cell Phones](#)
[ACPS JICJ-R1-2 Cell Phones](#)
[ACPS JICJ-E1 Cell Phones](#)

Complaints and Appeals

The Board of Education is committed to being responsive to inquiries and complaints from the public and intends to provide a process with which to address differences or problems as expeditiously and satisfactorily as possible. Responses to inquiries and complaints from the public should come from the local school or from the lowest possible administrative level. The first attempt at resolving a concern should be an informal process among the affected parties. A complainant who is not satisfied by the results of the informal approach should have the opportunity to pursue the matter through a formal complaint process.

Informal Inquiries and Complaints

Inquiries and complaints should be addressed at the lowest administrative level possible (e.g., relevant ACPS staff, teachers). When individuals are not sure who to speak with at this level, they should contact the Public Information Officer (PIO) for assistance. Individuals are encouraged to discuss and resolve the matter with relevant staff. Individuals not satisfied with results at this level should discuss the matter with the school administrator or supervisor. While no formal documentation is required at this level, principals and supervisors should create a record of efforts to resolve the complaint. Complainants not satisfied with the results of the informal approach may proceed formally.

References: [ACPS KE Responding to Inquiries & Complaints from the Public](#)

Formal Complaints

When a concern or complaint is not resolved through the informal process, the principal/supervisor shall provide a Public Formal Complaint Form and a copy of formal process regulations. Upon receipt of a completed written complaint, the principal/supervisor will initial and date the form and open a file for documentation. The file will contain all correspondence and pertinent information. Principal/supervisor decisions will be made within 10 working days. Individuals not satisfied with the decision of the principal/supervisor, may request a review by the superintendent.

1. Within 15 calendar days of the previous decision, a written request for superintendent review of the decision must be submitted to the PIO.
2. Within 5 working days, the PIO will submit the request to the superintendent or superintendent's designee, who may schedule a meeting to discuss the complaint and issue a decision within 30 working days. Complainants dissatisfied with the decision of the superintendent or designee may file a written appeal to the local Board of Education.

References: [ACPS KE-R1-R2 Responding to Inquires & Complaints from the Public](#)

Board of Education Hearings and Appeals

Aggrieved individuals may have the right to ask the Board of Education to review certain decisions or recommendations of the superintendent. Maryland law authorizes local boards of education to conduct appeals and hearings for three types of cases, as outlined in ACPS policy and regulations. Permissible appeals must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the decision of the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Board of Education will proceed in accordance with ACPS Policy BEE. General procedures for Board hearings and appeals are provided in ACPS regulations.

References: [ACPS BEE Board Hearings Appeal Proceedings](#)
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Sections 4-205, 7-305, 6-202

Allegany County Public Schools

Acknowledgement of Review of the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

Signature Page

Student's Name

Teacher/Grade

I acknowledge that I have accessed and reviewed the ACPS Students' Rights & Responsibilities Handbook, which is available electronically through my Schoology page and on the ACPS website.

I acknowledge that the Students' Rights & Responsibilities Handbook, including the policies and regulations referenced within it, applies to all students while in school system buildings, on school system property, in school system vehicles, during virtual learning, and while participating in or attending any school, school-related, or Board-sponsored activity. This includes, but is not limited to, field trips, athletic events, and other activities held on or off school property, including those held at private businesses or commercial establishments.

Student's Signature

Date

Please return this form to your student's teacher.