

Student Rights

I. Freedom of Expression, Speech, Beliefs or Opinions

Students have the responsibility to make sure that what they say, write, wear or express, either in person or on social media, does not stop others from learning, does not hurt anyone or their property, and does not violate the Student Code of Conduct or the law. See [Policy IIBEB-1 – Student Use of Social Media \(Appendix C\)](#)/[IIBEA/GAB – Responsible Computer Use \(Appendix B\)](#), and [JP – Student Publications \(Appendix I\)](#). See your school’s student handbook regarding expectations for dress code.

II. Freedom of the Press

Students have the right to create and/or share information from many different sources (with proper credit given to the source) Students have the responsibility not to make personal attacks or to publish untrue or offensive material. When writing or using online media such as texting, posting, snap chatting, tweeting, etc., students are responsible for evaluating the information for fairness, balanced views, and truthfulness. See [Policy IIBEB-1 – Student use of social media, IIBEA/GAB – Responsible Computer Use, JP – Student Publications, and ACPS Honor Code \(Appendix D\)](#).

III. Due Process (Fair Treatment)

School personnel must ensure that there is no use of force or threat to obtain information. ACPS students have the right to exercise due process rights whenever it is necessary. Students also have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not disturb others or their property. A student’s behavior should follow the ACPS Student Code of Conduct and laws. In schools, every student must be treated fairly. Each student has the right to:

- Be told if his/her behavior is not permitted
- Have an opportunity to discuss what happened
- Not to speak, if he/she chooses.

If the police wish to speak with a student:

- A school official must be present (unless the parent/guardian is)
- The student can ask that his/her parent or guardian be called before they speak
- The police must tell the student that what he/she says may be used against them (if a suspect)

See [Policy KNAJ - Relations with Law Enforcement \(Appendix G\)](#), [JGD/JGE – Student Suspension/Expulsion \(Appendix F\)](#), and [JGDA – Disciplining Students with Disabilities \(Appendix J\)](#).

IV. Freedom from Unreasonable Search and Seizure

Students are protected by the law from unreasonable search and seizure. However, this is not a guarantee against all searches and seizures. School officials do not need to obtain a warrant before searching a student who is under their authority; they only need reasonable suspicion. Law enforcement may need a search warrant when the search is not related to an incident that occurred within the school or an activity that will immediately threaten students, school property or school personnel. See [Policy JFG – Search and Seizure \(Appendix K\)](#) and [Policy KNAJ - Relations with law enforcement \(Appendix G\)](#).

V. Personal Property

Students have a right to bring personal possessions to school. However, students have the responsibility to make sure that personal possessions brought to school are not prohibited by the ACPS Student Code of Conduct or law.

See [Policy JFG – Search and Seizure \(Appendix K\)](#) and [JHCD – Administration of Medications to Students \(Appendix L\)](#).

VI. Privacy/Access to Educational Records

As a student, you have a right to privacy of your educational records, and for the information in your records to be accurate. Educational records include but are not limited to report cards, attendance records, discipline records, and tests. Until age 18, your parent or legal guardian has a right to access your records on your behalf, seek to have records changed that are inaccurate or misleading, and a right to consent to share information

from your educational record, except where required by law. Disclosure may be required in the following circumstances:

- When there is reasonable suspicion of harm or neglect.
- When the child presents a danger to him/herself or to others.
- When information is revealed that indicates danger to your child or another person.
- When disclosure is court-ordered or required by law (e.g. Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act [FERPA])

See [Policy JB/AC – Equal Educational Opportunities/Non-Discrimination](#) and [JO – Student Records \(Appendix H\)](#).

VII. Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)

ACPS offers a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to all school age students who live within Alexandria City. Education is provided regardless of a student’s race, color, national origin, citizenship, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or status as a parent, or pregnancy. Students have a responsibility and state requirement to attend school regularly, make a conscientious effort in classroom work, and to follow school rules and regulations. Students also have the responsibility to avoid actions or activities, individually or in groups, which interfere with the rights of any other student to exercise their right to receive a free and appropriate education.

See [Policy JB/AC– Equal Educational Opportunities/Non-Discrimination \(Appendix H\)](#).

VIII. Freedom of Religion

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice, or no religion at all, as long as the practices do not harm others. Students are encouraged to be aware of the diversity of beliefs and respectful of each other’s religious and/or non-religious views.

See [Policy IGDA – Student Organizations \(Secondary Schools\) \(Appendix M\)](#) and [INDC – Religion in Schools \(Appendix N\)](#).

IX. Petition

Students have a right to respectfully express disagreement with school personnel. Students also have a right to ask school or district administrators for adjustments or changes in policies, practices, or procedures. When students speak up, it should not stop others from learning, hurt anyone, destroy property, or violate the Student Code of Conduct or the law.

See [Policy INB – Teaching About Controversial Issues \(Appendix O\)](#), [IIBEB-1 – Student Use of Social Media \(Appendix C\)](#), [IIBEA/GAB – Responsible Computer Use \(Appendix B\)](#) and [JP – Student Publications \(Appendix I\)](#).