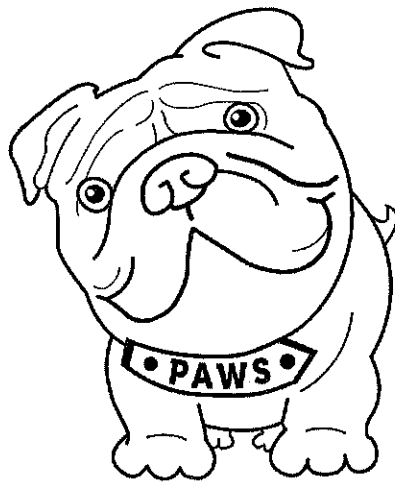


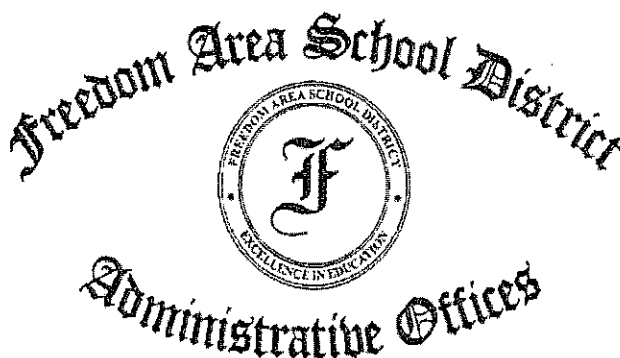
FREEDOM AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



2023 - 2024
PARENT-STUDENT
HANDBOOK

DIANE WORKMAN
Superintendent

724-775-5464
724-775-7644
FAX: 724-775-7434



ERIN BLUEDORN, CPA
Business Manager
School Board Secretary

www.freedomareaschools.org

1702 SCHOOL STREET
FREEDOM, PENNSYLVANIA 15042

This handbook has been prepared to inform you about Freedom Elementary School. You will find the rules and regulations that govern the day-to-day operation of our school in this booklet. You will also find important information that everyone needs to know and understand. Read this handbook carefully. Don't wait! Be sure you understand everything in it.

Parent/Guardian **MUST SIGN** the bottom of this form, and each student is to return this form to his/her homeroom teacher by **September 15, 2023**.

Parents, please notify the building principal if you would like to know more about our policies. A copy of all school district policies is available on the district website at freedomareaschools.org or by contacting the elementary school office.

Please print name of student:

Last Name

First Name

Teacher _____

Grade _____

I have read and reviewed the materials contained in the **2023-2024** Elementary Student/Parent Handbook.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Student academic achievement is the continuous interplay of three (3) dynamic components listed below to help students prepare for their futures in a complex society.

The ***Educational Institution*** must provide

- A curriculum that is diverse, challenging, and evolving to meet the needs of all children using a variety of teaching strategies.
- A caring professional staff that encourages, counsels, and expects all students to take the most challenging course sequence available.
- A safe school environment for all students, which promotes progress towards high expectations for academic achievement.

The ***Family*** must....

- Provide a supportive home environment to facilitate the child's physical, emotional, and educational growth.
- Be caring, proactive, and involved in the child's education.
- Be aware of student academic progress and needs with open communication between home and school.
- Make progress towards high academic standards for their children a high priority.

The ***Student*** must....

- Strive for 100 percent daily attendance.
- Strive to read at/or above grade level.
- Demonstrate proficiency or above in courses aligned to academic standards.
- Demonstrate yearly progress on NWEA Assessments/PSSA tests and other national tests such as new Standards, PSAT, SAT, and NAEP to meet state and federal goals.
- Contribute to a positive, safe school environment.

FREEDOM AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST READ

This handbook has been prepared to inform you about Freedom Area Elementary School. You will find the rules and regulations that govern the day-to-day operation of our school in this booklet. You will also find information that everyone needs to know and understand. Read this handbook carefully. Don't wait. Be sure you understand everything in it. Parents, please notify the building principal if you would like to know more about our policies on Curriculum Review by Parents and Students (105.1); Tobacco Use (222); Students' Rights/Surveys (235); Student Recruitment (250); Weapons (218.2); FERPA/Student Records Special Education Awareness and Screening (216); or Student Discipline (218). A copy of all school district policies is available in the Elementary School office.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<u>Building</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Fax Number</u>
Elementary School – K-4	724-775-1122	724-775-3672
Middle School – 5-8	724-775-7641	724-775-7748
High School – 9-12	724-775-7400	724-775-7753
Superintendent	724-775-7644 724-775-5464	724-775-7434
Transportation Director	724-775-7400	724-775-7434

www.freedomareaschools.org

THE FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AND WILL NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX AND HANDICAP IN ITS ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS OR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AS REQUIRED BY TITLE VI, TITLE IX AND SECTION 504.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Freedom Elementary Students, Parents, and Guardians,

It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you to the Freedom Area Elementary School! I am honored and excited to work with the students, faculty, staff, parents, and community during the 2023-2024 school year.

At the Freedom Area School District, we believe that learning goes beyond the lessons from our textbooks. Our Profile of a Bulldog supports these life skills that we believe every student needs to master to be successful in the classroom as well as in society. Our educational programming supports a well rounded education through our many offerings.

We have a world-class Parent-Teacher Association who works hard to provide our students and faculty with many wonderful opportunities. From field trips and class parties to book fairs and science fair, our PTA is very active. We appreciate the efforts of all who contribute to enriching our students' educational experience through volunteering, fundraising, and other supporting roles.

Freedom Elementary continues to focus on our School-Wide Positive Behavior Support system called PAWS. Our team has earned Tier 1 Fidelity over the past two years through the implementation of this school-wide prevention program aimed to establish a social culture that supports appropriate behaviors. Our focus through the acronym PAWS includes the following concepts: **P**ositive Attitude, **A**ccepting Responsibility, **W**orking Together, and **S**afe Choices. We will continue to promote and reward students who exhibit positive behaviors and attitudes throughout the school day. After modifying our program last year to adapt to the changes of the school year, we are ready to continue to improve and begin the work towards Tier 2.

I look forward to working with each of you as we continue to do what is right for the students and communities of the Freedom Area School District.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Capehart
Principal
Freedom Area Elementary School



ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF

Mr. John Capehart	Principal	jcapehart@freedomarea.org	Ext.402
Mr. Ryan Kennah	Dean of Students	rkennah@freedomarea.org	Ext. 198
Mr. Randal Perkins	School Counselor	rperkins@freedomarea.org	Ext. 460
Mrs. Jennifer Henderson	Prevention Specialist	jhenderson@freedomarea.org	Ext. 469
Mrs. Wendy Kline	School Nurse	wkline@freedomarea.org	Ext. 123
Officer Rick Jones	Resource Officer	rjones@freedomarea.org	Ext. 116
Mrs. Sara Miller	Gifted Support	smiller@freedomarea.org	Ext. 153
Mr. Randy Walker	Food Service	rwalker@freedomarea.org	Ext. 115
Mr. Joseph Testa	School Psychologist/ Special Education Coordinator	jtesta@freedomarea.org	Ext. 125

Building Secretaries

Mrs. Tracy Malagise	Administrative Secretary	tmalagise@freedomarea.org	Ext. 400
Mrs. Shelly Young	Attendance Secretary	syoung@freedomarea.org	Ext. 401

If you find it necessary to talk with one of the Elementary teachers, please phone at these times:
8:20-8:40 A.M. or 3:40-4:00 P.M.

Faculty (By Department)

Teacher	Department	Email Address	Phone Ext.
Mrs. Rebecca Champine	Kindergarten	rchampine@freedomarea.org	473
Mrs. Ashley Fetchin	Kindergarten	afetchin@freedomarea.org	468
Mrs. Gena Tokar	Kindergarten	gtokar@freedomarea.org	458
Mrs. Jennifer VanDeCar	Kindergarten	jvandecar@freedomarea.org	459
Mrs. Susan Camp	Grade 1	scamp@freedomarea.org	474
Mrs. Tina Cygan	Grade 1	tcygan@freedomarea.org	467
Mrs. Amy DeChellis	Grade 1	adechellis@freedomarea.org	450
Mr. Rick Baldauf	Grade 2	rbaldauf@freedomarea.org	472
Ms. Joy Crouch	Grade 2	jcrouch@freedomarea.org	466
Miss Cara Hessler	Grade 2	chessler@freedomarea.org	444
Mrs. Lori Sacco	Grade 2	lsacco@freedomarea.org	452
Mrs. Terri Seltzer	Grade 2	tseltzer@freedomarea.org	465
Mrs. Caitlin Chinchilla	Grade 3	cchinchilla@freedomarea.org	162
Mr. Chris DeLong	Grade 3	cdelong@freedomarea.org	163
Mrs. Colleen Tyler	Grade 3	ctyler@freedomarea.org	161
Dr. Amanda Whitworth	Grade 3	awhitworth@freedomarea.org	154
Mr. Brian Obman	Grade 4	bobman@freedomarea.org	155
Mrs. Linda Haffner	Grade 4	lhaffner@freedomarea.org	159
Ms. Kristine Ricci	Grade 4	kricci@freedomarea.org	156
Mrs. Amy Shultz	Grade 4	ashultz@freedomarea.org	157

Teacher	Department	Email Address	Phone Ext.
Mrs. Hailey Burks	Learning Support	hburks@freedomarea.org	166
Mrs. Erin Carnevale	Learning Support	ecarnevale@freedomarea.org	463
Mrs. Kelly Emes	Learning Support	kemes@freedomarea.org	457
Mrs. Lauren Harley	Learning Support	lharley@freedomarea.org	454
Mrs. Sara Miller	Gifted Support	smiller@freedomarea.org	153
Mrs. Renee Bogdan	Speech/Language	rbogdan@freedomarea.org	470
Mrs. Michaela Herrmann	Speech/Language	mherrmann@freedomarea.org	461
Mrs. Ashley Barnes	K-4 Music	abarnes@freedomarea.org	479
Mrs. Dana Gaertner	Physical Education	dgaertner@freedomarea.org	462
Mrs. Melissa Krajcovic	Art	mkrajcovic@freedomarea.org	480
Mrs. Tara Little	Library Media	tlittle@freedomarea.org	407
Mrs. Michele Lugowski	K-4 Technology	mlugowski@freedomarea.org	408
Mrs. Linda Girty	Title 1	lgirty@freedomarea.org	453
Mrs. Lisa Levenson	Title 1	llevenson@freedomarea.org	151
Mrs. Kim McDaniels	Title 1	ksmith@freedomarea.org	464
Mrs. Abby Vavithes	Math Intervention	avavithes@freedomarea.org	408
Ms. Staci Desiderio	Math Intervention	sdesiderio@freedomarea.org	408

ADD COLORED SCHOOL CALENDAR

SCHOOL CALENDAR

August 28-September 1	In-Service Days
September 4	Labor Day – No School
September 5	First Day for Students
October 9	In-Service Day
November 9	Early Dismissal
November 10	Act 80 Day – Parent-Teacher Conferences (K-12)
November 22-27	Thanksgiving Break
December 22-January 2	Winter Break
January 15	Martin Luther King Day – No School
February 16	Early Dismissal
February 19	President’s Day – No School
March 27	In-Service Day
March 28	Snow Day
March 29-April 1	Spring Break
April 18	Early Dismissal
April 19	In-Service Day
May 10	Act 80 Day / Prom
May 17	Early Dismissal (MS & HS Only - Senior Projects)
May 27	Memorial Day-No School
June 7	Last Day for Students / Commencement
June 10	In-Service Day
June 10	Kennywood School Picnic

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

8:25-Doors Open
No student entry before this time!
 8:30-Breakfast served
 8:50-Students to Homeroom
 9:00-Tardy Bell
 9:00 Announcements
 9:05 Instruction Begins
 3:40-Student Dismissal

TWO-HOUR DELAY SCHEDULE

11:00 AM – 3:50 PM

Parents should be familiar with the amount of time required for their children to walk from home to school and assigned bus stop to regulate each child’s departure accordingly. No breakfast is served during a two-hour delay schedule.

ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM

The elementary course of study is organized as prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Reading Program receives the greatest time allotment and is integrated within all other areas. We use an instructional approach that blends directed instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness with comprehension strategies at grade level and small group reading on a child's instructional level. A child's instructional level falls on a lettered scale between A-Z. He/she receives support at his/her instructional level.

Freedom Elementary School participates in the SchoolWide Title I program making all students eligible for Title I services. Full-time Art, Physical Education, Library, Music, and Technology Education are part of the school curriculum. Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Writing, Spelling, and English are included in the daily/weekly schedule.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

In case of a child who is physically unable to attend school for four weeks or more, parents may have the family physician fill out a form to send to the school board. If approved, the school will provide homebound instruction. If the student has an IEP, the state will also approve this method.

POWERSCHOOL

PowerSchool offers parents real-time access to access grades, attendance, teacher comments, assignments, bulletin boards and other important pieces of student-related information. Access to PowerSchool is available from anywhere in the world through a secure online web portal and a free PowerSchool app that is available for all iOS and Android devices. For more information, instructions to set up an account, or other parent portal information, please visit the district website.

PROGRESS NOTICE

Classroom progress can be tracked anytime throughout the school year utilizing our online portal, Powerschool. Paper progress reports are not sent home unless the student has an IEP. All students will receive a paper copy of the final report card. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to conference with teachers about a student's unsatisfactory progress at any time throughout the year. The district contact between home and school is most beneficial in analyzing and understanding your child's progress and development.

REPORT CARD AND GRADING METHOD

We are focused on the development of all aspects of your child's growth. We are working toward academic, social, mental, physical, and emotional development in desirable ways. This report communicates your child's progress about his/her ability and effort. We want to show his/her achievement in comparison with grade level Pennsylvania Standards. Overall progress is based on achievement and growth measures. This report is issued four times during the school year for grades 1-4. Report card grades can be accessed through Powerschool. Paper copies of the report card can be requested by contacting the office. The request for paper copies must be done yearly. All students will receive a final paper report card at the end of the school year. Kindergarten report cards are issued two times per year, with a modified report as a third communication piece between the 2nd and 4th nine weeks. Please read it carefully, and communicate further with the classroom teacher if you have questions or concerns. We urge you to meet/communicate at least once this year with your child's teacher.

<u>Grading Period</u>	<u>Progress Reports Issued</u>	<u>End of 9 Weeks</u>
1	Oct. 3	Nov. 3
2	Dec. 12	Jan. 24
3	Feb. 27	April 3
4	May 7	June 7

LETTER GRADE AND PERCENTAGE EQUIVALENTS

Grades are recorded as percentages on the report card. The following is a guide for interpreting letter grades.

A+	99-100	B	82-87	D+	68-69
A	92-98	B-	80-81	D	62-67
A-	90-91	C+	78-79	D-	60-61
B+	88-89	C	72-77	E	Below 60
		C-	70-71		

O - Outstanding

S - Satisfactory

N - Needs Improvement

2023-2024 PSSA TESTING WINDOW

Assessment	Dates	Grades
English Language Arts	April 22-26	Grades 3-4
Math	April 29-May 3	Grades 3-4
Science	April 29-May 3	Grade 4
Make-up Exams	May 6-10	All grades

TITLE I

The Freedom Area School District is a school wide Title One School. Our district receives Federal Funding through this grant to support learning needs in all content areas. The goal of this program is to serve all students to ensure that they demonstrate growth and grade level achievement. The Federal Programs Coordinator and Title I faculty provide a yearly meeting to outline the annual objectives for the program. Periodic communications will be issued to all parents via flyers, building/district newsletters, and updates during monthly events. The Parent Right to Know Letter and the School Compact are included in this handbook after the Board Policies section.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program is an innovative program whose goals are to maximize individual student success in the classroom. The Student Assistance Team is available to all students in the Freedom Area Elementary School. Involvement with the SAP team may be initiated by Administration, Parent(s), Teacher(s), Student(s), or through a review of the student's grades or records. Requests for assistance may be made to the Principal or the Guidance Counselor. Parental permission is required for continuation in the program.

The Student Assistance Program is a process which includes:

1. Identifying students who are in need of academic, behavioral and social support.
2. Convening SAP meetings to advocate for specific needs of students
3. Applying intervention and management strategies.
4. Expanding the capability of classroom teachers by involving them in team decision making, problem solving and guided practice.
5. Monitoring implementation and student progress.
6. Determining how best to meet the needs of students through a continuum of services.

SAP TEAM **(Student Assistance Program)**

Mrs. Jennifer Henderson	Mrs. Barb Martz	Mr. Randall Perkins
Mrs. Susan Camp	Ms. Joy Crouch	Mr. Chris DeLong
Mrs. Lisa Levenson	Mrs. Amy Shultz	Mrs. Colleen Tyler
Mrs. Jennifer VanDeCar	Dr. Amanda Whitworth	Mr. John Capehart

SPECIAL SERVICES

School-Wide Support is a collaborative process in which the teacher, parent, and administration work together to help the child become successful in the classroom. Students enter the school support process for many reasons. Academic difficulties, poor attendance, behavior difficulties, and at-risk issues, are reasons a child may enter into a program. A child's involvement with the school support process may be determined using benchmark/diagnostic data, and classroom observation to identify areas of student need. Requests for assistance should begin with your child's teacher or LEA.

SPECIAL SERVICES (cont.)

The following certified specialists are available based on specific needs:

School Psychologist	Speech Therapist
Title One Reading Specialist	Gifted & Talented Education
Vision Specialist	Hearing Specialist
Learning Support Specialist	Prevention Specialist/Counselor
Physical Therapist	Occupational Therapist

Referrals for services of any of the above specialists are handled through collaboration between the Elementary Principal and the School Wide Support Team.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

The Freedom Area School District offers a full continuum of special education programs and services to all eligible for such services. Special education programs and services are available for eligible students between the ages of three (3) and twenty-one (21). Services for eligible children ages three (3) to school entry age may be requested by contacting the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit at 724-774-7800. Services for eligible students of school entry age through twenty-one (21) years of age may be requested by contacting the building principal. Special Education programs at the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit and/or the Freedom Area School District include:

1. Developmentally Delayed (Preschool only)
2. Autistic/Pervasive Developmental Disorder
3. Visually Impaired
4. Mentally Gifted
5. Neurologically Impaired
6. Emotional Disturbed
7. Speech and Language Impaired
8. Intellectually Disabled
9. Learning Disabled
10. Hearing Impaired
11. Multi-handicapped
12. Physically Impaired

SCREENING

The Freedom Area School District conducts intervention meetings to identify students who may be eligible for special education services. Parents or guardians may request that their child is screened or evaluated for special education services. Requests for screening or evaluation should be made in writing and directed to the principal. For further information, parents or guardians may contact the school psychologist/special education coordinator by telephone at 724-775-7641.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information collected as part of an individual student referral or evaluation is treated confidentially. A written policy regarding the confidentiality of student records is available for review by contacting the building principal. Printed information regarding available special education services and programs and parental rights as they pertain to special education is available in the Elementary School office or the office of Superintendent of Schools. If you have any questions about the above information or special education services, please contact the school psychologist/special education coordinator or the building principal.

PROTECTED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

The Freedom Area School District will not discriminate against protected handicapped students as defined in Chapter 15 of the regulations of the State Board of Education. The Freedom Area School District will provide each protected handicapped student enrolled in the district, without cost to the student or family, those related services or accommodations which are needed to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities without discrimination and to the maximum extent appropriate to the extent of the student's ability.

ATTENDANCE and TARDY POLICIES

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits from the beginning of their school career. Regular and prompt attendance at school is a must if students are to progress scholastically as well as to develop responsible work habits. School attendance and prompt arrival at school are the responsibility of the parent and the student.

The Pennsylvania School Law specifically states that students under the age of seventeen must be in attendance at school and the only reason for legal absences are: (1) student illness, (2) family quarantine, (3) death in the immediate family and, (4) religious observances.

REPORTING OFF FROM SCHOOL

An automated messaging system will telephone the parent/guardian of students who have been recorded for an unexcused absence. To avoid the phone call, parents are requested to notify the school in the morning by **8:30 A.M.** if students are going to be absent for any reason.

ABSENCES – All absences (excused or unexcused) will accumulate on a yearly basis.

Excused Absences

1. MUST SEND WRITTEN EXCUSE TO SCHOOL within three days of returning to school.
2. A maximum of 10 parent/guardian notes can be used to verify absence.
3. After 10 general notes, all other absences must be verified with a doctor excuse or will be counted as unexcused.
4. All doctor excuses must include the doctor's name and phone number for verification.
5. All excuses must be brought to the office upon the student's return to school.

Definition of an EXCUSED ABSENCE:

- a. Sickness/injury verified by a doctor's excuse or parent note
- b. Serious illness or death in the immediate family
- c. Suspensions from school
- d. Medical, dental or legal appointments that cannot be made after school (Student must have an official note from the doctor's office)
- e. Observance of religious holidays
- f. Hazardous weather conditions
- g. Court hearings
- h. Definite emergency situations approved by Administration
- i. Any other circumstances that have been previously approved by Administration

Unexcused/Illegal Absences

1. Once a student accumulates **3** unexcused absences, a WARNING LETTER will be sent home to the parent/guardian of the student.
2. Once a student accumulates **6** unexcused absences, a SECOND WARNING LETTER will be sent home via mail to the parent/guardian. At this point, a Truancy Elimination Plan must be discussed and drafted between the designated school official (i.e. Prevention Specialist) and the parent/guardian.
3. Six unexcused absences may result in a hearing for truancy at the local magistrate's office.

4. After the 10th unexcused absence, a **final** letter will be sent to the parent/guardian. A mandatory attendance meeting will also be scheduled with the Truancy Intervention Program coordinator, school and family.
5. On the TENTH day of unexcused/illegal absence, the student will be referred to the local magistrate's office. For students under the age of 15, charges will be filed against the parent/guardian. **The school will not accept parental notes once the notice has been sent to the District Magistrate.**
6. Students will receive zero credit for all work on unexcused/illegal absences.

Definition of an UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:

- a. Seen on or near property but does not report to school
- b. Missing the bus, over sleeping, car failure
- c. Trips not approved through the Educational Tour/Trip Policy
- d. Any other reason that does not fall under State Regulations -
<https://www.education.pa.gov/Policy-Funding/BECs/Purdons/Pages/CompulsorySchoolAttendance.aspx>

TARDIES TO SCHOOL

All tardies (excused and unexcused) will accumulate on a nine week basis. Students are late at 9:00 A.M. They must report with a parent/guardian to the office for sign in, and a tardy pass. Failure to accompany the student will result in an unexcused tardy. Homeroom activities (attendance counts, flag salute, etc.) and announcements begin at 9:00 A.M. At that time, students should be in their seats and ready for the day's activity with classroom instruction beginning promptly at 9:05 A.M. All students arriving after the scheduled start time must report directly to the office.

Excused Tardies

1. MUST SEND WRITTEN EXCUSE TO SCHOOL within 3 days of returning to school.
2. A maximum of 5 parent notes can be used to verify tardies.
3. All other tardies must be verified with a medical excuse or will be counted as unexcused.
4. All doctor's excuses must include the doctor's name and phone number for verification. An excused absence/tardy form can be obtained from the doctor at the time of the appointment.
5. The same guidelines set by the State in regards to attendance will be followed to determine excused and unexcused tardies.

Unexcused Tardies

1. Only unexcused tardies accumulate for disciplinary reasons
2. 5 tardies (per nine weeks) = 1 unexcused absence and a warning letter sent home.
3. 10 tardies (per nine weeks) = 2nd unexcused absence and a second warning letter.
4. 15 tardies (per nine weeks) = 3rd unexcused absence and may result in a referral to Children & Youth Services.
5. The following reasons are considered to be unexcused tardies:
 - a. Sleeping in, alarm did not go off, no one got the student up
 - b. car failure, missed the bus, missed ride
 - c. Any other excuse not covered under the state exemption clause for mandatory attendance

EARLY DISMISSAL - *All early dismissals will accumulate on a yearly basis.*

If your child needs to be dismissed early for any reason, you must inform the school office in writing. The note must be specific and the reason must be covered under the acceptable excuses outlined in the attendance policy. The parent/guardian must include a phone number on the note for the school to confirm in case of any questions. Please state in the note who will pick up the student for safety.

Any child dismissed before 3:40 pm must be picked up in the office. This policy is established for the safety of your child. All children leaving before 3:40 pm must be signed out by an adult. Be advised that any adult who is picking up a child is required to provide ID. No student is permitted to leave school without permission from the nurse, attendance office or administration.

Excused Early Dismissal

1. Must turn in a written note to the classroom teacher, or directly to the attendance office before school. An early dismissal slip will be provided to the classroom teacher. The note must contain the student's name, time of the dismissal, the reason for the dismissal including doctor/dentist name and phone number if applicable, phone number and signature of parent/guardian.
2. A maximum of 5 parent notes can be used to excuse students for an early dismissal.
3. All other early dismissals must be verified with a doctor excuse or will be counted as unexcused.
4. All doctor's excuses must include the doctor's name and phone number for verification.
5. The same guidelines set by the State in regards to attendance will be followed to determine excused and unexcused early dismissals.

Unexcused Early Dismissal

1. After five (5) unexcused early dismissals a warning letter will be sent home.
2. After ten (10) unexcused early dismissals a second warning letter will be sent home and a meeting with our Prevention Specialist will be scheduled.
3. After fifteen (15) unexcused early dismissals a warning letter will be sent home, and may result in a referral to Child and Youth Services.

EXCUSE POLICY

Please follow these guidelines when writing absence/tardy excuses for your child. **Include full student name, dates of absences/tardies and the reason for the absence/tardy.** When writing the reason, please be as specific as possible. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated and extremely helpful when determining whether the absence/tardy is excused or unexcused according to State Guidelines.

EDUCATIONAL TRIP REQUEST

Please complete the *Student Application for Educational Tour or Trip* and return it to the school office at least two weeks prior to the proposed absence. A separate form must be filled out for each school student. Absences for trips which have not been pre-approved or do not include acceptable educational activities will be marked "unexcused" and addressed appropriately within the attendance policy. The Pennsylvania School Code requires that we classify absences as "unexcused" unless the educational trip is approved by administration in advance. Please note that only one educational trip will be approved per year. **Please visit the district website at www.freedomarea.org to print the necessary form.**

PROCEDURES

HOMEWORK FOR ABSENT PUPIL

Homework is an integral part of the total educational program in that it serves to give practice and reinforcement to the skills, concepts, and ideas discussed in the classroom. If a student is absent for several days, every effort should be made to secure the homework for the period of his/her absence. The parent should follow the following procedure:

1. If you call the school to request homework, please call by 10:00 a.m. so the teacher has time to get the assignments ready to go home.
2. Make arrangements with a brother or sister, a friend, or neighbor to bring the homework to the absent child. If this is not possible, the parent should arrange to pick up the work at school.
3. The student must make up homework within three days, according to teacher discretion.
4. Homework, tests, and quizzes will not be made up for unexcused absences.

VISITORS

All visitors must check in at the office. **Visitors must present their driver's license** to be scanned by the Raptor System and issued a visitor pass. Visitors will not be permitted to visit any student or teacher who is in a classroom. Arrangements must be made to visit during free periods. Visitors not in the building for school business will be asked to leave. Failure to leave will result in a trespassing fine.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES FOR CAR RIDERS

All cars shall enter the school campus by use of Harvey Run Road to Harvey Avenue onto Thorne Street. Cars will line up in the parking lot with the basketball goals. Do not enter campus before 3:00 PM. Each car will be directed to the Pick-Up Area of the Elementary School, where the guardian will be reunited with the student(s). Guardians will stay in cars, with the student hang tag displayed. This hang tag will be provided by the school and must be requested prior to picking up your child for the first time. You **MUST** have this card to pick up the child. Any cars arriving after 3:40 PM will wait until buses exit campus.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION TO HOMES

From time to time your child will bring an announcement or information home that requires a return reply. We ask that you complete your part and return it to the school as promptly as possible. We also use the district-wide phone message system for announcements, as well as email.

TRANSFER AND ENROLLMENT

Parents of children moving from the district must complete a withdrawal form several days before moving. (Pupils entering from another school system must present proof of residency, birth certificate, and immunizations.)

FIELD TRIPS

Parents will be required to sign a permission form for each child participating in a school-sponsored educational field trip. Each grade plans one such trip every year. PTA membership, clearances, and compliance with PTA bylaws are required to chaperone.

LOST AND FOUND

Items found in the building will be placed in a lost and found box in or near the office.

PLAY AREA

There are two playground areas adjacent to the elementary school building. These play areas are supervised by teachers and administration ONLY during school hours.

RESTROOMS

Students are not to loiter in the restrooms. Restrooms are available on all floors. Students are to use the restroom, and follow the standards set in place through the PAWS Program.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

A school insurance program protecting the child while at school and en route to and from school will be available shortly after the opening of school. Literature explaining the program will be available online at www.freedomareaschools.org. This policy becomes a contract between the insurance company and the parent with the school holding no responsibility.

SCHOOL SALES

School sales to raise money for school-sponsored activities are conducted during the school year. Student participation is strictly voluntary.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/FLAG SALUTE

It is the responsibility of every citizen to show proper respect for his/her country and its flag. However, students may decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the flag by personal belief or religious convictions. Students who choose to refrain from such participation must respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.

VIRTUAL LEARNING

The Freedom Area School District continues to monitor the health and safety of our schools and make instructional decisions according to the current needs of our students and staff. In the event that synchronous or asynchronous instruction is needed to be offered in a virtual setting, additional information regarding student access and expectations will be communicated to families. This would include weather emergencies that might necessitate the use of flexible instruction days.

LUNCHROOM AND CAFETERIA

CAFETERIA

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Freedom Area Schools** offer healthy meals every school day. For the **2023- 2024** school year, breakfast will be **free for all students**; and lunch will cost **\$2.60 per day or \$13.00 per week at the Elementary School**. However, your children may qualify for free meals. Parents are encouraged to make deposits for meals on a weekly basis by sending either cash or a check in a marked envelope with the child's name. If a parent wishes, you may set up a lunch prepay account at **www.schoolcafe.com** for a minimal fee.

The Food Service Department will not give any students change from checks sent in for meal purchases. Checks are welcomed and should be made out to the **Freedom Cafeteria Fund**. **CHECKS RETURNED FOR INSUFFICIENT FUNDS will have an additional charge added as a service fee.**

All meals must be paid for at the time of service. Milk is served with all meals and may be purchased separately for \$0.70. All Elementary students must take milk with all meals. This rule is a must due to Federal guidelines governing our school lunch program. Any student having milk or any other food allergy must have a doctor's excuse to have water/juice substituted for milk with meals.

To apply for free or reduced-price meals: Complete the Free or Reduced Meal application, it can be found online at www.paschoolsmeals.com or fill out the form that will be sent home to all households. **Use one application for all students in your household.** If your household financial conditions change during the school year, you may apply for this program at any time during the year. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to Mr. Randy Walker, Food Services Manager, 1702 School Street, Freedom, PA 15042.

FOOD POLICY

Students are not permitted to remove food from the cafeteria for consumption on any portion of the school campus. Food at ALL pre-planned parties is monitored by administration and is consistent with state recommended guidelines for nutritional health.

STUDENT MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCES

These procedures are implemented in coordination with revised guidelines of Policy 808 – Food Service (available on the district website www.freedomarea.org)

DIETARY NEEDS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

USDA regulations require substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. The physician's statement must identify the following:

- The child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet.
- The major life activity affected by the disability.
- The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

IN CASES OF FOOD ALLERGY:

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under 7 CFR 1b.3 of USDA's nondiscrimination regulations and school food authorities may, but are not required to, make substitutions for them.

However, when in the physician's assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions, the child's condition would meet the definition of "disability," and the substitutions prescribed by the physician must be made.

OTHER SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS:

Schools may make food substitutions, at their discretion, for individual children who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary needs.

Such determinations are only made on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by a statement which specifies the needed food substitution and is signed by a licensed medical authority (e.g., physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner) or other health professional specified by the state agency.

This provision covers those children who have food intolerances or allergies but do not have life-threatening reactions (anaphylactic reactions) when exposed to the food (s) to which they are allergic.

MEDICAL STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS:

The medical statement must include:

- An identification of the medical or other special dietary need which restricts the child's diet
- The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods to be substituted

CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE OF THE DISCIPLINARY CODE

Our code addresses the district's goal of providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and encourages, supports and maintains an educational environment conducive to learning. Everyone involved in the educational setting at Freedom Elementary School has the right to expect a safe, orderly and pleasant environment.

The guidelines outlined in the following code are intended to protect the rights of all students and staff. Regulatory guidelines and policies have been set to ensure that all offenders will be treated fairly and reasonably when actions or speech become disruptive to the educational process in the building.

The code of conduct provides guidance in the process of producing a safe environment and encouraging responsible behavior with mutual respect and cooperation among all within the Freedom/Conway/New Sewickley community. Mutual respect, responsibility, and self-discipline are the common threads of success that will be emphasized throughout our school and community.

We desire that each student has the opportunity to expand his/her knowledge, enrich his/her life experience, exercise his/her self-control and take responsibility for his/her actions. We will work together to learn, to grow, and to enjoy our elementary school days and prepare for the future as independent, responsible adults.

What follows is a section of Pennsylvania school code that establishes the foundation for codes of conduct throughout the state. In practice, it provides direction for developing and maintaining guidelines for individual behavior.

IN LOCO PARENTIS

Section 1317 of the Pennsylvania school code states: "Every teacher in the public school shall have the right to exercise the same authority as to conduct and behavior over the students attending his/her school, during the time they are in attendance, including the time required in going to and from their homes, as the parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to such pupils may exercise over them."

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN

Teaching responsibility and self-discipline has become a growing challenge for our schools today. We believe that students become more responsible decision-makers when they are held accountable for their decisions. As educators, we realize that these traits are not learned overnight. Some learn quickly, and others take a little longer to learn how to think before they act.

For this reason, we follow a progressive disciplinary system that gradually incorporates disciplinary steps as the student grows (i.e., student conferences, personal detentions, hour detentions, SAP referrals, parent conferences, etc.). In addition to this progressive system are disciplinary actions that are more severe, such as suspensions, hearings, expulsions, etc. These are in place for infractions that call for stronger actions, all of which are described in this handbook. The following action plan is in place for disruptions occurring at the Freedom Area Elementary School and is handled in a manner that preserves a quality educational environment.

DETENTION

Students may be assigned detention by teachers or from the office. Detention is assigned for conduct or other disciplinary problems. Students may be assigned after-school detention. Parents will be notified 24 hours in advance to make arrangements for transportation if needed.

ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY & STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To provide a safe, secure learning environment for all students.
2. To treat all students fairly and with respect.
3. To provide guidance and support for students in their pursuit of academic excellence.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students should attend school regularly.
2. Students should give a conscientious effort in classroom work.
3. Students should adhere to all school rules and regulations.
4. Students should share in the responsibility to develop a school climate that is conducive to learning.
5. Students should respect the rights of all others involved in the educational process.
6. Students should respectfully express their ideas and opinions.
7. Students should cooperate in the investigation of any matter relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community.
8. Students should comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
9. Students should exercise care when using school facilities and/or equipment.
10. Students should be on time for school and school activities.
11. Students should make up work when absent from school.
12. Promote intercultural and intergroup relations and understanding.
13. Apply their abilities and interests to the improvement of their education.
14. Develop and apply their learning skills.
15. Attend school to obtain a meaningful and quality education.
16. Contribute toward the overall improvement of the school curriculum through active involvement in both classroom and co-curricular activities.
17. Develop a sense of pride and respect for the school and the ideas for which it stands.
18. Assure that they have a voice in the Student Government through their duly elected representatives.
19. Provide support for the members of athletics and groups representing the school as part of the "spirit" necessary for team success.

ASSEMBLY BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to act respectfully and cooperatively during school assemblies or pep rallies. Whistling, booing, foot-stomping and yelling are not acceptable behaviors. Our behavior must be such that any guests would be proud to have witnessed. Students should sit in designated areas when attending assemblies in the gymnasium.

SEARCHES

A student, his/her locker or personal possessions may be searched when a school administrator has probable cause or reasonable suspicion. Parents/guardians will be notified if/when this occurs.

DRESS CODE

We encourage children to develop lasting habits of proper dress and good grooming. We ask that boys and girls have their hair clean and well groomed. Any attire disrupting the education process or poses a health/safety issue will not be permitted. This code applies to both male and female students. **IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN COME TO SCHOOL APPROPRIATELY DRESSED. If clothing is deemed to be inappropriate, you may be called to the school to replace your child's clothing for the school day.**

Please Review the following:

1. Hats, large bandanas, and non-prescription sunglasses are prohibited in school: except on approved hat days.
2. Hoods aren't to be worn in school on any occasion.
3. No clothing which interferes with the normal function of a class is to be worn.
4. No items that could, in the opinion of the teachers or administration, be used in any way as a weapon or a health & safety issue. Items include but are not limited to: chains, spikes, etc.
5. Clothing with obscene or suggestive pictures or language may not be worn.
6. Clothing that advertises drugs, alcohol, tobacco or satanic suggestions is not permitted.
7. Skirts and shorts must reach the tips of the middle finger when hands are fully extended at the sides. Any questionable lengths will be addressed by staff and may require a change of clothes.
8. Bare midriffs, halters, and similar outfits may not be worn.
9. Clothing that may cause disharmony in the building will be prohibited.
10. Shoes must be worn at all times. Sandals MUST have a strap on the back for safety (no flip flops).

NOTE: The faculty and administration have the right to question a student's dress.

The administration will take any necessary action if any item is not specifically covered in Items 1 – 10.

DUE PROCESS

No disciplinary action will be taken until the student is first notified of the reason(s) for the action taken by the administration.

No detention will be served until notification is made to the parents by either phone, email, or mail.

ISS and OSS will not be served until parents have been notified. ISS may be initiated if the parental contact has been unsuccessful.

Any suspension of 4-10 days must be accompanied by an informal hearing in the Principal's office within five days. The following requirements will be observed:

- A. Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardian and the student.
- B. Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
- C. A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
- D. A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his behalf.

Any hearing for expulsion from school in front of the Board of Education will follow these requirements:

- A. Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardian by certified mail.
- B. Sufficient notice of time and place of the hearing must be given.
- C. The hearing must be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
- D. The student has the right to be represented by counsel.
- E. The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
- F. The student has the right to request that any such witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- G. The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his behalf.
- H. A record must be kept of the hearing, either by a stenographer or by tape recorder. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy of the transcript.
- I. The proceeding must be held with all reasonable speed.
- J. Where the student disagrees with the results of the hearing, recourse is available in the appropriate state or federal court

LEVELS OF BEHAVIOR

Level 1

Classroom Disruption	Inappropriate Behavior
Homework Incomplete (3+)	Uncooperative Behavior
Unprepared for Class	Hall Pass Abuse
Inappropriate Speech	Behavior for Sub
Horseplay	Dress Code (1 st offense)
Bus Behavior (1 st offense)	Unprepared for gym (shoes, etc.)
In Area Without Permission	Verbal Dispute between others
Eating or drinking in an authorized area	

*Disciplinary action for Level 1 can be one or more of the following:

Change Seating/Isolate	Administrative Conference/Warning
Verbal Reprimand	Parental Contact (Mail or phone)
Hall Pass Restriction	Administrative Discretion
Academic Detention w/teacher	
Hour Detention	

Level 2

5+ Class Tardies	Did Not Serve Personal Detention
10+ Unexcused School Tardies	Did Not Serve Hour Detention
Class/Study Hall Cut	Cafeteria Misconduct
Outside Building Without Permission	School Assembly/Activity Misconduct
Behavior on a field trip	Behavior for Substitute Teacher-Habitual
Unauthorized Use of Electronic	Bus Behavior (2 nd offense)
Devices (including wearable	Forged Pass
technology)	Cheating/Plagiarism
Dress Code Violation (2+)	Inappropriate Language
Left Area Without Permission	Open Defiance – Minor
Public Display of Affection	Habitual Level 1 Referral
Insubordination/Disrespect – Minor	Other
Inappropriate Use of Technology	

*Disciplinary action for Level 2 can be one or more of the following:

Administrative Conference/Warning	Hall Pass Restriction
Parental Contact (Mail/Phone)	In-School Suspension
Hour Detention	Contact Probation Officer
Suspension	Suspension from Bus
Parental Conference	Administrative Discretion
Saturday Detention	

Level 3

Open Defiance - Major
 Insubordination/Disrespect - Major
 ISS/Detention Behavior
 Destroy/deface school property
 Intimidation/Threats/Bullying
 Threatened Teacher/Staff
 Causing a Disruption
 Altercation/Confrontation
 Fighting/Assault
 Harassment
 Poor sportsmanship at an extracurricular event (athlete or spectator)
 Stealing

Possession of Lighter/Matches
 Act of Gambling
 Possession of Tobacco/Vape
 Smoking Policy Violation
 Second Circumstantial Smoking
 Hindering an Investigation
 Disorderly Conduct
 Safety Violation
 Bus Behavior (Major)
 Left School Without Permission
 Habitual Level 2 Referral
 Other

*Disciplinary action for Level 3 can be one or more of the following:

Parental Contact or Conference
 Probation Officer Contacted
 Police Contact
 Loss of extra-curricular privilege
 Suspension
 In-School Suspension
 Informal Hearing
 Behavior Contract/Agreement

Restitution
 Probation/Hall Pass Restriction
 Loss of technology privileges
 Daily Monitor Slip
 Removal from Field Trips
 Administrative Discretion

Level 4

Weapons Policy Violation
 Drug/Alcohol Policy Violation
 Assault Teacher/Staff
 Sexual Harassment
 Set Off Fire Alarm
 Set Fire on School Property
 Indecent Exposure
 Endangers Self and/or Others

Destroy/Deface Staff/Personal Property
 Bomb Scare Involvement
 Habitual Referral/Incorrigibility
 Destroy/Deface School Property-Extreme
 Citing a Riot or Disturbance
 Malicious Use of Technology

*Disciplinary action for Level 4 can be one or more of the following:

Strict Probation
 Informal Hearing
 Suspension (5 – 10 days)
 School Board Hearing for Expulsion
 Contact Police
 Loss of technology privileges

Contact Probation Office
 Restitution
 Recommendation to Outside Agency
 For Counseling
 Administrative Discretion

BUS POLICIES

BUS TRANSPORTATION

School buses will stop for students living beyond walking distance from school only at designated stops. The children should be at the appointed station on time and are expected to aid the driver by **being quiet and courteous**. Kindergarten children will be seated in the front seats of the bus. Parents can aid the school by seeing that the children behave while waiting for the bus to arrive. **STUDENTS MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM RIDING THE BUS IF THEIR ACTIONS JEOPARDIZE THE SAFETY OF OTHER STUDENTS. SIGNS ARE POSTED ON ALL BUSES NOTIFYING STUDENTS THAT VIDEO AND AUDIO ARE INSTALLED AND IN USE.**

BUS VIDEO / AUDIO

The Freedom Area School Board has authorized the use of video/audio cameras on school buses. These cameras can record both what is said and done on the school bus. The video/audio cameras will be used to monitor student behavior to maintain order on the school buses to promote and maintain a safe environment. Students and parents are hereby notified that the content of the tapes may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. The contents of the tapes are confidential student records and will be safeguarded. Tapes will be retained, only if necessary, for the use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matters as determined necessary by the administration. Pennsylvania School Districts are no longer required to complete a physical mailing regarding the use of audio on school buses.

BUS TRANSFER REQUESTS/KINDERGARTEN BUS STOP POLICIES

District Policies and Procedures about Kindergarten Bus Stops is on the next page. The district will only approve bus transfers that meet the guidelines that are listed on the top of the transfer request form. Phone calls to request transfers for the same day will not be honored because of the possibility that a student may be placed on a different bus without the proper notification, thus causing the risk of "misplacing" a student.

A second area that the district needs continued parent cooperation is that of dropping off kindergarten students at their regular bus stop. It has been the district's practice to let kindergarten students depart the bus at their regular bus stop only with a parent or guardian present. If a responsible adult is not present at the bus stop for an individual kindergarten student, that student will be taken back to the school, and a parent/guardian will be called using the emergency phone numbers listed in the student's file. Parents/guardians will be expected to pick up their child at school within 30 to 60 minutes of being notified before the local Police or Children and Youth Services will be called. Persistent lack of a parent/guardian present at their assigned kindergarten stop for individual kindergarten students returning home may result in a suspension of bus riding privileges.

The above procedures are being restated with the intent of requesting the assistance of all District parents to help the district maintain a safe student transportation system for all of our children. Contact your child's building principal if you have any questions or need assistance with the above bus procedures and policies.

BUS CONDUCT

Riding a bus is a privilege, not a right. Exercise caution, good manners, and consideration for other people. Obey the driver; their first concern is for your safety. Below are some regulations students are asked to abide by at all times

AT ALL TIMES:

- Exercise caution, good manners, and consideration for other people.
- Obey the driver; their first concern is for your safety.
- **Passengers must remain seated throughout the entire ride.**

WAITING FOR THE BUS:

- Get to your stop five minutes ahead of time.
- Stay a safe distance from the road.
- When the bus approaches, get in line.
- Stay clear of the bus until it has come to a complete stop.
- Let smaller children board first.
- Your driver has a schedule to keep. If you are not at the bus stop, they can't wait for you.

BOARDING THE BUS:

- Always use the handrail.
- Go up the steps one at a time.
- Go directly to your seat. The bus will move when all passengers are seated.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS:

- Place book bags or other items on your lap. Keep the aisle clear.
- Avoid loud talking and confusion that might distract your driver.
- Ask the driver for permission before opening windows.
- Keep arms and head inside the bus.
- Throwing objects inside or out of the bus could cause an accident.
- The emergency door and exit controls may be used only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.
- The bus is not a playground. Save wrestling and horseplay for another time.
- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop at its designation or your bus stop.
- Help your drivers to keep the bus clean and in good shape. Keep food in backpack.
- Do not write on the seat backs, throw things on the floor or cut seats.
- Keep cell phones INSIDE backpacks at all times.

GETTING OFF THE BUS:

- Use the handrail and take one step at a time.
- Pushing or crowding could cause an accident.
- After you leave the bus, go directly to your school or home.

NOTE: The driver on any school bus shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct and safety of the pupils transported. Continued disorderly conduct or refusal to respect the authority of the school bus driver shall be sufficient reason for the pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with regulations of the school district

DETENTION FOR VIOLATIONS

The principal retains the right to assign in-school or after-school detention for violations of bus regulations.

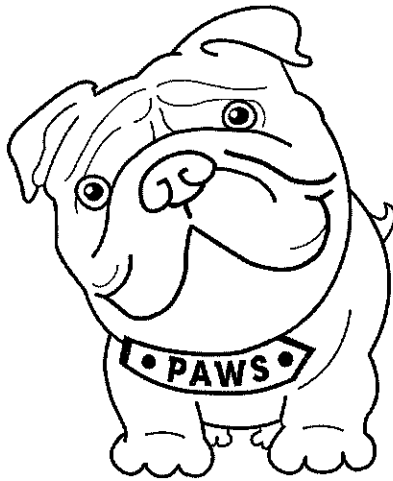
BUS PASS

No student can ride an alternate bus without written communication from home. The office issues bus passes. A bus pass is also needed for a different bus stop on the same bus. Requests for a bus pass must be received by 2:00 P.M. to ensure time to get the bus pass to the student. Please put the date, bus number, student's name that you wish your child to ride with to/from school. No student can ride an alternate bus without **written** communication from home. The office issues all passes based on written communication. A bus pass is also needed for students exiting the bus at a different stop on the same bus. **No changes will be made without written permission.**

Add transportation form pg. 1

Add Transportation form pg. 2

PAWS



Positive Attitude

Accept Responsibility

Work Together

Safe Choices

P.A.W.S. Program

PAWS Program Description

The PAWS Program is a new Positive School-Wide Behavior Program at Freedom Area Elementary School. The program was designed with student and teacher input and is intended to promote and reward students who exhibit positive behaviors and attitudes throughout the school day. The four main concepts of the program are centered around the acronym PAWS: Positive Attitude, Acept Responsibility, Work Together, and Safe Choices.

The goal of the PAWS Program is to create a social culture in our building that will encourage positive behaviors and interactions, while decreasing negative behaviors. Research shows that a positive social school culture will lead to an increased safe environment where students achieve higher academically and build positive relations with each other and with adults. The foundation of this approach emphasizes teaching students the behaviors we expect to see, reminding them to use those behaviors consistently, acknowledging them when they do, and correcting them when they do not while using a consistent school wide approach.

The program will begin by teaching students expectations in six key areas of the building including hallways, restrooms, arrival/dismissal, cafeteria, playground, and bus. If students do not meet the behavior expectations, they will be retaught the proper behavior. PAWS is designed to teach and reinforce the expected behaviors before major disciplinary measures are taken. The goal of the program is to encourage students to not only be on their best behavior at school and in the community but also to set an example for their peers. Students are an integral part of creating this environment for each other with the support of our faculty and staff.

PAWS Reward System

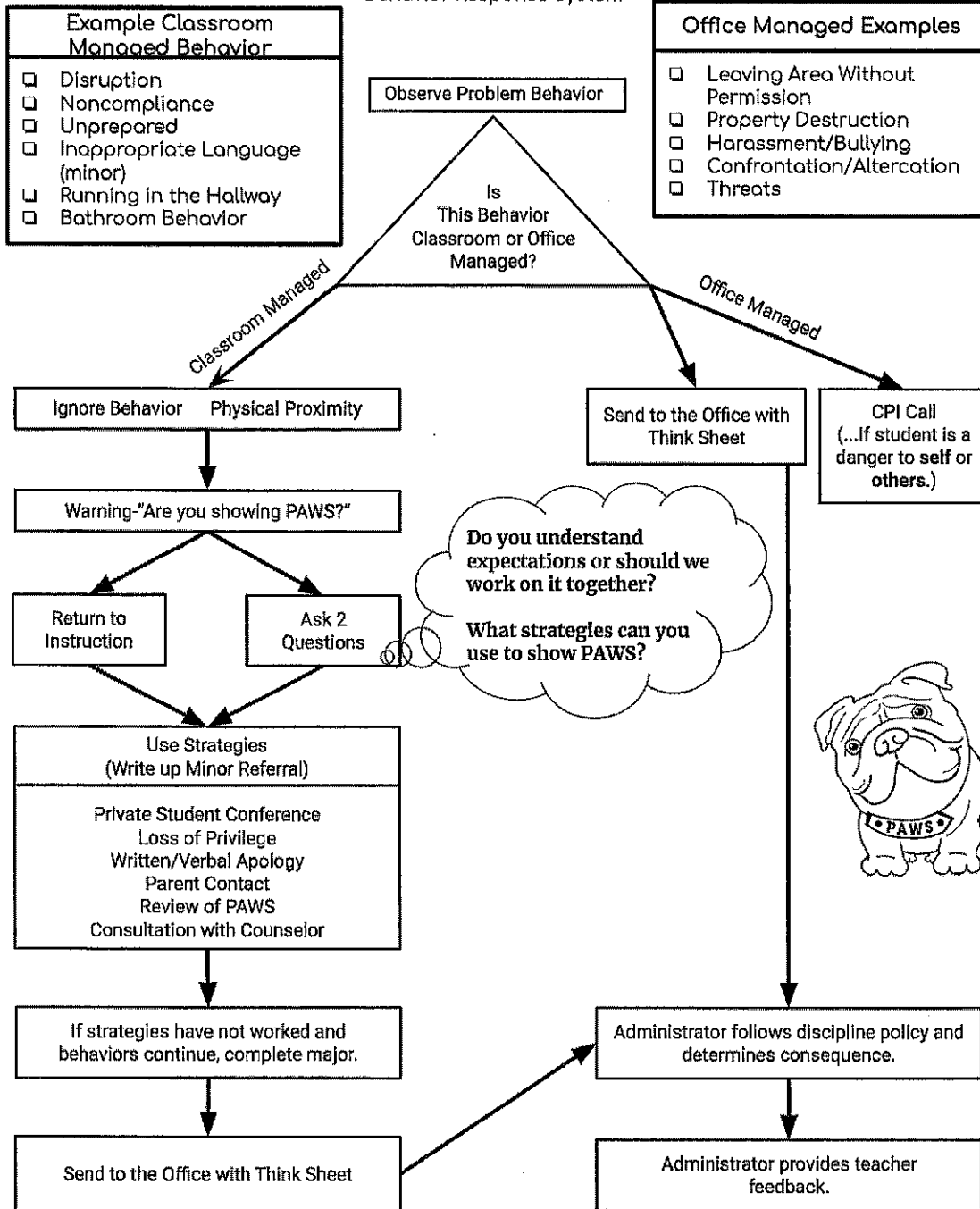
Students who show appropriate behaviors will be recognized on a daily basis by earning a PAWS ticket from faculty members. All of the PAWS tickets will be entered for weekly prize drawings. Students who continuously display positive behaviors and who act as role models for peers will be awarded a Principal's 100 Power Pass card. These students will be eligible for a mystery prize as part of the Principal's 100. At the end of the semester, all students who have received Power Passes will be entered into a drawing for larger prizes which will be awarded at the end of the year. Negative behaviors will be addressed at the classroom level and at the office level, with a focus on reteaching the expected behaviors when needed. Consequences will be administered according to the tiered system listed in the Code of Conduct.



PAWS Behavior Response System

Freedom Area Elementary

Behavior Response System



HEALTH SERVICES

The provision of the School Health Services is carried out by the Certified School Nurse, Registered Nurse and/or Nurse Aides. The Nurse Practice Act does not allow nurses to diagnose illnesses. Any physical or emotional problems your child may have should be explained to the school nurse and classroom teacher each year. Please inform us if specific treatment is needed for asthma and/or epilepsy or allergic reactions to food and/or bee sting. Students arriving to school with crutches or a cast/brace **MUST** see the nurse and have a physician's note stating the diagnosis and requirement for use of crutches in the school. The note should state the duration of time that the student must stay out of Physical Education and when to return to activity. Proper rest and sleep, a balanced diet, and a safe secure and loving home environment all promote good health in children.

Every effort should be made to attend school. Children who have been ill during the night should be kept home in the morning. Sending children to school ill may delay their recovery or spread the illness to other students. A child who has had a fever should be kept at home until the temperature has been normal for 24 hours without medication. The best way to prevent the spread of illness in our schools is for children to stay home when they are sick.

ILLNESS EXCLUSION 24 Hour Rule

A pupil may be excluded from school when his/her condition endangers the health of classmates, or he/she has symptoms that suggest a serious infection or illness. Exclusion from school for communicable diseases or conditions includes, but is not limited to the following:

FEVER Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or more is excluded from school. Children must be **FEVER-FREE** (temperature below 100 degrees) for a full 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, **BEFORE** returning to school. Children's temperatures do not remain constant throughout the day. It is important to check your child's temperature a few times throughout the day, not just in the morning or at night, to be certain they have completely recovered from their illness.

VOMITING AND/OR DIARRHEA Children with stomach viruses often do not have a fever. It is difficult to know whether a child's vomiting or diarrhea is caused by a virus, something they ate or some other reason; therefore, any child who vomits or has diarrhea is excluded from school. Children who vomit or have diarrhea should remain home until they have not vomited or had diarrhea for a full 24 hours. Children should be tolerating regular meals without discomfort before returning to school.

STREP THROAT Children diagnosed with strep throat need to be on antibiotic therapy for a full 24 hours before returning to school. They must also be fever-free for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

PINK EYE (Conjunctivitis) Children diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis need to be on antibiotic therapy for a full 24 hours AND have no purulent discharge from the eye(s) before returning to school.

INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) Children with a fever, cough and/or sore throat are considered to have ILI. Children with ILI should stay home & not go into the community (except to seek medical care) for **AT LEAST 24 HOURS** after being fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Children should feel well enough to perform regular school activities before returning to school.

INFECTIOUS SKIN CONDITIONS (Impetigo) Children must be on medical treatment prescribed by their physician for a full 24 hours prior to returning to school. For open and/or draining lesions, exposed areas must remain covered while in school. A physician's note stating the condition is no longer contagious may be required by the school nurse in order for the student to return to school.

CHICKEN POX Children diagnosed with chicken pox may return to school after they are fever-free for a full 24 hours and all lesions are dry and crusted before returning to school.

WE ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SEND A SICK CHILD HOME ON THE BUS.

Many children return to school before they have recovered from an illness. Children who are not fully recovered from an illness may still be contagious and able to infect others. Children who are not feeling well have difficulty performing well in school.

IMPORTANT NOTE: make sure the school has accurate phone numbers where you can be reached during the school day in the event of an illness or emergency. In the case of a seriously ill or injured child, the uncertainty and timeliness of voice mail is not helpful. Please provide phone numbers of a co-worker or supervisor who would be able to get a message to you quickly. If your workplace is located more than 45 minutes from school, please provide the number of someone who would be able to accept responsibility for your child until you are able to get home from work.

I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...

I HAVE A FEVER	I AM VOMITING	I HAVE A DIARRHEA	I HAVE A RASH	I HAVE A HEAD LICE	I HAVE A EYE INFECTION	I HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL
Temperature of 100.5 or higher.	Within the past 24 hours.	Within the past 24 hours.	Body rash with itching or fever.	Itchy head, unless head lice.	Redness, itching and/or "crusty" drainage from eye.	Hospital stay and/or ER visit.
I AM READY TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL WHEN I AM ...						
Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication (i.e., Tylenol, ibuprofen).	Free from vomiting for at least 2 solid meals.	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours.	Free from rash, itching, or fever. I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed.	Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home and provided to others.	Evaluated by my doctor and have a note to return to school.	Released by medical provider with note to return to school.

Medication Policy

Schools are accountable to provide safe, legal, and appropriate care for students. This includes the administration of medications necessary during the school day in order for the student to attend school and take full advantage of his or her educational program (Department of Health). Students will not be permitted to carry any medication during school hours. The role of the Certified School Nurse regarding medication administration is the management of medications in the school setting.

Procedure for medication administration during school hours:

1. Permission for medication administration form completed by parent/guardian
2. Physician order for prescription and/or non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications
3. All medications must be delivered to the school by the parent/guardian in original bottle/container with pharmacy label

Important Note: First time dose of any medication should be given at home.

Immunizations

Pennsylvania law requires that all students must follow certain immunization requirements for attendance in school. A record of immunization will be kept on file at the school. Students may request this record when graduating from the district. Parents may request a copy of the record when withdrawing a child from the school. You will need proof of immunization in other districts in Pennsylvania, and you may need proof in other states.

Exams and Screenings:

The PA School Health Law requires the following examinations and screenings. Dental and physical exams may be done by the family dentist/doctor. Results of exams within the previous 12 months of the first day of school will be accepted. Pennsylvania School Law requires students to be scheduled for the exams at school if a completed form is not received from the family doctor/dentist by the scheduled school screenings. Parents will be notified when an examination or screening results in other than normal findings. When students are referred for further evaluation, parents should report the findings to the nurse.

Examinations required to be completed by the student's private physician/private dentist or by the school physician/school dental hygienist in the following grades:

Service	Grades
Physical Exam	K, 6, 11
Dental Exam	K, 3, 7

Screenings required to be completed by the school nurse in the following grades:

Service	Grades
Height/Weight	K - 12
Vision	K - 12
Hearing	K, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11
Scoliosis	6, 7

PARENTS

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Parents are encouraged to join and support the PTA. General meeting nights are scheduled four times per school year. Discussion of your child's progress or other matters of a personal nature should be handled at individual conferences rather than at a PTA meeting. All PTA sponsored events, including school parties (Fall, Winter, Spring) will include a PTA sponsored treat. No outside food will be distributed for consumption during parties.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

The Freedom Area School District considers its parent volunteers to be a special resource and appreciates their efforts. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the library, classrooms, PTA events, and other school services, but it is necessary by law for volunteers to possess Act 34, 151, 114 clearances as well as Act 24 Arrest and Conviction Report to be part of the volunteer program. If you are interested in helping our school become a better place to learn and grow, please contact the office, and we will provide you with the clearance forms. Information on these clearances can also be found on our district website. No person may be engaged in daily activities without the clearances registered in the building office.

Upon entering the office, all volunteers must sign in, obtain a visitor's badge and receive verbal confirmation from the office staff before entering the hall/classrooms. Upon leaving, volunteers must sign out and return the badge to the office staff.

TREATS

Treats are allowed to be sent in for birthdays and class parties. Due to the variety of allergies and food sensitivities of our students, we ask that treats be store bought with the store label sent in. Treats sent in from individual homes should be individually wrapped. It is recommended that you notify the classroom teacher in advance of sending in a treat.

PEACHJAR

In an effort to provide a more streamlined process of communication and easy access to district, school and community resources, events and information the FASD has implemented an online platform to post announcements, advertisements and opportunities. Peachjar enables schools and community organizations to easily reach parents electronically year-round and allows easy access to important information and resources from their school and community. All families who currently have an email address in our district database have access to Peachjar. Parents will receive an email when information has been posted on the platform. The flyer or information can also be found by clicking on the Peachjar tab on the Freedom Area School District website (www.freedomareaschools.org).

HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THE SCHOOL

1. Marking your child's outer clothing will help the teacher to identify the article in case of loss.
2. Return emergency cards, field trip consent slips, etc. promptly.
3. See that the child is dressed simply, neatly, modestly, and suitably, by the weather.
4. Check with the school regarding lost articles. Many articles are left unclaimed.
5. See that the child does not bring dangerous or distracting toys or articles to school.
6. Help to instill in your child habits of obedience and respect for authority.
7. All pupils are to go directly home at the dismissal bell and not remain in the school or around the school grounds.

TRANSITION TO FREEDOM

All registrants must present a certificate of birth when registering. Be sure your child's birth certificate is returned after the school has made a copy.

Kindergarten: Children reaching the age of five years before the first day of September may enter. Children will not be accepted after the second week of school unless they have been members of another kindergarten.

First grade: Children reaching the age of six years before the first day of September may enter.

HOMELESS ACT: McKINNEY-VENTO ACT

About Homeless Act-McKinney Vento Act:

The McKinney–Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act guarantees a free and appropriate public education for all homeless children and youth. B.E.C. 42 U.S.C. 11431 outlines procedures for deciding school placement, enrolling students, and determining responsibility. Federal and state laws make our responsibility clear. Freedom Area School District is committed to providing proper educational support and services.

What is the definition of a “homeless youth” under McKinney-Vento? “Homeless” is defined as “anyone lacking a fixed, adequate, regular nighttime residence.”

What situations fit this definition?

- Staying in the home of other people due to unavailable housing, financial hardship, or similar circumstances
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (in some instances – examples: leaking roof, no heat, etc.), public places, or campgrounds due to unavailable suitable housing options
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Unaccompanied (not living in direct care of legal parent or guardian) or runaway youth
- Refugee and migrant youth

How does McKinney-Vento help these students?

The law makes sure that these students receive a free and suitable public education by removing barriers to school enrollment and full, basic, daily participation in school activities. This includes:

- Immediate enrollment
- Free and Reduced School Lunch
- Help from school with any necessary enrollment documents
- Help from school setting up transportation service (if the student qualifies)
- Help from school with basic school supplies
- Help from school with any basic clothing needs
- Help from school with basic high school graduation needs and expenses

Where can I find more information for Pennsylvania?

You can visit the PA Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness at the following website: www.education.pa.gov.

Contact Information:

Mr. Steve Mott

High School Principal/Homeless Liaison

724-775-7400 Ext. 505

smott@freedomarea.org

SAFETY INFORMATION

SAFE SCHOOLS POLICY

In compliance with our Safe Schools Policy, and to protect our students and staff, the following procedures are to be observed:

1. Visitors are to enter the building through the main doors closest to the main office.
2. **VISITORS ARE TO REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE FOR SIGN-IN.**
3. **All visitors and volunteers must present their driver's license to be scanned by the Raptor System to be issued a visitor badge.**
4. **Visitor badges must be worn at all times while in the school building and returned to the office when leaving.**
5. All students must be signed out by a properly identified adult for early dismissal. Students will only be released from the office.

Unauthorized persons found on school property during school hours will be reported to the Superintendent's office and the local police.

CUSTODY

It is necessary that school records be accurate and current regarding custody and visitation privileges. In cases where there is a possibility of parental conflict, the building principal should be informed as to the situation and a court order placed on file in the school office.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

When weather conditions are such that the safety of the students may be in jeopardy, the Superintendent may close all public schools. Parents are urged to have a prearranged place for their children to report, should it become necessary to close school for an emergency.

The emergency closing of school announcements will be made on local radio and television stations. Announcements will also be made by the district-wide phone messaging system and will be posted on the district website.

On rare occasions, students may need to be sent home early due to an emergency. Please have a plan for your child in the event of an emergency early dismissal.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

SCHOOL MESSENGER NOTIFICATION

WTAE	Channel 4 TV	WPXI	Channel 11 TV
KDKA	1020 AM Radio & Channel 2 TV	WBVP	1230 AM Radio

Note: If school is cancelled, so are any scheduled home activities.

DISTRICT SECURITY

The Freedom School District recognizes the fact that each student is entitled to an education in a safe, secure environment. To ensure the safety and security of both students and staff, the District has taken precautions to secure all of its buildings. These precautions include, but are not limited to, electronically locking and monitoring entrances and specific rules governing access to the buildings. Also, the District is implementing a uniform system of identification and monitoring of individuals entering the facilities.

Visitors and tardy students are to enter only through the front entrance of the building. All visitors and tardy students must sign in immediately at the office. Visitors must wear a Visitor Pass while in the building. After sign-in and badge acceptance, visitors must receive verbal confirmation of purpose and location to enter the hall/classroom.

To ensure the safety of the children, visitors will not be permitted to wander through the building. Messages for students or teachers may be given to the office staff so that instruction is not interrupted. No one will be permitted to go to a classroom unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher/principal.

The office staff must receive all telephone messages from parents before 2:00 P.M. to ensure there is ample time to distribute the message before dismissal.

SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

The Administration is committed to providing an atmosphere that is perceived as safe and secure by our student body and faculty. As a district, we have developed a plan of action to follow in cases of emergency in all buildings. Evacuation and non-evacuation plans are included in the district's emergency plan and are practiced on a regular basis with staff and students. Any concerns regarding personal safety should be directed to the Administration immediately.

STUDENT EMERGENCY CARDS

Every parent, without exception, must fill out and return the emergency card with phone numbers to contact parents in case of an emergency. The school nurse will collect these cards during the first week of school. It is the parent's responsibility to update the information when changes occur. Please notify us immediately if your phone number or email changes.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Evacuation Drills (Fire, Bomb, etc.) – Upon hearing the alarm, students should quietly and quickly exit the classrooms and building through the appropriate avenues.

Non-Evacuation Drills (Severe Weather, Dangerous Intruder, etc.) – Students will remain in the building in a safe area.

In both situations, the plans are on file, and periodic drills to deal with emergencies will be practiced with students and staff.

DISTRICT POLICIES

Please read the following district policies carefully. If you have any questions about these policies or others included in this handbook, feel free to contact your child's Principal. These are also accessible on the district webpage.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT Bullying Policy

The Board strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools. The Freedom Area School District recognizes that bullying of students has a negative effect on the educational environment of its schools. Students who are bullied, intimidated or fearful of other students may not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the school district. Bullying can also escalate into more serious violence. Therefore, the school district strives to offer all students an educational environment free from bullying.

Bullying shall mean unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a student by another student that has the intent and effect of, but is not limited to:

1. Bullying is characterized when a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students. Bullying implies an imbalance of power or strength. The student who is bullied has difficulty defending himself/herself.
2. Bullying behaviors (direct or indirect) include three (3) forms: physical, verbal/written, and emotional. Some examples of bullying are as follows, but are not limited to:
 - A. Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, stealing and/or damaging personal belongings, sexual acts, and invasion of one's personal space in an aggressive manner.
 - B. Verbal/Written – taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, making threats, phone and Internet, and sexual remarks.
 - C. Emotional – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships or environment, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, ridiculing, and intimidating.
3. The term bullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

The school district will not tolerate any acts of bullying occurring on school district property, as school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds, or during the time students necessarily spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative procedures to increase the awareness of the problems of bullying, and train teachers to effectively intervene if bullying is witnessed in their presence or brought to their attention.

Intervention

Teachers and other staff (including, but not limited to, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, hall monitors, etc.) who observe acts of bullying shall take reasonable steps to intervene to stop such conduct, unless intervention would threaten a teacher's safety. The nature of the intervention will vary depending upon the age of the student (both the victim and aggressor), the severity of the bullying and the student's involvement in prior acts of bullying. The purpose of the intervention is to take prompt remedial steps to ensure observed acts of bullying cease and to teach students that bullying is not acceptable behavior.

Student, Parent and Employee Reporting

The school district encourages all students and parents who become aware of any act of bullying to report that conduct immediately. Students may report acts of bullying to their teachers, building principal or other school employees supervising school-sponsored activities. Parents may contact the building principal to report acts of bullying.

If teachers and/or other staff cannot reasonably remediate acts of bullying through their intervention, they should report the bullying to the building principal. Other school employees who observe acts of bullying shall report that conduct to the building principal.

Investigation Procedures

Each building principal or designee is authorized to complete an impartial, thorough and confidential investigation of the bullying brought to their attention by students, parents or school employees. Any investigation of a report may include meetings with students, parents or employees; a review of student records and other reasonable efforts to better understand the facts surrounding a reported incident.

Consequences/Discipline

Consequences for students who are found to have bullied others may include counseling, a parent conference, detention, suspension, expulsion, a loss of school privileges and/or exclusion from school-sponsored activities. All incidents of bullying will be documented.

Depending upon the severity of a particular situation, the building principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. Such steps may include the implementation of a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing employee support for students as needed; reporting incidents to law enforcement, if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with parents.

Interplay with Other School District Policies

Nothing in this policy shall prevent school employees from enforcing or imposing discipline, or fulfilling their professional responsibilities under other school district policies or student disciplinary rules.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT Depression/Suicide – Responding to Students-At-Risk

PURPOSE

Adhering to District procedures in a crisis expedites the critical decision-making process, thus providing timely intervention to our students. In addition, our procedures support and protect staff by providing for shared responsibility. Effective and efficient management of suicidal ideation behavior in a system as large as Freedom is contingent on staff awareness of role responsibilities.

The Freedom Area School District recognizes the need for a program that intervenes on behalf of students at risk. The purpose of the program is to coordinate the efforts of staff members, family and community services in response to a crisis. Services will be provided in an attempt to prevent harm to the student at risk and to develop within the student a feeling of self-worth.

AUTHORITY

Every Freedom School District employee, certified and non-certified, must report any evidence of a student's being at risk for suicide to the counseling staff. If counseling staff are unavailable, the building administrator must be contacted. If evidence of physical injury or need for medical attention exists, the school nurse should be the initial contact. Evidence of at-risk behavior may be manifested in the following ways:

1. Student classroom writings, i.e., notes, assignments
2. Direct expression of suicidal ideation
3. Indirect fatalistic expressions by student
4. Self-abusive or self-mutilating behaviors
5. Expressions of peer concern
6. Expressions of parental concern

In these situations, students and staff members must understand that the issue of confidentiality shall no longer apply until the student's safety and welfare are secured.

DEFINITIONS

Crisis – an unpredictable tragic event which can happen, either on or off of school property, and has the potential to have a significant impact on the school community

Crisis Team – is a team of trained personnel who help establish and implement a pro-active plan which would respond to the unique needs of a particular building and ensure an effective response if and when a crisis occurs

Intervention – is a means of assisting an individual in learning more effective ways of coping with the present critical situation

Prevention – is a process that serves to counteract stressful and life-threatening situations

Postvention – consists of those activities that serve to reduce the after-effects of a traumatic event. The purpose is to help survivors live longer, more productive and less stressful lives than they are likely to do otherwise and to discourage “copy-cat” behaviors.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team – is a multi-disciplinary team composed of teachers, administrators, nurses, counselors and a prevention/intervention specialist. This team has been trained to understand and work out issues of adolescent chemical use, abuse, and dependency and will play a primary role in the identification and referral process of students coming to their attention through the procedures outlined in this policy.

Students at Risk – a student who has indicated by changed behavior, depression or verbal remarks that he/she may be contemplating a suicide attempt.

SUICIDAL IDEATION

Suicidal ideation by a student shall be considered an attitude of hopelessness and despair, verbal or written expressions of death, or a wish/desire to die (examples: social isolation, giving away personal belongings, suicide notes, wills).

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

A staff member will notify the principal, SAP Team, Prevention Specialist and counselor

Prevention Specialist or Counseling staff will take the following action:

1. Interview the student to assess the level of risk regarding:
 - a. history of previous ideations/attempt
 - b. existence/specificity of plan
 - c. availability of a planned method
 - d. availability of the means – guns, pills
 - e. loss or losses as a prescription factor
 - f. symptoms of sleep disturbance, eating disturbance, social withdrawal, feelings of helplessness, agitation, hostility
 - g. history of impulsivity and coping mechanisms
 - h. motivational clues/precipitating stressors
2. Collect all pertinent information

IF STUDENT IS ASSESSED TO BE:

High Risk

The student conveys an attitude of hopelessness and despair, expresses a desire, wish or willingness to die, expresses a desire to threaten or harm others and or indicates a place, time and method for a suicide attempt.

- a. If possible, have the student relinquish any weapons or pills
- b. Arrange for an appropriate staff member to stay with the student
- c. Contact parent/guardian requesting immediate in-school parent conference with principal/SAP team member
- d. Immediate and mandatory referral to the Base Service Unit (724)775-7262, Mental Health (MH) Emergency Services (724)775-5208 or privately licensed psychologist
- e. Parent/guardian is to transport to appropriate MH facility
- f. A student admitted back to school based upon the recommendation of assessment and a back to school conference with principal/SAP team member
- g. The student must follow through with all treatment recommendations.
- h. The student will be monitored by a SAP team member upon return to school
- i. Refusal to comply with the above procedures will result in an informal hearing and a referral to Children and Youth Services (CYS)

Low Risk

The student conveys an attitude of hopelessness and despair.

- a. If possible, have the student relinquish any weapons or pills
- b. Corroborate low-risk assessment with another qualified staff member and Base Service Unit (724)775-7262
- c. Contact parent/guardian requesting in-school parent conference within three (3) school days with principal/SAP team member
- d. Provide immediate support and develop a plan with student and parent, to provide ongoing follow-up and support, i.e., counseling, outside referral
- e. A SAP team member will monitor the student

SUICIDAL GESTURES

Suicidal gestures by a student shall be considered an intentional, non-verbal or symbolic, self-destructive act. It is differentiated from ideation by a past or current behavioral manifestation as opposed to verbal expression (examples: self-mutilation, innocuous overdose, playing with knives or other weapons). A staff member with knowledge of the gesture will take the following action:

1. Notify nurse if the student is injured
2. Notify Administrator, Prevention Specialist or Counseling Staff. Counseling staff will take the following action:
 - a. Interview the student to determine the extent of the gesture
 - b. If possible, have the student relinquish any weapons or pills
 - c. If the student is resistant, combative, runs or in possession of a weapon, the local law enforcement agency will be contacted:

New Sewickley – 774-2473, Conway – 869-9530, Freedom – 775-7490

- d. Arrange for an appropriate staff member to stay with the student
- e. Contact parent/guardian requesting an immediate in-school conference with principal/SAP team member to discuss:
 1. The need for medical attention
 2. Immediate and mandatory referral to the Base Service Unit (775-7262), Mental Health Emergency Services (775-5208) or privately licensed psychologist.
- f. A student admitted back to school based on the recommendations from the assessment, and a back to school conference with the principal/SAP team member
- g. Refer the student to SAP team for additional monitoring and follow-up
- h. Refusal to comply results in a hearing and CYS referral

SUICIDAL ATTEMPT

Suicide attempt by a student shall be considered any intentional self-destructive act, which is potentially lethal. It is differentiated from a gesture by an increase in the likelihood that the method used will result in fatality (examples: serious overdose, ingestion of the highly toxic substance, self-infliction or serious injury)

The staff member with knowledge of the attempt will take the following action:

1. Follow medical emergency procedures
2. Do not leave the student alone
3. Contact school nurse to come to the student's location. Attempt to advise nurse of severity or injuries so that the need to contact rescue squad can be assessed.
4. Contact building administrator, Prevention Specialist, and Crisis Team

The nurse, counseling staff, building administrator will, in collaboration, take the following action:

1. If the student is physically agitated, refuses to stay in an area where directed, is combative, runs away or possesses a weapon, the local law enforcement agency should be contacted: New Sewickley – 774-2473, Conway – 869-9530, Freedom – 775-7490
2. If possible, interview the student to obtain details about the attempt
3. Interview witnesses to determine time, place and method of attempt
4. Contact parent/guardian immediately to inform of the situation and request an in-school conference within three days with the Principal and SAP team member
5. Contact the emergency room of the hospital that has been selected as the rescue squad departs from the school. Inform the hospital of the incident and of the anticipated time of the student's arrival.
6. Immediate and mandatory referrals to the Base Service Unit (724)775-7262, inform the center of the incident and the location of the student.

If the attempt is done outside of school the counseling staff and SAP team will:

1. Contact parent/guardian to confirm
2. Offer services of SAP team to family

Postvention Procedures

Despite the best prevention and early identification methods utilized by district staff, a student may attempt to take his/her life. If a suicide/death does occur, the Freedom Area School District intends to provide support for students, parents, and members of the school staff. We have, therefore, established procedures to help all affected individuals react positively and serve as a deterrent to future suicides.

If a youth suicide does occur, the community needs to deal with the problem of extreme grief and the fact that one suicide can lead to another. How a school district handles the aftermath, or postvention, of a youth suicide, can prevent the cluster phenomenon and help the community deal with grief.

1. Verify incident with police or family member
2. Administrator to notify Crisis Team and Superintendent
3. Crisis team to meet immediately
4. The administrator will call a meeting of the faculty and brief the staff in consultation with the counselors, nurse and SAP team. Faculty will be given information about referring "at risk" students to various support personnel. Counselors and support staff from other buildings can be temporarily assigned to affected buildings to provide support as needed. Counseling staff and/or SAP team will make referrals to outside agencies.
5. A prepared statement to be read in homerooms
6. The Superintendent or his designee will coordinate all media contacts.
7. The victim's family shall be contacted to offer supportive services and referral to outside agencies when deemed appropriate.
8. Families of other "at risk" students will also be notified to alert them to their child's concerns and to offer supportive counseling and or referrals to outside agencies.
9. Counseling will be available for all students and staff
10. Debriefing to be held for all staff at 2:40 p.m.

Things to Do

Emphasize that suicide is a permanent solution for a temporary problem
Emphasize that help is available and that people care
Emphasize that no one is to blame
Provide small group opportunities for grieving students
Refer any student in need of counseling to the team
Follow a normal schedule

Things NOT to Do

Do not dismiss school
Do not dedicate anything in the student's memory
Do not schedule an assembly

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT Drug and Alcohol Policy and Administrative Guidelines

PREAMBLE

This policy including its rules, regulations, and guidelines is a coordinated effort by the Freedom Area School District to openly and effectively respond to potential and current uses and abuses of drugs, alcohol and mood-altering substances by members of its entire student population. It is intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all concerned as well as to maintain the rapport existent among students and staff.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Freedom Area School District recognizes that the misuse of chemicals is a serious problem. The district adopts the position that students must be chemically free to function and develop most productively and healthily. Concern for the individual as well as for the health, safety, and welfare of the entire school community is addressed in this policy.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Assessment – includes both psychological and physiological examinations. Any costs involved are the responsibility of the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Behavior, Cooperative – shall be defined as the willingness of a student to work with staff and school personnel reasonably and helpfully, complying with requests and recommendations of the members of the Student Assistance Program Team.

Behavior, Uncooperative – is resistance or refusal, verbal, physical or passive, on the part of the student to comply with reasonable request or recommendations of school personnel. Defiance, assault, deceit, and flight shall constitute examples of uncooperative student behavior. Uncooperative behavior shall also include the refusal to comply with the recommendations of the members of the Student Assistance Program Team. (Any uncooperative behavior will result in a minimum of 5-day suspension)

Distributing – deliver, sell, pass, share or give any alcohol, drug or mood altering substance, as defined by this policy for one person to another.

Drug – alcohol, anabolic steroids, mood altering substance, narcotic or other health-endangering compound that includes but is not limited to alcohol, any alcoholic beverage, tranquilizer, amphetamine, synthetic opiate, marijuana, LSD or other hallucinogen, glue, solvent-containing substances, controlled substance, abused substance or medication for which a prescription is required under the law and/or any substance which is intended to alter mood.

Examples of the above include but are not limited to beer, wine, liquor, marijuana, hashish, chemical solvents, glue, "look alike and counterfeit substances" and any capsules or pills not registered with the nurse, annotated within the School District Policy for the administration of medication to students in school. A more comprehensive list would include all substances identified in the following laws.

1. Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act 1971(Commonwealth of PA) as Amended.
2. Public Law 91-513 Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1979 (Federal Law) as amended.
3. The Controlled Substance Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act of April 1972 (P.L. 233, No. 64) as amended.

Drug Paraphernalia – includes any utensil or item, which can be associated with the use of drugs, alcohol or mood altering substances. Examples include, but are not limited to, roach clips, pipes, and bowls.

Look-A-Like Drugs – are any substances manufactured or designed to resemble drugs, narcotics or other health-endangering compounds included above in the definition of drug.

Possession – possesses or holds, without any attempt to distribute, any alcohol, drug or mood-altering substance determined to be illegal or as defined by this policy.

Prevention/Intervention Specialist – is a program specialist with expertise in the area of chemical dependency and other student high-risk behaviors.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) – is a multi-disciplinary team composed of teachers, administrators, nurses, counselors and a prevention/intervention specialist. This team has been trained to understand and work on issues of adolescent chemical use, abuse and dependency and will play a primary role in the identification and referral process of students coming to their attention through the procedures outlined on this policy.

A Student Assistance Program is a way to identify students who are having problems in school because of drug or alcohol use (or other high-risk behaviors) and refer them for help. It is an intervention, NOT a treatment program. A student assistance program provides a way for school officials to help students at the same time as they are dealing with the student's chemical use as a disciplinary offense. The heart of the program is the student assistance team, a core group of school personnel who are specially trained to work with these students. Core team members receive referrals from administrators, faculty, and staff, parents and students themselves. Drug and alcohol policy violations can initiate referrals; but more commonly, they happen because of observed changes in behavior or performance, which may or may not be drug-related. The team's job is to conduct a pre-assessment to determine if the student can be helped within the school or if the student needs to be referred to an outside agency.

RULES, REGULATIONS, AND GUIDELINES

All school district personnel are to report any student who, while under the school's jurisdiction, is under the influence of alcohol, other drugs or mood-altering substances, or who possesses, uses, dispenses, distributes, sells or aids in the procurement of alcohol, other drugs or mood altering substances. Students observed doing any of the above behaviors shall be subject to discipline pursuant to the provisions and procedures outlined in this policy.

As a key component of the Freedom Area School District Drug and Alcohol Prevention/Intervention Program, these guidelines represent one component in a district-wide effort

to respond effectively to the drug, mood altering substance and alcohol-related situations that may occur at school or at school-sponsored activities. The following guidelines are intended to provide a consistent disciplinary means to respond to the drug, mood altering substance and alcohol-related incidents. The Freedom Area School District will provide consideration for the students' legal rights and responsibilities. The School Board reserves the right to use extraordinary measures deemed necessary to control substance abuse even if the same is not provided for specifically in any rule or regulation enumerated herein.

BREATHALYZER POLICY

Students reasonably suspected of consuming or having consumed alcohol may be required to take a test, which determines blood alcohol concentration. Only the police shall conduct the test. Refusal to take the test may be considered uncooperative behavior.

If the results are negative and the student still exhibits abnormal behavior, further assessments will be required.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Drug and Alcohol Policy and Administrative Guidelines

PROBATION AGREEMENT

A student in violation of the district Drug and Alcohol Policy may be placed on probationary status as established by administrative guidelines. The probationary rules are noted below.

1. The student will be placed on probation for up to 90 school days, which may carry into the following school year.
2. The student will not have restroom privileges or a hall pass without written authorization from an administrator or teacher.
3. Student must also stay in Advisory room during activity period.
4. The student will not be able to participate in or attend any extra-curricular activities including dances and sports.
5. The student must meet _____ a week with a principal, assistant principal or prevention specialist during the probationary period.
6. The student must adhere to all school rules and policies.
7. The parent/guardian of the student on probation must call and inform the school of any absences. This call must be made by 7:50 a.m. on the day of the absence.
8. Students on probation should attempt, within reason, to avoid other students on probation.
9. If the probationary rules are broken, the student will be referred for an informal and/or a formal hearing and may be recommended for expulsion from school.
10. The student will comply with all recommendations from the assessment.
11. Other supervision including _____

This probation agreement will be reviewed by the administration after the recommended treatment program has been satisfactorily completed.

I, _____ understand and agree to abide by all of the rules noted in this agreement.

Signed/Date _____

I, _____ understand and agree that my son/daughter is to abide by all of the rules noted in this agreement.

Signed/Date _____

Administrator Signature/Date _____

SAP Member/Prevention Specialist Signature/Date _____

Cc: Parent, Appropriate Teachers, Discipline File, SAP file

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Fighting Policy

The Freedom Area School District Fighting Policy consists of five (5) distinct elements:

1. Establish a significant consequence for fighting
2. Provide time for administrative action by the School Administration
3. Initiate an Anger Control component for all combatants
4. Implement a "Conflict Resolution" course for students
5. Conduct "Conflict Management" training for faculty and staff.

These elements are integrated into two (2) formal categories that make up the policy:

- A. Confrontation Intervention
- B. Confrontation Prevention

Elements #1, #2 and #3 are contained in category "A," and elements #4 and #5 are contained in category "B."

Policy Operational Definitions

FIGHTING

The violent physical confrontation between two or more individuals in which combatants are involved in the exchange of blows by hands, arms, legs and/or feet.

ALTERCATIONS

Offensive interactions between two or more individuals that may or may not involve physical activity, but demonstrating disruptive behavior and action, including but not limited to:

1. pushing
2. shoving
3. verbal shouts and/or name calling
4. verbal or physical harassment
5. disruptive behavior that interferes with the learning environment

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Strategies and skills that prepare individuals to handle confrontational situations without the use of physical force. These strategies include effective communication, listening and anger management.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Strategies and skills that train individuals to intervene in confrontational and conflict situations, to diffuse the violence, neutralize the parties and install calm so that diverse action can be taken.

CATEGORY "A"

1. Fighting

- A. Up to a five (5) day suspension automatically imposed for the first offense. Parent conference necessary before student(s) re-admitted to school.
- B. Five to ten (5-10) day suspensions on the second offense, plus required Anger Control sessions. Informal hearing with school administration necessary before student(s) are re-admitted to school.
- C. Ten (10) day suspension automatically imposed on the third offense plus formal hearing before the Board of Education and the Superintendent for expulsion.
- D. Investigation of all fights will be conducted by the School administration. After facts have been gathered, the administration will turn data over to local police with potential recommendations for the pursuit of disorderly conduct or assault charges against any or all of the combatants.

2. Altercations

- A. For all disruptive behavior (pushing, shoving, name-calling, harassment, etc.) up to three (3) days suspension for the first offense. A phone call to parents will alert parents of the incident. Parents must accompany student(s) back to school after serving a suspension.
- B. A second offense of the altercation rule will invoke similar action as those in the fight section. Up to five (5) days suspension and necessary Parent Conference to re-admit the student(s) to school.
- C. A third offense will invoke a five to ten (5-10) day suspension, plus required Anger Control sessions and an informal hearing with School administration to re-admit student(s) to school.
- D. Any and all subsequent incidents will invoke a minimum ten (10) days suspension plus a formal hearing before the Board of Education and the Superintendent with a recommendation for expulsion.

NOTE: If at any time during a student fight or altercation a teacher, administrator or staff member is struck, the individual responsible for inflicting the blow will immediately be suspended for ten (10) days, and a formal hearing before the Board of Education and Superintendent for expulsion will be held.

CATEGORY "B"

1. Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution course of study will be offered through the Health curriculum. All students will be required to take this mini-course which is designed to provide students with skills and strategies to diffuse anger and handle conflict and confrontation in non-combative ways.

2. Conflict Management

Faculty, staff, and students will be trained in techniques that are proven measures to control violence. Skills will be developed that permit these individuals to intervene in a volatile situation, neutralize the combatants, diffuse the anger and return order to the situation.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Harassment Policy

Harassment in any form (verbal threats/hate acts) will not be tolerated.

Any incident that jeopardizes the health, safety or welfare of another student/staff member should be reported to the office for disciplinary action.

All threats will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken up to and including fines and expulsion.

No student has the right to harass anyone. This includes verbal outbursts, name-calling, intimidation acts and third-party messengers who instigate trouble.

Please remember that words can get you in trouble; think before you speak.

UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT

The Board strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the district to maintain an educational environment in which harassment in any form is not tolerated.

The Board prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of students and third parties by all district students and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers and third parties in the schools. The Board encourages students and parties who have been harassed to report such incidents to the designated employees promptly.

The Board directs that complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly and corrective action be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations.

Neither reprisals nor retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of harassment. For purposes of this policy, harassment shall consist of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion when such conduct:

1. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance.
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Internet - Acceptable Use

PURPOSE

The Board supports the use of the Internet and other computer networks in the district's instructional program to facilitate learning and teaching through interpersonal communications, access to information, research and collaboration. The use of network facilities shall be consistent with the curriculum adopted by the school district as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of students.

AUTHORITY

The electronic information available to students and staff does not imply endorsement of the content by the school district, nor does the district guarantee the accuracy of information received on the Internet. The district shall not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable when using the network or for any information that is retrieved via the Internet. The school district shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet. The district reserves the right to log network use and to monitor fileserver space utilization by district users while respecting the privacy rights of both district users and outside users. The Board establishes that use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right; inappropriate, unauthorized and illegal use will result in the cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action.

RESPONSIBILITY

The district shall make every effort to ensure that this educational resource is used responsibly by the students and staff. Administrators, teachers, and staff have a professional responsibility to work together to help students develop the intellectual skills necessary to discriminate among information sources to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels and to evaluate and use the information to meet their educational goals.

Students and staff have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of every other user in the district and on the Internet. No student will be permitted to use the Internet or the school network without a signed copy of the Internet and Computer Usage Agreement on file in the principal's office. This agreement shall be in effect until the student changes buildings. The building administrator shall have the authority to determine what inappropriate use is, and his/her decision is final.

INTERNET AND SOFTWARE GUIDELINES

Network accounts will be used only by the authorized owner of the account for its authorized purpose. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property and shall not be disclosed. Network users shall respect the privacy of other users on the system.

The FASD Acceptable Use of Policy must be followed at all times. **Students should have no expectation of privacy related to laptop/desktop use and can expect a teacher, technical support staff, and administrators to conduct a spot check of their Internet history and usage data.** Logs and other records of usage will be checked as well. Students may not install or run software that has not been approved by the administration.

PROHIBITIONS

Students and staff are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with district policy, accepted rules of network etiquette and federal and state law. Specifically, the following uses are prohibited:

1. Use of the network to facilitate illegal activity.
2. Use of the network for commercial or for-profit purposes.
3. Use of the network for non-work or non-school related work.
4. Use of the network for product advertisement or political lobbying.
5. Use of the network for hate mail, discriminatory remarks and offensive or inflammatory communication.
6. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction or use of copyrighted materials.
7. Use of the network to access obscene or pornographic material.
8. Use of inappropriate language or profanity on the network.
9. Use of the network to transmit material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
10. Use of the network to intentionally obtain or modify files, passwords, and data belonging to other users.
11. Impersonation of another user, anonymity, and pseudonyms.
12. Use of network facilities for fraudulent copying, communications or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws.
13. Loading or use of unauthorized games, programs, files or other electronic media.
14. Use of the network to disrupt the work of other users.
15. Destruction, modification or abuse of network hardware and software.
16. Quoting personal communications in a public forum without the original author's prior consent.
17. Teacher permission must be required before student use.

SECURITY

System security is protected through the use of passwords. Failure to adequately protect or update passwords could result in unauthorized access to personal or district files. To protect the integrity of the system, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Employees and students shall not reveal their passwords to another individual.
2. Users are not to use a computer that has been logged in under another student's or teacher's name.
3. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the network.

SAFETY

To the greatest extent possible, users of the network will be protected from harassment or unwanted or unsolicited communication. Any network user who receives threatening or unwelcome communications shall immediately bring them to the attention of a teacher or administrator.

Network users shall not reveal personal addresses or telephone numbers to other users on the network.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

The network user shall be responsible for damages to the equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.

Illegal use of the network; intentional deletion or damage to files of data belonging to others; copyright violations or theft of services will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.

General rules for behavior and communications apply when using the Internet, in addition to the stipulations of this policy. Loss of access and other disciplinary actions shall be consequences for inappropriate use.

Vandalism will result in cancellation of access privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet or other networks. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

Copyright

P.L. 94-553 Sec. 107

The illegal use of copyrighted software by students and staff is prohibited. Any data uploaded to or downloaded from the network shall be subject to "fair use" guidelines.

REPAIR POLICY

In case of loss, theft, misuse or vandalism, the following approximate costs will be incurred by the parent and paid to Freedom Area School District.

- A. Keyboard Breakage: \$50.00 - \$75.00
- B. Screen Breakage: \$150.00 - \$200.00
- C. Plastic Case Replacement: \$30.00 - \$40.00
- D. Charger Replacement: \$30.00 - \$60.00
- E. Battery Replacement: \$90.00 - \$100.00
- F. Hard Drive: \$50.00 - \$75.00
- G. Loss/Theft: According to Scale

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
No-Smoking Policy

This no-smoking policy in school buildings and school buses and on school property owned by, leased by or under the control of the school district is authorized under Act 168 of 1988 regulating smoking in certain public places and signed by the Governor of Pennsylvania on December 21, 1988, and became effective sixty days after that.

SECTION I: Tobacco use by pupils, including smoking, the use of smokeless tobacco, and the use of electronic cigarettes, in any form, is prohibited in all school buildings and school buses and on school property owned by, leased by or under the control of the Freedom Area School District.

SECTION II: Tobacco use by School District employees, including smoking, the use of smokeless tobacco, and the use of electronic cigarettes, in any form, is prohibited in all school buildings of the Freedom Area School District.

SECTION III: Tobacco use by all persons who are not pupils or employees of the School District, including smoking, the use of smokeless tobacco, and the use of electronic cigarettes, in any form, is prohibited in all school buildings and school buses owned by, leased by or under the control of the Freedom Area School District.

SECTION IV: The following penalties may be imposed when the no-smoking or no-tobacco-use policy is violated:

- A. Penalties for violation of this policy by a pupil are as stated in the Student Handbook;
- B. A violation of this policy by any person, including a pupil or an employee, may be cause for removal from the school building and/or for charges to be filed before a District Justice, which, if convicted, will subject them to a civil fine.
- C.

SECTION V: This Resolution became effective immediately upon adoption by the School Board of the Freedom Area School District at a regular meeting held on the 10th day of September 1992.

SECTION VI: Notice of this policy was given to the Freedom Area School District employees, students and parents and to the public, as provided in Act 168 of 1988.

Note: *Act 145 has been amended to include possession of lighted and unlighted tobacco products and smokeless tobacco.*

- 1st Offense - possession = 1 day of OSS/Fine
- 2nd Offense - possession = 3 days of OSS/Fine
- 1st Offense - smoking/chewing = 3 days of OSS/Fine
- 2nd Offense - smoking/chewing = 5 days of OSS/Fine

*Strong circumstantial evidence will result in disciplinary action also.

*Hiding in bathroom stalls or around corners, acting as a look-out and smoking in a car on school property are prohibited.

*Student can attend a Tobacco-user Program in lieu of a fine.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Sexual Harassment of Students

The Freedom Area School District is committed to assuring equal educational opportunities to all persons and does not discriminate by sex. Furthermore, the Freedom Area School District is committed to maintaining an educational environment for all its students which is free from any type of sexual harassment.

The Board of School Directors of the Freedom Area School District will not tolerate any behavior by administrators, faculty, staff or students which constitutes sexual harassment of a student.

For this policy, the definition of sexual harassment of a student includes, but is not limited to, the following action: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct or written communication of an intimidating, hostile or offensive sexual nature, where submission to such conduct is made, either implicitly or explicitly, a term or condition of the student's status in a course, program or activity; or submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a basis for academic or other decisions affecting such student; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational experience or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment.

All reports of sexual harassment will be investigated confidentially. Appropriate disciplinary action, including termination of employment or permanent expulsion from the school roles, may be imposed in proven circumstances.

Harassment Policy

Harassment in any form (verbal threats/hate acts) will not be tolerated.

Any incident that jeopardizes the health, safety or welfare of another student/staff member should be reported to the office for disciplinary action.

All threats will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken up to and including fines and expulsion.

No student has the right to harass anyone. This includes verbal outburst, name-calling, intimidation acts and third-party messengers who instigate trouble.

Please remember that words can get you in trouble; think before you speak.

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Weapons Policy

The Board of Education of the Freedom Area School District does hereby enact the following policy relative to use or possession of weapons upon School property.

1. **Purpose:** Weapons serve no educational purpose. The Board of Education directs that students of the Freedom Area School District found to be in possession of a weapon upon School property shall be subject to discipline as outlined herein.
2. **Definitions:** As used in this Policy, the following words shall have the meanings given to them by this section:
 - A. District – Freedom Area School District
 - B. Elementary – Grades Kindergarten through Sixth, inclusive
 - C. Explosive – Any substance or instrument by whose decomposition or combustion gas is generated with such rapidity as to cause a sudden breaking or bursting, usually accompanied by a loud noise. The term includes, but is not limited to, a bomb, incendiary device, gas bomb, grenade or ammunition of any kind.
 - D. Firearm – Any instrument, including but not limited to, a pistol, shotgun, rifle, starter gun or any look-alike of the same, which is designed or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or the expansion of gas therein.
 - E. Possession – That set of circumstances by which a student exercises control over an inanimate article, whether upon his or her person or in a place under his or her sole or mutual control.
 - F. Secondary – Grades Seventh through Twelfth, inclusive.
 - G. Student – A registered pupil of the School District in either the Elementary or Secondary Divisions.
 - H. Weapon – Means any explosive, firearm, blackjack, metal knuckles, dagger knife, razor or cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchuck stick and any other tool, implement or instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.
3. **Prohibited Activity:** Any student of the District who is in possession of a firearm, explosive or weapon as defined herein, on property being used by the District, or at any school function or activity, including District-authorized events held away from District property, including while the student is going to or returning from school, shall be in violation of this Policy.

4. Procedures:

- A. Any employee of the District, upon learning of a violation of this Policy, shall immediately notify the Building Principal of the violation and the identity of the student(s) involved.
- B. The Building Principal shall immediately investigate the alleged violation and take steps to confiscate the weapon(s).
- C. After the weapon(s) is/are taken into custody, or the Principal has otherwise confirmed the violation of the Policy, the Principal shall notify and/or summon:
 - 1. the local police
 - 2. the Superintendent of the district
 - 3. the parent(s) or guardian of any student(s) involved in the violation.
- D. After the Principal has confirmed the violation of the Policy, the Principal shall immediately notify the student(s) and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student(s) that the student(s) is/are suspended from school as outlined in the "Penalties" provisions of this Policy.
- E. The Building Principal shall be directly responsible for Investigating the violation on behalf of the District with the requested assistance of District Administrative personnel.

5. Penalties:

- A. If the student involved is a secondary student, and if the violation is the possession of a firearm or explosive, the Student shall be cited for a ten (10) day out-of-school suspension and notified of the scheduling of a due process hearing to consider expulsion before the Board of Education, or a Committee thereof, of the District. Said hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Department of Education regulations and the provisions of the Public School Code. If, after the formal expulsion hearing before the Board of Education, it is determined that the student had possession of a firearm or explosive on School property, or otherwise contrary to the provisions of this Policy, the student shall be expelled from the Schools of the District for a period of not less than one (1) year. Also, thereto, the Board of Education may impose such other conditions for re-admission as deemed necessary.
- B. If the student involved is a secondary student and the violation is the possession of a weapon, not a firearm or explosive, the student shall be cited for a ten (10) day out-of-school suspension and notified of the scheduling of a due process hearing to consider expulsion before the Board of Education, or a Committee thereof, of the District. Said hearing shall be conducted under Department of Education regulations and the provisions of the Public School Code. If, after the formal expulsion hearing before the Board of Education, it is determined that the student had possession of a weapon, not a firearm or explosive, on School property or otherwise contrary to the provisions of this Policy, the student may be expelled for a period of up to one (1) year. The Board may consider possible defense(s) or other extenuating circumstances in setting the duration of the expulsion or other appropriate disciplinary measures.

- C. If the student involved is an elementary student & the violation is the possession of a firearm or explosive, as defined in this Policy, the student shall be cited for a ten (10) day out-of-school suspension and notified of the scheduling of a due process hearing to consider expulsion before the Board of Education, or a committee thereof, of the District. Said hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Department of Education regulations and the provisions of the Public School Code. If, after the formal expulsion hearing before the Board of Education, it is determined that the student had possession of a firearm or explosive on School property, or otherwise contrary to the provisions of this Policy, the student may be expelled for a period of up to one (1) year. The Board may consider possible defense(s) or other extenuating circumstances in setting the duration of the expulsion or other appropriate discipline measures.
- D. If the student involved is an elementary student and the violation is the possession of a weapon, not a firearm or explosive, the student shall be cited for up to ten (10) days out-of-school suspension. The Building Principal will complete the investigation, consult with District and non-District professionals concerning the incident, and, through consultation with the District Superintendent and/or Assistant Superintendent, either:
 - A. Re-admit the student after the ten(10) day out-of-school suspension, with provisions for his/her behavior and activities on School property, or
 - B. Notify the student and parent(s) or guardian(s) of the scheduling of a due process hearing to consider expulsion before the Board of Education, or a committee thereof, of the District. Said hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Department of Education regulations and the provisions of the Public School Code. If, after the formal expulsion hearing before the Board of Education, it is determined that the student had possession of a firearm or explosive on School property, or otherwise contrary to the provisions of this Policy, the student may be expelled for a period of up to one (1) year. The Board may consider possible defense(s) or other extenuating circumstances in setting the duration of the expulsion or other appropriate disciplinary measures.
- E. In all cases proceeding under this Paragraph 5, it shall be a possible defense to be considered by the Board of Education, if evidence is offered by the student, that the weapon was possessed by the student in conjunction with a lawful supervised School activity or course or was possessed for another lawful purpose.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights concerning their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, under specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, photograph or likeness, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

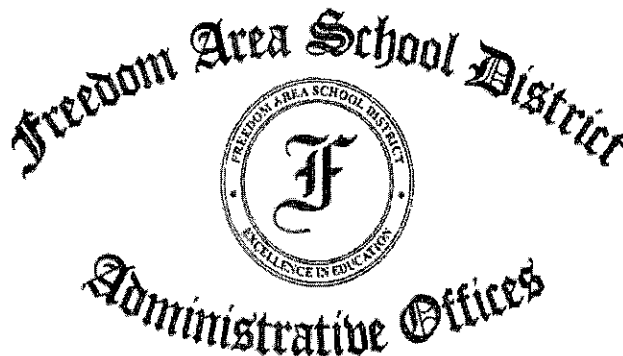
The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) is a federal law that affords certain rights to parents of minor students in regard to surveys that ask questions of a personal nature. Briefly, the law requires that schools obtain written consent from parents before minor students are required to participate in any U.S. Department of Education funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following areas:

1. Political affiliations;
2. Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family;
3. Sex behavior and attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent*; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 contains a major amendment to PPRA that gives parents more rights about the surveying of minor students, the collection of information from students for marketing purposes, and certain non-emergency medical examinations. Also, an eight-category of information (*) was added to the law. The Department will be updating the PPRA regulations to reflect these changes

DIANE WORKMAN
Superintendent

724-775-5464
724-775-7644
FAX: 724-775-7434



ERIN BLUEDORN, CPA
Business Manager
School Board Secretary

www.freedomareaschools.org

1702 SCHOOL STREET
FREEDOM, PENNSYLVANIA 15042

Parent Right to Know Information as Required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)] and the Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)]

**2023-2024
School Year**

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

Your child attends Freedom Area Elementary School (FAES), which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. Throughout the school year, we will be providing you with important information about this law and your child's education. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

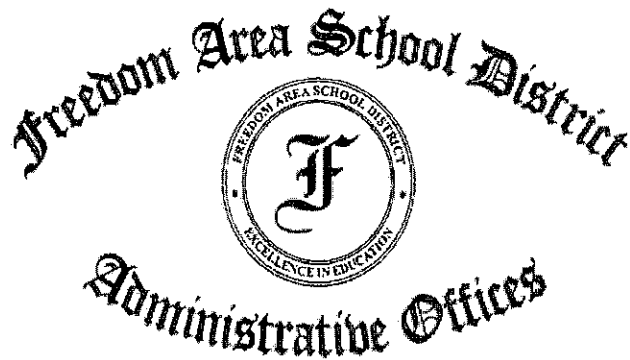
At FAES, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

DIANE WORKMAN
Superintendent

724-775-5464
724-775-7644
FAX: 724-775-7434



ERIN BLUEDORN, CPA
Business Manager
School Board Secretary

www.freedomareaschools.org

1702 SCHOOL STREET
FREEDOM, PENNSYLVANIA 15042

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA) includes additional right-to-know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
 - subject matter tested,
 - purpose of the test,
 - source of the requirement (if applicable),
 - amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
 - time and format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact Mr. John Capehart at Freedom Area Elementary School at 724.775.1122 or email at jcapehart@freedomarea.org.

Sincerely,
John Capehart
Principal
Freedom Area Elementary School
1700 School Street
Freedom, PA 15042



Freedom Area School District
Title I
Home/School Involvement Compact



**Freedom Area School District believes that a student's continued academic success is dependent upon the communication between teachers and parents/guardians. This compact indicates how all members of the school, parents, students, and the community will agree to share the responsibility of learning for an individual child.*

Teacher: I understand the importance of the school experience to every student and my role as a teacher and model. Therefore, I agree to do the following:

1. Provide high-quality, data driven instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment.
2. Teach necessary, curriculum based concepts to our students.
3. Be aware of the needs of our students.
4. Regularly communicate with you based on your student's progress.
5. Hold parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and /or be available through email or phone contact.
6. Provide parents/guardians with opportunities to volunteer and participate in class when appropriate and throughout the school year.

Teacher Signature _____ Date _____

Student: My education is important to me. I know that my education is important for my future success. My parents/guardians and teachers want to help me, but I am the one who has to do the work. Therefore, I agree to do the following:

1. Use PAWS - Positive Attitude, Accept Responsibility, Work Together, Safe Choices
2. Complete my class work and homework in a timely manner.
3. Always give my best effort on my work.
4. Use good organizational skills.
5. Arrive at school prepared to learn.
6. Return corrected work to my parents or guardian.
7. Read at least 15 minutes a day.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian: I understand that my child's education is very important. I also understand that supporting my child's education will help his/her achievement and attitude. There, I agree to do the following:

1. Review my child's assignments with him/her and help as needed.
2. Provide my child with a quiet place to study.
3. Ensure that my child gets enough sleep each night.
4. Ensure that my child arrives at school on time.
5. Encourage my child to read with me, or independently, at least 15 minutes each day.
6. Attend parent involvement events (conferences, workshops, open house, etc.)

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE KEEP THIS COMPACT AT HOME where it can serve as a reminder of the commitments that we have made.