

FREEDOM AREA
MIDDLE SCHOOL



2023 - 2024
PARENT-STUDENT
HANDBOOK

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 to the student.
- 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 PSSA and Keystone tests and other national tests such as PSAT, SAT, and NAEP to meet state and federal goals.
- Contribute to a positive safe school environment.

FREEDOM AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

This handbook has been prepared to inform you about Freedom Area Intermediate/Middle 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 Intermediate/Middle School office.

FREEDOM AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL
2023 - 2024
PARENT/GUARDIAN

MUST READ

This handbook has been prepared to inform you about Freedom Area Middle School policy and procedures. 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. Please read this handbook carefully. Don't wait! Be sure you understand everything in it.

FREEDOM AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL
2023 - 2024

Parent/Guardian **MUST SIGN** the form below and have your child **RETURN** the form to his/her homeroom teacher by **Friday, September 8, 2023.**

Please print name of student

Last Name

First Name

I have read the Student/Parent Handbook for 2023 - 2024 and understand it contents.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT MEDIA OPT OUT FORM

Student's Name _____

Freedom Area School District may develop, participate in, or be the subject of media-based presentations and events which highlight various educational activities that take place during the course of the school year. These presentations/events are two types:

1. Those developed by Freedom Area School District students, staff, personnel, and/or commercial enterprises. These may include but are not limited to:
 - Photographs of students and activities
 - Slide/tape presentations
 - Videotapes of students and activities
 - Computer-generated presentations which may incorporate scanned photographs and video clips
 - Computer-based productions transmitted via telecommunications
2. These media-based presentations may be used in:
 - Faculty in-services
 - Parent programs
 - Staff development activities
 - Media festivals (local, state, and international)
 - Public relations
 - Newspaper articles
 - TV presentations
 - Marketing materials
 - Freedom School District Internet web pages
 - Social media i.e., Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Please sign this form **ONLY** if you would **NOT** like your child's photograph or presentation published in any Freedom Area School District's media-based productions. If this form is not signed, Freedom Area School District assumes your permissions to publish your child's photograph with identification, as well as to publish your child's presentations (as listed above), in any Freedom Area School District's media-based productions for the above-stated purposes.

()

I hereby **DENY** my permission to **Freedom Area School District** to publish my child's photograph **without** identification, as well as to publish my child's presentation (as listed above), in any of Freedom Area School District's media-based productions for the above-stated purposes.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

FREEDOM AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

www.freedomareaschools.org

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<u>Building</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Fax Number</u>
Middle School - 5 th - 8 th	724-775-7641	724-775-7748
Freedom Elementary	724-775-1122	724-775-3672
Freedom Area High School	724-775-7400	724-775-7753
Superintendent's Office	724-775-7644 724-775-5464	724-775-7434

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

Middle School Students and Parents/Guardians,

Middle School Students, Parents, and Guardians,

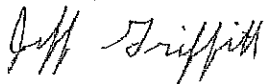
Welcome to the 2023-34 school year at Freedom Middle School. We look forward to having our students back in the building.

The Freedom Middle School staff hopes that your experience, no matter what, will be fun, exciting and safe. We feel that relationship building is essential to developing well-rounded students that excel academically, in the arts, and on our athletic teams. As always, we strive to build positive relationships amongst our students and staff. We will continue to utilize our PAWS program throughout the year. We will continue to teach and encourage students to have a:

- Positive Attitude
- be Accountable for their behaviors
- make Wise and respectful choices
- Spread Kindness to their peers and staff members

Throughout the school year, you will receive information from the staff regarding your daughter/son's academic performance and important events at Freedom Middle School. As parents/guardians, please invest time in talking with your daughter throughout the school year about their academic performance, relationships with peers, and information communicated to you from the school. Please also consider attending Open House, participating with the FMS Parents organization, and volunteering during other opportunities throughout the school year. We extend the invitation to join the administration and faculty as we maintain our progress and explore plans for improvement. Your representation within the school is essential to creating a positive culture here at Freedom Middle School.

Sincerely,



Jeff Griffith
Principal
Freedom Middle School

ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF

Principal

Mr. Jeffery Griffith

Counselors

Ms. Susan Suleski

School Nurses

Mrs. Wendy Kline

Food Services Manager

Mr. Randy Walker

Campus Security

Officer Rick Jones

School Psychologist

Dr. Joe Testa

Dean of Students

Mr. Ryan Kennah

Office Secretary

Mrs. Cathy Baker

Attendance Secretary

Mrs. Maria Bohn

SAP TEAM

(Student Assistance Program)

Mrs. Tina Boyd
Mrs. Barb Martz
Ms. Susan Suleski

Mr. Jeff Griffith
Mrs. Stephanie Stewart

FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Freedom Area Middle School, in relationship with the community, strives to develop the total individual into a responsible, self-sufficient citizen by providing a rigorous curriculum using relevant, meaningful learning experiences to prepare for lifelong learning.

MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY DIRECTORY

Mr. Craig Bohon	Spanish
Mrs. Tina Boyd	5 th Grade Teacher
Mr. Mathew Brandt	7 th Grade Science
Mrs. Amie Buzza	8 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Wendy Clibbens	5 th Grade Teacher
Mr. Jim Culler	7 th Grade History
Mr. Dante DeNome	8 th Grade History
Mr. Justin Derickson	7 th Grade English
Mrs. Ellen Egley	Math Interventionist
Ms. Lisa Finch	7 th & 8 th Grade English
Ms. Jeanine Ging	6 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Jen Glover	5 th Grade Teacher
Mr. Jim Gregg	5 th – 8 th Art
Ms. Sara Heiman	Librarian
Miss Amanda Hryckowian	ELA Interventionist
Mr. Jason Knox	Computer Applications
Miss Alyssa LeFebvre	8 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Beth Malarik	Tech Ed/Keyboarding
Mrs. Michelle McCanna	8 th Grade Math
Mrs. Gretchen Meyer	5 th -8 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Laura Miller	7 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Sara Miller	Gifted Coordinator
Mrs. Jen Newman	5 th – 8 th Grade Chorus
Ms. Amy Nicely	5 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Heidi Orrico	6 th Grade Teacher
Ms. Michaela Herrmann	Speech Teacher
Mrs. Sherry Perry	5 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Angela Post	7 th Grade Math
Ms. Emily Rickard	5 th – 8 th Grade Band
Mrs. Tami Smithmyer	Physical Education
Mrs. Ashley Spencer	6 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Stephanie Stewart	Behavioral Interventionist
Mrs. Tina Strati	6 th Grade Teacher
Mrs. Nicole Spiker	8 th Grade English
Mrs. Shanda Wyatt	6 th Grade Teacher

FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES 2023 – 2034

DAILY SCHEDULE

Students to Halls	7:35
Students to Homeroom	7:40
Period 1	7:40 – 8:23
Period 2	8:26 – 9:06
3	9:09 – 9:49
4	9:52 – 10:32
	10:35 – 11:05 A Lunch
5 (7/8)	11:08 – 11:48
5 (5/6)	10:35 – 11:15
	11:18 – 11:48 B Lunch
6	11:51 – 12:31
7	12:34 – 1:14
8	1:17 – 1:57
9	2:00 – 2:40

PAWS HOUSE DAY SCHEDULE

Students to Halls	7:35
Students to Homeroom	7:40
Period 1	7:40 – 8:23
Period 2	8:26 – 9:06
3	9:09 – 9:49
4	9:52 – 10:32
	10:35 – 11:05 A Lunch
5 (7/8)	11:08 – 11:48
5 (5/6)	10:35 – 11:15
	11:18 – 11:48 B Lunch
6	11:51 – 12:24
7	12:27 – 1:00
8	1:03 – 1:36
9	1:39 – 2:12
House Activity	2:15 – 2:40

TWO HOUR DELAY

Students to Halls	9:35
Students to Homeroom	9:40
Period 1	9:40 – 10:08
2	10:11 – 10:37
3	10:40 – 11:06
4	11:09 – 11:35
	11:38 – 12:08 A Lunch
5 (7/8)	12:11 – 12:44
5 (5/6)	11:38 – 12:11
	12:14 – 12:44 B Lunch
6	12:47 – 1:13
7	1:16 – 1:42
8	1:45 – 2:11
9	2:14 – 2:40

2 HR EARLY DISMISSAL

Students to Halls	7:35
Students to Homeroom	7:40
Period 1	7:40 – 8:08
2	8:11 – 8:37
3	8:40 – 9:06
4	9:09 – 9:35
6	9:38 – 10:04
7	10:07 – 10:33
	10:36 – 11:06 A Lunch
5 (7/8)	11:09 – 11:42
5 (5/6)	10:36 – 11:09
	11:12 – 11:42 B Lunch
8	11:45 – 12:11
9	12:14 – 12:40

FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

2023-2024 School Calendar

August (1-1)				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

September (20-21)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

October (21-42)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

November (18-60)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

December (15-75)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

January (20-95)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

February (20-115)				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

March (18-133)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

April (20-153)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

May (22-175)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17*
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

June (5-180)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Green-First Day of School and Last Day of School
Yellow-In-Service Days (No School for Students)
Blue-Act 80 Days-Prof. Dev. (No School for Students)
Pink- Holiday (No School)
Orange – Two Hour Early Dismissal
Tan-Snow Days (No School)

Grading Periods

First: September 5 – November 3
 Second: November 6 – January 24
 Third: January 25 – April 3
 Fourth: April 4 – June 7

August 28 – September 1	In-Service Days/Act 80 Days
September 4.....	Labor Day
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
February 16.....	Early Dismissal
February 19.....	President's Day
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.....	No School (Middle and High School Only – Senior Projects)
May 27.....	Memorial Day
June 7.....	Last Day for Students/ Commencement
June 10.....	In-Service Day
June 10.....	Kennywood School Picnic

**LEFT BLANK
INTENTIONALLY**

ACADEMICS

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL HELP

Tutoring is offered before school (7:15 am to 7:35 am) and after school as needed with prior arrangements made with individual teachers. (2:40 pm to 3:10 pm)

CHANGES IN PERSONAL INFORMATION

Students must report all changes in personal information to the office ASAP (address, phone number, etc.)

CHROMEBOOKS

All students will be issued a Chromebook and charger at the beginning of the school year. All parents/students must sign the "Use of Technology Form" and pay any applicable fees.

FIELD TRIPS

Individual teachers schedule field trips as part of the academic program. Students may be denied the opportunity to attend field trips based on poor attendance, discipline, or educational effort. Regarding make-up work, students must notify their teachers of their absence at least one day in advance. The student is responsible for any missed work.

GRADING POLICY

A+	99 – 100%	Superior Work
A	92 – 98%	
A-	90 – 91%	
B+	88 – 89%	
B	82 – 87%	Above Average Work
B-	80 – 81%	
C+	78 – 79%	
C	72 – 77%	Average
C-	70 – 71%	
D+	68 – 69%	
D	62 – 67%	Below Average
D-	60 – 61%	
F	0 – 59%	Failure

A HONOR ROLL, HIGH HONOR ROLL AND HONOR ROLL

A Honor Roll	4.0 (All A's)
High Honor Roll	3.5 to 3.999 (All A's and B's)
Honor Roll	3.0 – 3.499 (No more than 2 C's (B Average))

No grades less than 70% (D) can be considered for Honor Roll. Incomplete grades "I" cannot be considered for Honor Roll. Honor Rolls are published on the district website for students in Grades 7 and 8.

GRADING

1. The grade for each grading period will be computed on the following two areas of these achievements:
 - a. Participation (30-50%* of cumulative total of your grade)
 - i. Classroom Participation
 - ii. Assignments
 - iii. Homework
 - iv. Lab Work
 - b. Assessment (50-70%* of cumulative total of your grade)
 - i. Tests
 - ii. Projects
 - iii. Quizzes

**The percentages of these areas will differ according to the subject matter. Students will be informed of these percentages by the subject teacher within the first week of class.*

2. The Final Grade will be the average of each grading period's grade. Determination of the final grade in each class will be determined as follows:

1 st Nine Weeks Grade	25%
2 nd Nine Weeks Grade	25%
3 rd Nine Weeks Grade	25%
4 th Nine Weeks Grade	25%
3. The teacher may raise the grading period grade and/or the final grade of a student up only one letter grade when effort and other factors are considered.
4. Students will be given two weeks (first 10 school days) to change their schedule. Course selections **will not be changed** after the first 10 days of school. Class changes cannot occur unless the parent calls/emails the principal explaining the reason for the request. The Administrator must endorse that changing the class will help the educational welfare of the student.
5. All quizzes and tests are to be returned to the student within **five (5) school days**. Exceptions to this amount of time will be made with prior administrative approval. Tests returned late are of little value to the student and should not be considered for grading.

REPORT CARDS & PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are distributed at the end of each nine-week grading period. Progress reports will be distributed at the midway point (4.5 weeks) of each grading period.

<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

2022-2023 PSSA TESTING WINDOW

Assessment	Dates	Grades
English Language Arts	April 26 – April 26, 2024	Grades 5-8
Mathematics	April 29 – May 3, 2024	Grades 5-8
Science	April 29 – May 3, 2024	Grade 8
Make-up Exams	May 6– May 10, 2024	Grades 5-8

HOMEWORK

Excused Absence – Students are responsible to see their teachers for work missed during an excused absence. The student must make up homework within three days, according to teacher discretion.

Unexcused Absence – Work missed during an unexcused absence is at the discretion of the teacher and administration.

Educational Tour or Trip – The Pennsylvania School Code requires that we classify absences as “unexcused” unless the absence is the result of illness, death in the immediate family, quarantine, exceptionally urgent matters, or approved educational trips. These educational trips must be approved by the office in advance of the trip and include valid educational activities to be completed during the trip. **Please note that only one educational trip will be approved per year.**

Please complete the Student Application for Educational Tour or Trip (on school website) and return it to the school office. A separate form must be filled out for each student. The request must be submitted to the attendance office two weeks prior to the proposed absence. Absences for trips which have not been pre-approved or did not include acceptable educational activities will be marked “unexcused” and addressed appropriately within the attendance policy.

- If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due then the assignment becomes due the day the student returns to school.
- **Homework not made up will result in zero credit.**

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Students must make arrangements for make-up work upon returning to school. If make-up work is not completed by the time agreed upon the grade automatically becomes a zero. The student has the responsibility to contact his/her teachers concerning make-up work.

MAKE-UP TEST POLICY

If the student was present on the day that the test was announced, the student must take the test when he/she returns to school. If the student was absent on the day that the test was announced, the student will have up to three days to make up the test. The number of days will be determined by the teacher with consideration of extenuating circumstances such as prolonged illness. Note: If a student is late to school with an invalid excuse, that student receives a zero on the test that was missed. If the student has a valid excuse, then the test must be taken that same day by using a permit pass from another period or the student must stay after school to take the test. Also, if the student has a valid early dismissal note, he/she must take the test before leaving school that day. **It is the responsibility of the student to see the teacher in each of these circumstances or otherwise receive a zero on the test.** Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by Administration.

GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

Our Guidance Department is available for the developmental needs of all students. The counselor is available for consultation to:

1. Develop effective study habits to promote academic success.
2. Improve problem-solving skills and coping strategies to deal with personal, social, and emotional matters.
3. Encourage career awareness and exploration as it relates to education.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are welcome at any time. Please call the guidance counselor's office to make an appointment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information collected as part of an individual student referral or evaluation is treated in a confidential matter. A written policy regarding the confidentiality of student records is available for review by contacting your child's building principal. Printed information regarding available special education services and programs and parent rights as they pertain to special education is available in the building Principal's Office or the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. If you have any questions about the above information or special education services, please contact the school psychologist or your child's building principal.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is an innovative program whose goals are to maximize individual student success in the regular classroom. The Student Assistance Team is available to all students in the Freedom Area Middle 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.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

The Freedom Area School District offers a full continuum of special education programs and services to all eligible. 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 your child's building principal. Special education programs at the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit and/or the Freedom Area School District include:

1. Developmentally Delayed (Pre-School Only)
2. Autism
3. Visually Impaired
4. Mentally Gifted
5. Neurologically Impaired
6. Emotionally Disturbed
7. Speech and Language Impaired
8. Intellectually Disabled
9. Learning Disabled
10. Hearing Impaired
11. Multi-Handicapped
12. Physically Handicapped.

SCREENING

The Freedom Area School District conducts intervention meetings in each building to identify students who may be eligible for special education services.

Parents or guardians may request that their child be screened or evaluated for special education services. Requests for screening or evaluation should be made in writing and directed to your child's

principal. For further information, parents or guardians may contact the school psychologist by telephone at 724-775-7641 x125.

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.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

All new students are required to complete a Home Language Survey with parent signature. ESL Support for qualifying students will be provided by the district through the Intermediate Unit.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – MEDICAL EXCUSES

Only students presenting a doctor's excuse will be exempt from the physical activity in gym classes. Written assignments may take the place of physical activity.

RECORDS POLICY

Confidentiality laws regarding student records are enforced to safeguard our students' rights. Please contact the Principal for further information regarding student records.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school arrangements can be made through the Guidance Office. Students failing two or more subjects should attend summer school. It is not academically feasible to double up on core classes. Class loads are limited and sequential knowledge requirements are important to progressing to the next school year.

TRANSFERS

All transfers to or from FMS must be handled through the Office. Parents must be present to sign papers at the time of a transfer as well as a withdrawal from school. In the event of a withdrawal, all school materials and/or accumulated fees must be turned in or settled prior to departure.

ACTIVITIES

The following activities are available to students in the Intermediate/Middle School:

Grades 5 & 6

Pep Club
Newspaper
Math 24
School Play
Band - Lessons
Student Gov't.
Academic Games
Robotics
Chorus

Grades 7 & 8

Math Counts	Intramurals
Newspaper	School Play
Student Gov't.	Chorus
Academic Games	Math 24
Pep Club	Yearbook
Band	Robotics

SPORTS

FALL

JH Basketball (Girls)
JH Soccer (Boys)
JH Soccer (Girls)
JH Football
JH Cheerleading

WINTER

JH Basketball (Boys)
JH Wrestling

SPRING

JH Track & Field (Girls)
JH Track & Field (Boys)
JH Volleyball (Girls)
JH Baseball
JH Softball

REQUIREMENTS FOR SPORTS PARTICIPATION

- Age – Not to turn 19 before July 1 of up-coming school year (JH-16)
- Semesters of participation – not to exceed 8
- Attendance – Absentees not to reach 20 days in a semester. After 20 absences in a semester, the student must attend for 60 days before being declared eligible.
- Grades – to pass a minimum four full-credit classes
- Must have permission slip signed by parent/guardian
- Must pass a physical examination and have school insurance.
- Other PIAA/WPIAL/MAC sanctions that apply must be adhered to.
- Amateur status
- The student has no disciplinary probation restrictions.
- Transferring student/athletes must be approved by the WPIAL.
- ***No student-athlete is permitted to participate in practice or a game unless he/she has been in school that day. Students must be in school by 11:00 a.m. with a valid tardy excuse approved by the Administration in order to be permitted to participate that day. No student-athlete will be permitted to leave school with a valid early dismissal note before 1:00 p.m. unless first approved by the Administration.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS – FMS PARENTS

Meetings are held in the middle school library during the first Monday of each Month at 7:00. Please check the middle school website and click on the FMS Parents link for scheduled dates and newsletter.

FUNDRAISING

All fundraising must be approved by the Principal. Fundraising is limited to organizations directly affiliated with the intermediate/middle school. Students are not permitted to solicit games of chance.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

School activities (dances, formals, banquets, athletic events, field trips, etc.) are scheduled throughout the school year. Student behavior at these events, regardless of location, is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with our code of conduct listed in this handbook.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The Administration, faculty, coaches, and athletes at FMS stress the following pledge as a positive Bulldog fan:

We enforce the fundamental principles of fair play.

We realize that “winning at any cost” is unacceptable.

We respect the opposing team, cheerleaders, and fans.

We respect game officials.

We realize that name-calling, taunting, finger-pointing, and any other form of verbal or physical confrontation have no place in our athletic arenas.

We realize that degrading or insulting cheers or signs are unacceptable.

We realize that we are to cheer for our team rather than against our opponent.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS

The courts have ruled that students are entitled to certain rights. Also, the student, like anyone else, does not have the total freedom to do as he/she pleases. In cases involving both students' rights and school discipline, the individual freedom of the student will be weighed against the school's responsibility by law to provide an environment for learning to take place and to prevent disruption or the invasion of the rights of others.

ATTENDANCE AND SCHOOL TARDY POLICIES

Regular and prompt attendance is essential for each student to progress scholastically and develop a responsible approach to work habits which carries over to adult life. School attendance and prompt arrival to school are responsibilities of the students and parents. It is our responsibility as an educational institution to provide daily instruction. Any activity that detracts from our goal to provide quality education for our students will be discouraged; hence, students and parents will be informed of violations of our policy, and proper disciplinary action will be taken according to the following guidelines:

ABSENCES - All absences (excused and unexcused) will accumulate on a yearly basis.

Excused Absences

1. MUST SEND WRITTEN EXCUSE TO SCHOOL within 3 days of returning to school.
2. A maximum of 10 general 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 official note from the doctor's office)
- e. Observance of religious holidays
- f. Hazardous weather conditions
- g. Definite emergency situations approved by the Administration
- h. Any other circumstances that have been previously approved by the Administration

Unexcused/Illegal Absences

1. Students will be sent a WARNING LETTER at 3 days of unexcused absences.
2. Students with 6 or more unexcused absences will be sent to the school's prevention specialist.
3. Students will receive zero credit for all work on unexcused/illegal absences.

Definition of an UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCE:

- a. Skip days are not approved by the school (this will result in discipline)
- b. Seen on or near school property and does not report to school
- c. Missing the bus, oversleeping, car failure
- d. Trips not approved in advance
- e. Working during the school day, helping at home (non-emergency), babysitting
- f. Hunting, fishing, shopping, eating breakfast, birthdays, etc. or any other reason that doesn't fall under State Regulations as an excused absence.

Disciplinary Procedure for Unexcused Absences – On the THIRD day of unexcused/illegal absence, the parent will be sent a warning letter regarding truancy fines. On the TENTH day of unexcused/illegal absence, the student will be referred to the local magistrate's office.

The school will not accept parental notes once the notice has been sent to the District Magistrate.

TARDIES TO SCHOOL - All tardies (excused and unexcused) will accumulate on a yearly basis. Students are late at 7:40 am. They must report to the office for a tardy pass.

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.
5. The same guidelines set by the State in regards to attendance will be followed to determine excused and unexcused tardies.

Unexcused Tardies - Disciplinary Procedure

1. Only unexcused tardies accumulate for disciplinary reasons
2. Students cannot make up work in any classes that were missed during unexcused tardies. Students will receive zero credit in those classes. To avoid this, students who are tardy must have their valid excuse available when they arrive at school.
3. 5 School tardies(per year) = 1 unexcused absence & a warning letter sent home.
4. 10 School tardies (per year) = 2nd unexcused absence & will receive 1 day of Saturday detention.
5. 15 School tardies (per year) = 3rd unexcused absence & Saturday Detention.
6. The following reasons are considered to be unexcused tardies:
 - a. Sleeping in, alarm did not go off, no one got me up.
 - b. Car failure, missed the bus, missed ride.
 - c. Any other excuse not covered under the State exemption clause for mandatory attendance.

NOTE: Students must be in school by 11 am to be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities that day after school. Valid tardy notes and early dismissal notes are mandatory in these cases. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by administration.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Students wanting to be excused early from school must bring in a note from their parent/guardian explaining the **valid** reason for the dismissal. The note must be specific and the reason must be covered under the acceptable excuses outlined in the attendance policy. The student will not be permitted to leave until the parent calls to confirm the validity of the note. The parent/guardian must include a phone number on the note for the school to confirm in case the parent forgets to call the school. Students who attempt to use a forged early dismissal will be disciplined accordingly.

NOTE: Students must SIGN OUT with the attendance office before leaving. No student is permitted to leave school without permission from the nurse, attendance office, or administration.

Excused Early Dismissal

1. MUST TURN IN WRITTEN NOTE TO ATTENDANCE OFFICE before school and receive an EARLY DISMISSAL PERMIT. Note must contain Student Name, Time of Early Dismissal, Reason for Early Dismissal including Doctor/Dentist name & phone number if applicable, Phone Number of Parent/Guardian, Parent/Guardian Signature.
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. Student will receive a zero for any work missed due to an unexcused early dismissal.
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 - Disciplinary Procedure

1. Students cannot make up work in any classes that were missed during unexcused early dismissals. Students will receive zero credit in those classes. To avoid this, students requiring an early dismissal must turn in their valid note to the attendance office when they arrive at school.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

The automated phone system will call home to report a student absent. All students will be marked as unexcused until we receive a valid excuse within 3 days or a call from parent. If a student is out for more than 3 days unexcused the attendance secretary will call home to follow-up.

NOTE TO PARENTS: So that we can continue to work together to provide a sound education for your children, please follow these guidelines when writing absence/tardy/excuses for your child. Include full name, dates of absences/tardies, and reason for the absence/tardy. When writing the reason, please be as specific as possible. For example "John was absent/tardy because he wasn't feeling well" would be better written as "John was absent/tardy because he had an upset stomach this morning." If the note is too vague, the excuse will be considered invalid and the student cannot make up work missed and may have further disciplinary action taken. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated and extremely helpful when determining whether the absence/tardy is excused or unexcused according to State guidelines.

NOTE: The student must be in school for 5+ periods a day to get credit for a full day attendance. (1-4 periods equal a half-day.)

CLASS CUTS/LEAVING CLASS WITHOUT PERMISSION

The following disciplinary action will be carried out for students cutting classes:

- 1st offense = 1 Saturday detention.
- 2nd offense = 2 Saturday detentions.
- 3rd offense = Informal hearing – 1 Day of ISS.
- 4th offense = Administrative discretion inclusive of, however not limited to Informal hearing, truancy charges filed, 1-3 day of OSS, Formal Expulsion Hearing.

Students will receive zero credit for work missed in classes when they leave without permission.

GRADING POLICY FOR CLASS ATTENDANCE/EARLY DISMISSALS

Students who have early dismissals will receive zero credit for all work missed in class unless a valid excuse is presented in writing to the attendance office. Valid excuses are notes from the doctor's office written on the doctor's professional form. Parental notes will not be accepted!

Students will receive no credit for work missed in class when they cut class.

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 Intermediate/Middle School has the right to expect a safe, orderly, and pleasant environment.

The guidelines set forth 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.

It is our desire that each student has the opportunity to expand his/her knowledge, enrich his/her life experience, exercise his/her own self-control and take responsibility for his/her own actions. We will work together to learn, to grow, and to enjoy our middle 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. personal detentions, hour detentions, Saturday detentions, ISS, 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 minor disruptions occurring at the Freedom Area Intermediate/Middle School and is handled in a manner that preserves a quality educational environment.

Students who receive a Level 1 detention slip must serve a personal detention with the teacher for 30 minutes after school. It is our desire that the student and teacher develop an understanding/relationship during this time, and further problems will be eliminated. If the student does not serve the personal detention, it will result in an hour detention. Students who are absent on the scheduled detention date must make it up on the day he/she returns to school. If there are any other conflicts with the date, it is the student's responsibility to work out a solution with the teacher.

Should the student continue to act out in school and/or be irresponsible, the administration will schedule a parent conference to discuss terms of probation for the student. Again, our goal is to help the student change his/her behavior.

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 SHOULD

1. Attend school regularly.
2. Give a conscientious effort in classroom work.
3. Adhere to all school rules and regulations.
4. Share in responsibility to develop a school climate that is conducive to learning.
5. Respect the rights of all others involved in the educational process.
6. Express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.
7. Cooperate in the investigation of any matter relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community.
8. Comply with commonwealth and local laws.
9. Exercise care when using school facilities and/or equipment.
10. Be on time for school and school activities.
11. 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 for the purpose of obtaining 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 in a respectful and cooperative manner 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 auditorium. Teachers will take roll.

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.

Parents can aid the school by seeing that their children behave properly while waiting for the bus to arrive. **RIDING THE BUS IS A PRIVILEGE; STUDENTS MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM RIDING THE BUS IF THEIR ACTIONS JEOPARDIZE THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.**

PARENT NOTIFICATION

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 what is 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. Student and parent/guardian are hereby notified that the content of the tapes may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. The content of the tapes are confidential student records and will be safeguarded. Tapes will be retained, only if necessary, for use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matters as determined necessary by the administration.

BUS CONDUCT

Riding a bus is a privilege, not a right! Exercise caution, good manners, and consideration for other people. Obey the driver; his first concern is for your safety. Below are some regulations students are asked to abide by at all times: (Includes field trips – 3, 4, 5, and 6)

1. The bus driver shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of pupils. While on the bus, the pupils are under the authority of and directly responsible to the bus driver.
2. Pupils are to meet the bus at the scheduled time and at the stop designated by the Board of Education. Drivers are not required to wait for the pupils who are not ready when the bus arrives.
3. No unnecessary noise, disturbance, or improper language will be permitted at any time. Absolute quiet must be observed when approaching railroad crossings – for safety's sake.
4. Never extend arms or hands from bus windows.
5. No student or group of students will be permitted to ride a bus other than the bus to which he is regularly assigned, and then only "station stops to school" and "school to station stops" designations. Only exceptions will be individual cases granted upon written request from the parent to the principal.
6. Chronic and/or safety problems will be referred to the principal by the bus driver. Students could lose their bus privileges temporarily or permanently if any problems are not eliminated.

WAITING FOR THE BUS

1. Be at your assigned (students must ride assigned bus) stop five minutes ahead of time.
2. Stay a safe distance from the road.
3. Get in line when the bus approaches.
4. Stay clear of the bus until it has come to a complete stop.
5. Let smaller children board first.
6. Your driver has a schedule to keep. If you are not at the bus stop, he can't wait for you.

BOARDING THE BUS

1. Always use the handrail.
2. Go up the steps one at a time.
3. Don't push or crowd others.
4. Go directly to your seat. The bus will not move until all passengers are seated.
5. Regulations do not permit passengers to stand in a moving school bus.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS

1. Place books or parcels on your lap. Keep the aisle clear.
2. Avoid loud talking and confusion that might distract your driver.
3. You can help the driver when the bus approaches railroad tracks by keeping quiet so that he can listen for trains.
4. Ask the driver for permission before opening windows.
5. Keep arms and head inside the bus.
6. Throwing objects inside or out of the bus could cause an accident.
7. The emergency door and exit controls may be used only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.
8. The bus is not a playground. Save wrestling and horseplay for another time.
9. Do not smoke.
10. Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop at its destination or your bus stop. Help your drivers to keep the bus clean and in good shape. Don't eat on the bus, write on the back seats, throw things on the floor, or cut the seats.

GETTING OFF THE BUS

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

BUS PASSES

1. All bus passes must be written by the parent and turned into the office by noon.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Any student who is discovered to have cheated, plagiarized, or similar including aiding another student to knowingly cheat, plagiarize, or similar will receive a zero for that assignment, project, test, mid-term, final, etc. Further administrative discipline may be taken depending on the circumstances of the violation.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Inappropriate display of affection is not permitted in the school setting. Students will be disciplined and parents contacted if necessary.

DRESS CODE

Freedom students are expected to present a neat, clean, and well-groomed appearance. Any attire causing a disruption to the education process or poses a health/safety issue will not be permitted. This code applies to both male and female students. **Students not abiding by the dress code will be sent home to change into appropriate clothing or have their parents bring in a change of clothing for them. In addition to being asked to change, additional discipline will be assigned as follows:**

- 1st- Offense- Warning
- 2nd Offense- 1-Hour Detention & Phone Call to Parents
- 4th Offense- Saturday Detention & Phone Call to Parents
- 5th Offense or More – In-School Suspension & Phone Call to Parents

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 is a health & safety issues. This includes but is 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. Tank top strap tops must be at least two (2) fingers wide. Spaghetti tops and strapless tops aren't permitted.
9. Bare midriffs, halters, and similar outfits may not be worn.
10. Undergarments should not be exposed or visible.
11. Clothing that may cause disharmony in the building will be prohibited.
12. Shoes must be worn at all times.
13. Inappropriate make-up, face/body painting will not be permitted.
14. Provocative dress such as see-through fabrics, deeply plunging necklines, strategic cutouts, and extreme bare midriffs will not be permitted at any school activity including dances, banquets, etc.

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 – 14.

DUE PROCESS

No disciplinary action will be taken until the student is first notified on 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 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 to 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 own behalf.

Any hearing for an 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 own behalf.
- H. A record must be kept of the hearing, either by 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.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Students have the right to express themselves unless such expression materially and substantially interferes with the educational process, threatens immediate harm to the welfare of the school or community, or encourages unlawful activity, or interferes with another individual's rights.

Students have the responsibility to obey laws governing libel and obscenity and to be aware of the full meaning of their expression. Students have the responsibility to be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and to give others a fair opportunity to express their views. (See harassment policy)

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 on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions. Students who choose to refrain from such participation shall stand and respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.

SEARCHES

A student, their locker, or personal possessions may be searched when a school administrator has probable cause or a reasonable suspicion.

STUDENT VOICE IN GOVERNMENT

Students will have the opportunity to voice their opinions and ideas for change through student government elections, class officer elections, or through homeroom representative elections.

TARDY TO CLASS

Students are expected to be on time for all classes. Students will receive a personal detention for their first four tardies to class per nine weeks. Each subsequent tardy will result in a referral to the office.

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

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 Devices (including wearable technology)	Bus Behavior (2 nd offense)
Dress Code Violation (2+)	Forged Pass
Left Area Without Permission	Cheating/Plagiarism
Public Display of Affection	Inappropriate Language
Insubordination/Disrespect – Minor	Open Defiance – Minor
Inappropriate Use of Technology	Habitual Level 1 Referral
	Other

*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	Possession of Lighter/Matches
Insubordination/Disrespect - Major	Act of Gambling
ISS/Detention Behavior	Possession of Tobacco/Vape
Destroy/deface school property	Smoking Policy Violation
Intimidation/Threats/Bullying	Second Circumstantial Smoking
Threatened Teacher/Staff	Hindering an Investigation
Causing a Disruption	Disorderly Conduct
Altercation/Confrontation	Safety Violation
Fighting/Assault	Bus Behavior (Major)
Harassment	Left School Without Permission
Poor sportsmanship at an extracurricular event (athlete or spectator)	Habitual Level 2 Referral
Stealing	Other

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

Parental Contact or Conference	Behavior Contract/Agreement
Probation Officer Contacted	Restitution
Police Contact	Probation/Hall Pass Restriction
Loss of extra-curricular privilege	Loss of technology privileges
Suspension	Daily Monitor Slip
In-School Suspension	Removal from Field Trips
Informal Hearing	Administrative Discretion

Level 4

Weapons Policy Violation	Endangers Self and/or Others
Drug/Alcohol Policy Violation	Destroy/Deface Staff/Personal Property
Assault Teacher/Staff	Bomb Scare Involvement
Sexual Harassment	Habitual Referral/Incorrigibility
Set Off Fire Alarm	Destroy/Deface School Property-Extreme
Set Fire on School Property	Citing a Riot or Disturbance
Indecent Exposure	Malicious Use of Technology

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

Strict Probation	Contact Probation Office
Informal Hearing	Restitution
Suspension (5 – 10 days)	Recommendation To Outside Agency
School Board Hearing For Expulsion	For Counseling
Contact Police	Administrative Discretion
Loss of technology privileges	

Note: Each behavior infraction carries with it a disciplinary action. Our philosophy in matters of discipline is that the student is ultimately responsible for his/her behavior; therefore, with a good balance of consequences and counseling, the student will be expected to improve his/her decision-making process that may have led to trouble in the past. Over a reasonable period of time, behavior problems, and poor decision-making by the student should lessen significantly. With parent involvement throughout this process, we hope to support and encourage the student, as well as provide consequence when necessary. It should be noted that an uncooperative attitude by the student could lead to expulsion.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION - DEFINITIONS

ACADEMIC DETENTION – Individual teachers assign academic detention for Level 1 infractions. The detention is scheduled for one day after school, from 2:40-3:10 with that particular teacher. Parents will be notified. Failure to serve detention will result in an hour detention.

HOUR DETENTION – The administration assigns hour detention for Level 2 infractions. Hour detention is held after school from 2:40-3:30 in a central location. Failure to serve hour/two-hour detention will result in an in-school suspension.

NOTE: If the student is absent from school on the day of personal or hour detention, he/she must serve it on the day he/she returns to school. Also, parents are responsible for transportation.

SATURDAY DETENTION - Saturday detention will run from 8:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M. Parents are responsible for transportation.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION – ISS is held in an isolated classroom. All core subject teachers will send classwork to the ISS room during the day. Students are expected to work quietly and cooperate in all manners while in ISS. Breaks are worked into the schedule and the students eat lunch together also. Misbehavior in ISS will result in a one-day suspension. An attempt to contact the parent by phone will be made.

SUSPENSION (1-3 DAYS) - Parents must be notified before a student can be suspended from school. A suspended student is not permitted on school property and cannot participate in or attend any extra-curricular activities during the suspension. In the event of inclement weather and the district is closed the suspension is extended to the following day. A parent conference may be scheduled before the student can return to school.

SUSPENSION (4-10 DAYS) – Suspensions of four or more days are used for more serious offenses. The same restrictions as listed for 1-3 day suspensions are in effect. In addition, the parents will be notified by mail about the reasons for the suspension. Included in the letter will be the scheduled time, place, location for an informal hearing with the administration, which is mandatory before the student can return to school.

BEHAVIOR CONTRACT – A written agreement between the school, parents, and student that specifies the responsibilities of the student and the consequences for non-compliance to be administered by both the school and the parent. A daily monitor slip will be signed by the teachers to comment on the student's behavior and academic effort.

FORMAL HEARING – The final step in the disciplinary action line is an expulsion. A formal hearing must be scheduled before an expulsion can take place. Parents will be notified of all their due process rights before the hearing.

HALL PASS RESTRICTION – Students on hall pass restriction will not be permitted to use the hall pass freely. Once in the morning and once in the afternoon will be arranged with specific teachers to monitor the student's use of the pass and to allow for restroom time. Abuse of this restricted time will result in consequences. Student is not permitted out of homeroom or during activity, and SSR periods. Teachers can restrict students from using the hall pass in their class at any time they feel the student has abused the privilege. In which case, the teacher must contact the parent.

INFORMAL HEARING – An informal hearing is scheduled with the parents and student for the purpose of discussing ways by which future offenses can be avoided. Probation and/or a behavioral contract may be in order at this time. The informal hearing may lead to a recommendation for a formal hearing in front of the school board for expulsion.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES – A student can be referred to the school psychologist or an outside agency for counseling. The student will have to comply with the recommendations of these professionals. Expulsion from school is the last resort. Parents will be responsible for finding a school to educate their child.

PROBATION – Probation will be at the discretion of administration.

- The student will be on hall pass restriction.
- Will not be able to participate in or attend any extra-curricular activities (This is subject for review upon completing any counseling services during the probationary period).
- The student must meet daily with an assigned faculty/staff member.
- The student must adhere to all school rules and policies.
- Any school tardies or absences must be confirmed by telephone before 8:00 a.m. by a parent.
- Students may be required to avoid, whenever possible, certain areas and/or peers that have contributed to his/her making poor decisions that ended in trouble.
- The student may not be permitted to attend field trips during probationary period.

P.A.W.S Program

PAWS Program Description

The PAWS Program is a new Positive School-Wide Behavior Program at Freedom Area Middle 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 three tenants of the program are having **P**ositive Attitudes, being **A**ccountable for Your Behavior, and making **W**ise and Respectful Choices, which together make **S**uccessful students.

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

The program will kick off with students being taught the specific behaviors expected for each area of the school. 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 discipline. 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 be an example to their peers. As a middle school team, we believe that students perform at their highest level when they are a part of a caring and safe learning environment and that the students are an integral part of creating this environment for each other.

PAWS Reward System

Students who show appropriate behaviors will be recognized on a daily basis by earning a PAW ticket from their teachers. All of the PAW tickets will be entered for weekly prize drawings. Students who continuously display good behaviors and who are role models for their peers will be awarded a Bulldog Bonus card. These students will be eligible for a mystery prize as part of the Principal's 100. At the end of semester, all students who have received Bulldog Bonuses will be entered into a drawing for larger prizes which will be awarded at the end of the year. Misbehaviors will be handled at the classroom level and at the office level, with a focus on re-teaching the expected behaviors when needed. Consequences will be administered according to the tiered system listed in the handbook.

Minor Infractions

Defiance/Disrespect

- Talking back
- Body Language
 - ✓ Smacking lips/rolling eyes
 - ✓ Tone/facial expressions
- Arguing with the teacher
- Arguing with classmates
- Sleeping in class
- Dishonesty
- Cheating/Plagiarism
- Running in the hallway
- Loud noise(s) in the hallway
- Not walking on right hand side of hallway

Fighting/Physical Aggression

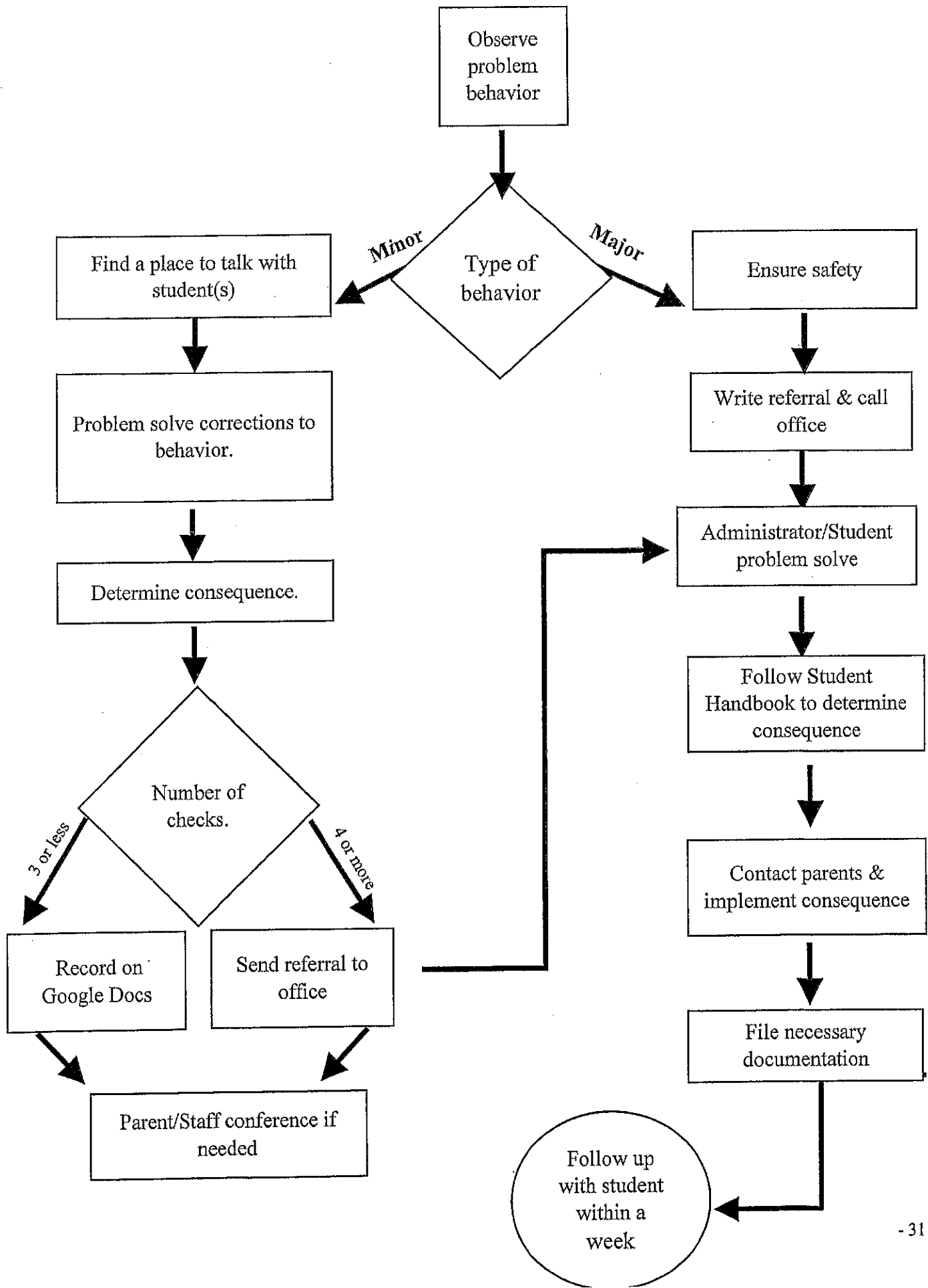
- Play fighting
- Horseplay

Inappropriate Language

- Cursing
- Name calling

Disruptions/Off-Task Behavior

- Making noises
- Chair rocking
- Talking out
- Talking to neighbor at inappropriate times
- Throwing items
- Shooting rubber bands
- Noise with materials
- Tapping with pencil
- Playing in desk
- Excessive talking
- Gum/food/drinks
- Not prepared for class
- Public display of affection
- Tardy to class
- Playing with toys during class



DAILY OPERATION PROCEDURES

ANNOUNCEMENTS/BULLETIN BOARDS/POSTERS

All announcements, messages, posters, flyers, advertisements, signs, etc. must be approved by the Administration before posting on bulletin boards.

ARRIVING AT SCHOOL/DISMISSAL

Once students have arrived on school grounds they may not leave school grounds for any reason until dismissed unless permission is given. Students are to remain on school property in designated areas while waiting for buses after school. No one is permitted to wait on private property or the roadways off school property. Snowball throwing is prohibited while waiting for buses.

- Students should not be dropped off at the school earlier than 7:15 a.m.

Students must remain in the auditorium or, if they want breakfast, remain in the cafeteria when they arrive at school. The 7:35 students will be released to their homerooms.

BOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

Students are responsible for replacing books and any other school materials that have been lost or damaged. This includes damage to the Chromebook assigned to the student.

BUS PASSES

Bus passes are available in the office for those needing to ride a different bus when a parent's note is presented. All notes must be written by a parent and turned into the office by noon.

CAFETERIA

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Freedom Area Schools** offer healthy meals each and every school day. For the **2023 – 2024** school year, breakfast will cost **\$1.25 per day or \$6.25 per week at all buildings**; and lunch will cost **\$2.60 per day or \$13.00 per week at the Middle School**. However, your children may qualify for either free or reduced-price meals. The reduced price is **\$.30** for breakfast and **\$.40** for lunch. Parents are encouraged to make deposits for meals on a weekly basis by sending either cash or a check in a clearly 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.**

THERE WILL BE NO CHARGING OF MEALS IN EITHER THE HIGH SCHOOL OR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL. All meals must be paid for at time of service. Milk is served with all meals and may be purchased separately for **\$.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 juice substituted for milk with meals.

CAFETERIA (Cont'd)

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.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES (and other non-school related items)

Students are allowed to carry cell phones/headphones as long as they do not interrupt class, are not visible, and are not used in any way including as a camera, calculator, text messaging, social media, etc. Students may only use their cell phones before and after school (bell to bell). **CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF WHILE IN SCHOOL!** Music, gaming, and other non-school related items, such as skateboards, cards, hacky sacks, water guns, balloons, etc. are not permitted in school.

Violation of this policy will result in the student receiving an after school detention. Subsequent violations will lead to further disciplinary action.

FOOD AND DRINK

No food or drink, other than water, is permitted in any areas of the building other than the cafeteria.

HALL PASSES

No student is permitted in the halls without a hall pass. Students who abuse the privilege will be placed on hall pass restriction. **Teachers have the authority to restrict or deny the use of the hall pass.** Hall passes are available for emergency restroom requests. Students are to use the facilities in the same hall that their classroom is located. Students should be able to return to class within five minutes.

Note: Students are not permitted in other classrooms, the library, the general office, and especially the gymnasium when using the pass. Students will lose hall pass privileges if they wander into other areas.

HALLWAYS

Students should not loiter in the hallway in a manner that obstructs others from passing through or creates congestion that leads to students being tardy for class. Stay to the right when walking to class. Running or yelling will not be tolerated in the halls for safety and educational reasons. Three minutes on our schedule is the passing time between classes. Gathering in groups in the halls between classes can lead to tardiness. Food & drink are not permitted in the hallways. **Students are to keep the halls clean so that we can be proud of our building.**

INSURANCE

Accident insurance is made available through the school for all students at the beginning of the school year. School insurance or a waiver signed by parent or guardian is required for participation in all athletics and cheerleading.

Following an accident or injury, it is the student's responsibility to report to the office and file a claim form. These claim forms are then presented to the insurance company (by the parent) for payment. The school is not in the insurance business and cannot file, pay, or receive payment for accidents.

All claims must be filed with the insurance company. Parents may specify whether the payment should be made to the parents or to the doctor.

LIBRARY

Our library contains fiction, non-fiction, and reference materials. The library contains a number of audiovisual materials in addition to books. Many pamphlets on specific subjects are available upon request. The library is for your enjoyment and convenience. It is to be used for research and reference. This is not a place for conferences with your friends or for social gatherings.

LOCKERS

Lockers are available to all students. Students are not permitted to switch or share lockers with another student. Students are encouraged to place a lock on their lockers to protect valuables. Lockers are the property of Freedom Area School District and are subject to search. Students are responsible for taking proper care of their locker. At no time can students adhere anything on the outside of the locker. **The school is not responsible for items stolen.** Once all lockers have been assigned, it is the responsibility of the student to meet with their 1st-period teacher to store items during the day. Teachers are not responsible for student materials.

LOST AND FOUND

Any time you find an article belonging to someone you do not know, you are to give it to the teacher in charge. If you have lost an object of some value, check and see if it has been turned in at the office.

RESTROOMS

Students are not to loiter in the restrooms. Please keep them clean.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

WTAE	Channel 4 TV	WPXI	Channel 11 TV
KDKA	1020 AM Radio & Channel 2 TV	WBVP	1230 AM Radio
WMBA	1460 AM Radio	FROGGY	98.3 & 104.3 FM Radio

SCHOOL MESSENGER NOTIFICATION

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

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.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Academic Support provides an extended period where students have access to all of their teachers for support of the school curriculum. The program provides a time for teachers to identify and work with students who are in need of differentiated learning opportunities to assist them in reaching their highest potential. This is a teacher-directed time that is dedicated to student remediation and one-on-one instruction as needed. Grade level teachers will be structuring this time as student data dictates.

TELEPHONES (Student Use)

Students that need to make phone calls during the school day must ask permission from their classroom teacher to use the phones in the main office.

VISITORS

All visitors must check-in at the office with their driver's license before being permitted access to the building. Visitors will not be permitted to visit any student or teacher who is in a classroom. Arrangements will 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.

HEALTH, MEDICAL, SCHOOL NURSE

EMERGENCY FORMS

Every student, without exception, must return an emergency form with phone numbers to contact parents in case of an emergency. These form will be passed out and collected by the office/school nurse during the first week of school.

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.

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. The best way to prevent the spread of illness in our schools is for children to stay home when they are sick.

EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL FOR HEALTH REASONS

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.

COVID-19 Please refer to and follow the latest district health and safety plan.

WHOOPIING COUGH (PERTUSIS) This is a very contagious respiratory illness caused by a type of bacteria that spreads from person to person. It causes the airway to swell. People are contagious for at least 2 weeks but can be shortened if symptoms are treated early.

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.

HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND SCREENINGS

Pupils are given health exams and screenings according to the following state mandates:

1. Physicals – K, 6th, and 11th Grades unless done by your private physician.
2. Athletic Physicals - are given for school sports for Grades 7 – 12.
3. Dental Exams – Kindergarten, 3rd and 7th Grades unless done by your private dentist.
4. Vision Screening – Yearly
5. Hearing Screening – K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 11th Grades.
6. Weighing, Measuring and BMI – Yearly
7. Tuberculin test – According to state regulations
8. Scoliosis Screening – 7th & 8th Grades
9. Pediculosis (Head Lice) – As needed in all grades

Note: 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.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Pennsylvania law requires that all students must follow certain requirements for attendance in school. A certificate of immunization will be kept on file at the school. Students will receive this card when graduating from our district. Parents may request a copy of the certificate when withdrawing a child from our school. You will need proof of immunization in other districts in Pennsylvania, and you may need proof in other states. Immunization exemption forms are available at the nurse's office. If there is an outbreak of any communicable disease a student is not immunized for, the student may be exempt from school during the outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease (PA DOH).

MEDICATION POLICY

Students will not be permitted to carry any medication during school hours except inhalers which are registered in the nurse's office. The school nurse has information regarding the use of inhalers during the school day. Only prescription medication will be given as ordered by a doctor or dentist, and the medication must be registered and kept in the nurse's office. The prescription bottle or container must be sent to school along with a written note from the parent/guardian for that day. A parent permission form will be sent home that day and must be returned the following day. Prescription medications that are given once, twice, or three times a day will not be given at school unless the physician or dentist has indicated such on the prescription or by a note on his letterhead.

Non-prescription medications will not be given without a doctor's order and must be registered and kept in the nurse's office. Medication will be kept in a locked cabinet. Medication permission forms may be obtained in the nurse's office or on district website under: Departments/Health Office/Forms

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

SCHOOL NURSE

Students must have a pass from class to see the nurse unless it is an extreme emergency. Do not report to the nurse's office without a pass. Students who miss class or arrive late to class from the nurse's office without first seeing their classroom teacher will be considered unexcused cut/tardy. No student can be excused early from school until the nurse can confirm the illness; otherwise, it is an illegal early dismissal.

Note: Under no circumstances are students permitted to stay in the restrooms when they are sick. This will be considered a class cut.

FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE HEALTH CURRICULUM

The fifth-grade health curriculum includes instruction on growth and development. The instruction includes co-ed lessons on basic hygiene and good grooming. In separate classrooms, the boys view a documentary, have discussion time, and have an opportunity for question/answer time. Girls view a video on feminine hygiene, have discussion time, and have an opportunity for question/answer time. All students will receive information on HIV infection, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

If you do not wish your fifth-grade child to be included in the presentation that is held in separate classrooms, please notify the school in writing by October 1st. All materials can be previewed by contacting the school nurse.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Precautionary techniques are used to help prevent students and staff from exposure to diseases that could be present in blood or bodily fluids containing blood.

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:

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

IN CASE OF FOOD ALLERGY

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under 7CFR 15b.3 of USDA's nondiscrimination regulations and school 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.

Please notify the main office and school nurse of any Food Allergies your child may have **immediately.**

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 need.

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:

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

Freedom Area School District: Concussion Protocol

What is a concussion?

- A concussion is a mild brain injury which is caused by either a blow to the head or body or by another injury that shakes or jars the head.
- A concussion may also be called a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) or a closed head injury.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Feeling light-headed
- Blurred vision
- Possible loss of consciousness
- Easily fatigued
- Sensitive to light and noise.
- Confusion

Cognitive Symptoms

- Difficulty learning new information
- Poor memory
- Making decisions
- Problem-solving
- Impaired concentration
- Slowed thinking
- Difficulty completing daily tasks

Psychological Symptoms

- Anxiety/Restlessness
- Depression/Sadness
- Mood swings
- Low motivation
- Sleep difficulties such as difficulty w/sleep onset, sleeping more, or waking up often.
- More/Less emotional
- Irritability/Anger

If your child is experiencing these symptoms, contact your family physician and school nurse. Athletes should also inform the school trainer and their team's head coach. Band students should inform their Director.

Freedom Area School District: Concussion Protocol

Purpose: To be proactive in two primary areas regarding student concussion management:

1. Return to SCHOOL
2. Return to PLAY
 - * Return to play/sports progression will begin after return to full academics/full cognitive workload has taken place.

Concussion Management Team (CMT):

- Consists of four monitors:
 - Academic Monitor (Guidance Counselor, School Psychologist)
 - Symptom Monitor (School Nurse)
 - Regular Education Teacher
 - Building Administrator
- CMT helps students:
 - Recover faster
 - Remain in school while recovering
 - Not fall as far behind in classwork
 - Experience lower stress as there are educational professionals who understand what the student needs

Impact Baseline and Concussion Wise Pennsylvania

- All Freedom Area School District coaches are required to pass Concussion Wise Pennsylvania's annual concussion course prior to beginning their season.
- Students involved in potential contact sports take an Impact Baseline Test prior to the start of mandatory practice. Parents may get their child's baseline test results at any time by contacting our Athletic Director, Mr. Dave Badamo (724-775-7400).

How Freedom Area School District Can Help:

- All district teachers are trained in concussion management through the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit and district administration.
- The Student Concussion Management Team meets once per week to discuss student progress.
- As a goal, the Concussion Management Team will encourage self-advocacy for students and provide information and accommodations that aid student recovery.



FREEDOM AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Illuminating the Path of Success for All Students

1702 School Street Freedom PA, 15042 (P) 724-775-7461 (F) 724-775-7748

FMS Concussion Management Protocol

Name: _____

Date of Injury: _____

Grade: _____

Protocol Dates: _____

The above student has been evaluated by a physician and diagnosed with a concussion. Based on this diagnosis and a meeting of the student's Concussion Management Team, the following accommodations are to be implemented until notified otherwise. These accommodations must be implemented to reduce physical and/or mental exertion to promote a full recovery for this student.

Attendance Recommendations

- School absences excused until: _____
- May return to full days
- Initiate or continue homebound instruction
- Modified days until: _____

Physical Education / Participation in Sports

- No Physical Edu. / No sports participation
- May return to PE class with restrictions such as:
- May return to PE class with no restrictions.
- Student not permitted to attend sports practice if practice causes interaction with direct sun light.

General Accommodations

- Frequent breaks from class. Student to visit nurse's office to rest.
- Student to bring snacks to school (nurse's office).
- Use of school elevator.
- Use of sunglasses permitted to limit light.
- Student permitted to leave class early (3-4 min.) to avoid crowds.
- Student to eat lunch in quiet area to control noise.

Class / Assignment Modifications

- Student to be exempt from all assignments from _____ to _____
- Student NOT permitted to use computer or other electronics (Teacher to modify these assignments)
- Student to receive a decreased amount of course work (i.e. shortened tests, projects, homework).
- Student to receive a "reasonable" amount of extra time to complete work.
- Teacher to prepare individual copy of class notes for student.
- Teacher to provide recorded lecture of class.
- Teacher to reduce level of "rigor/higher level thinking" required for assignments.
- Student provided with audio books.

Test Modifications

- Student to test in a quiet environment.
- Allow testing across multiple sessions.
- Open note/open book permitted.
- Take home testing permitted.
- Test to be orally read to student if available.
- Multiple choice tests (No Essay)
- Other: _____

Additional Class Accommodations

Teacher Signatures (Coach included if athlete)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature:

Concussion Management Team Signatures

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

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 be defined as 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 in 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, via 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, at 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 personal 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 immediately report that conduct. 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 own 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 as well as 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 situation expedites the critical decision-making process, thus providing timely intervention to our students. In addition, our procedures support and protect staff by creating 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 efforts of staff members, family, and community services in a response to a crisis situation. 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 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 significant impact upon the school community

Crisis Team – 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 – a means of assisting an individual to learn more effective ways of coping with the present critical situation

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

Postvention – 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 – 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:

Staff member will notify 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 in terms of:
 - a. history of previous ideations/attempt
 - b. existence/specificity of plan
 - c. availability of 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, hospitality
 - 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 suicide attempt.

- a. If possible, have 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 private licensed psychologist
- e. Parent/guardian is to transport to appropriate MH facility
- f. Student admitted back to school-based upon the recommendation of assessment and a back to school conference with principal/SAP team member
- g. Student must follow through with all treatment recommendations.
- h. 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. Student will be monitored by a SAP team member

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). Staff member with knowledge of the gesture will take the following action:

1. Notify nurse if 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 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 immediate in-school conference with principal/SAP team member to discuss:
 1. The need for medical attention
 2. Immediate and mandatory referral to Base Service Unit (775-7262), Mental Health Emergency Services (775-5208), or private licensed psychologist.
 - f. Student admitted back to school-based upon the recommendations from the assessment, and a back to school conference with the principal/SAP team member
 - g. Refer 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 increase in likelihood that the method used will result in fatality (examples: serious overdose, ingestion of 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 student alone
3. Contact school nurse to come to student's location. Attempt to advise nurse of severity of 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, and 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 situation and request an in-school conference within 3 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 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, it is the intent of the Freedom Area School District to provide support for students, parents, and members of the school staff. We have, therefore, established procedures to help all affected individuals appropriately grieve.

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. 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. 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 to the counseling 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 in order to function and develop in the most productive and healthy manner. 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 in a reasonable and helpful manner, 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 requests 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 5 day minimum 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-ALike 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. Referrals can be initiated by drug and alcohol policy violations: 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 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 drug, mood-altering substance and alcohol-related incidents. The Freedom Area School District will provide a 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

BEHAVIORAL PROBATION AGREEMENT

A student in violation of the Code of Conduct 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 be on hall pass restriction and will be escorted when they need to leave class.
3. The student will not be able to participate in or attend any extra-curricular activities including dances and sports.
4. The student must meet _____ a week with a principal, dean of students, or prevention specialist during the probationary period.
5. The student must adhere to all school rules and policies.
6. The parent/guardian of the student on probation must call and inform the school of any absences. This call must be made by 7:40 a.m. on the day of the absence.
7. Students on probation should attempt, within reason, to avoid other students on probation.
8. 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.
9. Other supervision including _____

This probation agreement will be reviewed by the administration and all stakeholders after the probation period 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. These elements are integrated into two (2) formal categories that make up the policy.

- A. Confrontation Interventions
 - 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
- B. Confrontation Prevention
 - 4. Implement a "Conflict Resolution" course for students
 - 5. Conduct "Conflict Management" training for faculty and staff.

Policy Operational Definitions

FIGHTING

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 second offense, plus required SAP referral. Informal hearing with school administration necessary before student(s) are readmitted 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 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. Phone call to parents will alert parents of the incident. Parents must accompany student(s) back to school after serving suspension.
- B. 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. 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

A 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 promptly report such incidents to the designated employees.

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 in order 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 file server 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 Policy must be followed at all times. **Students should have no expectation of privacy related to Chromebook/desktop use and can expect teachers, technical support staff, and administrators to conduct spot checks 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 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, 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 thereafter.

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, maybe 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.

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 also result in disciplinary action.

*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 on the basis of 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 the purposes of this policy, the definition of sexual harassment of a student includes, but is not limited to, the following actions: 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 in a confidential manner. 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 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.

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 on 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. In addition, 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 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 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 discipline 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 of 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.
- E. In all cases proceeding under this Paragraph five, 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 other 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 with respect to 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 in order 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, pursuant to 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 with 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 with regard to the surveying of minor students, the collection of information from students for marketing purposes, and certain non-emergency medical examinations. In addition, an eighth category of information (*) was added to the law.

You may read more about the specific changes to the law by clicking onto [\[take them to the document that talks about recent changes to FERPA and PPRA that are in Hot Topics\]](#)
The Department will be updating the PPRA regulations to reflect these changes

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 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 Homeless site.

Contact Information

Ms. Rita Kaplin, M. Ed.
School Counselor/Homeless Liaison
Freedom Area High School
724-775-7400 Ext 542
rkaplin@freedomarea.org

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.

Student Meal Account Balances

The following procedures are implemented in coordination with guidelines of Policy 808- Food Services

- No Student who requests a meal will be denied a main lunch option unless the student's parent or guardian has provided written permission to withhold a school lunch
- Direct communication regarding money owed will be made to the parent or guardian only. Students may deliver communication in letter form, addressed to the "parents/guardians".
- Meals served to students should not be removed or exchanged as a result of overdrawn accounts or free/reduced status. When it is discovered a student has selected a meal and they do not have positive funds to purchase it, the student will be permitted to have the items without discussion. The meal will be charged to the student's lunch account.
- When a-la-carte limits are in place, food can be removed from the student at the register.
- Weekly notices for negative account balances will be e-mailed to parents/guardians who have addresses on file. When a student owes money for five or more school meals, the school will make at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian and have the parent/guardian apply for participation in the school food program.
- When a negative balance of \$50 or more exists and at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian have been made, the account may pursue legal action through the District Magistrate.
- When all components of a reimbursable meal are not taken, the cashier must charge a-la-carte prices for the food items.
- If a student receives a free or reduced meal and has a condition that limits certain components of a lunch, the appropriate Pennsylvania Department of Education form must be completed.
- Free/Reduced Lunch applications will be sent home at the start of each school year. Applications are available upon request throughout the year on the District Website, schoolcafe.com, and through the main office.
- Translated applications are available upon request
- Cafeteria Staff will be trained annually on the guidelines of Policy 808
- No student who owes money or does not have money for a school meal will be publicly identified, stigmatized or be required to do work or chores

Please Note: Allowing charges to continuously accumulate can lead to financial losses to the school food service program and is unfair to the households that do pay for their meals. If parent/legal guardian does not pay after being contacted, the District reserves the right to take actions necessary to collect charges owed. The actions may include initiating collection proceedings.

ADDENDUM

STUDENT EXPRESSION/DISSEMINATION OF MATERIALS

These procedures address the dissemination by students of nonschool materials that are not part of the curricular or extracurricular program of the district. Materials sought to be disseminated as part of the curricular or extracurricular program of the district will be regulated as part of the district's educational program and are not subject to the time, place, and manner provisions set forth herein.

Students may disseminate nonschool materials, provided that the form of expression and/or the use of public school facilities and equipment is/are in accordance with Board Policy 220 (Student Expression/Dissemination of Materials), the Code of Student Conduct. These procedures and the school dress code, if applicable. It is the responsibility of students intending to disseminate nonschool materials to become familiar with the provisions of Board Policy 220 and pertinent provisions of the Code of Student Conduct.

The district has no responsibility to assist students in or to provide facilities for the dissemination of nonschool materials.

Dissemination of Nonschool Materials

The dissemination by students of all nonschool materials will be governed by the following procedures:

1. All nonschool materials, together with a copy of the plan of dissemination, must be submitted to the building principal no later than 10 a.m. on the school day prior to the requested dissemination. The building principal will forward such information to the Superintendent or designee for approval. The plan will set forth in detail the desired time, place and manner of dissemination, as well as the individuals involved.
2. Identification of the individual student or at least one (1) responsible person in a student group will be required upon submission for approval. The person wishing to disseminate such material must provide in writing their name, address, telephone number and organization, if any. This information will be filed in the building principal's office.
3. The Superintendent or designee will review the material, determine if it constitutes expression that is prohibited by Board policy, and inform the building principal or designee of the decision. The building principal or designee will notify the student(s) planning to disseminate nonschool materials of the decision to grant or deny permission. If the decision is to not permit the dissemination, the building principal or designee will specify the reasons for the decision as well as the changes in the content of the material or in the plan of dissemination which must be made, if any, in order to secure such permission. If the student(s) desiring to disseminate such material make(s) such changes in a manner satisfactory to the Superintendent or designee prior to the planned dissemination, the building principal or designee may then grant permission to disseminate.

Time -

When permission has been granted, students may disseminate approved nonschool materials only at the following times:

- Thirty (30) minutes before the official start of school.
- During regularly scheduled lunch periods.
- Thirty (30) minutes after the official end of school.
- At school-sponsored activities outside of the venue.

Place -

- Dissemination of approved nonschool materials on school property will be permitted only in locations that allow for the normal flow of traffic within the school and its exterior doors, including on sidewalks located on school property paralleling school driveways. Building entrance walkways and building lobbies will not be utilized for such dissemination.
- Nonschool materials may not be disseminated during any regularly scheduled class unless specifically authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
- Dissemination of approved nonschool materials will be permitted on the following district-owned technology sites or platforms: Google

Manner -

- All nonschool materials must bear the district disclaimer.

DISCLAIMER: THE FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR, AND DOES NOT ENDORSE, ANY STATEMENT, SENTIMENT OR OPINION PUBLISHED OR EXPRESSED IN THIS DOCUMENT. THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT PART OF, AND HAS NOT BEEN DISTRIBUTED AS PART OF, THE DISTRICT'S CURRICULAR OR EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS.

- All approved nonschool materials displayed in a fixed location shall be officially dated and the district shall remove the materials within ten (10) school days.

Any student who disseminates materials will be responsible for cleaning any resulting litter, including any discarded pamphlets, fliers or other documents.

No student will harass or otherwise interfere with the dissemination of approved nonschool materials by student(s), nor may a student in any way compel or coerce a student to accept any materials.

Disciplinary Consequences

Any student who violates any provision of Board Policy 220 or these procedures will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy and the Code of Student Conduct, which may, in appropriate cases, include suspension and/or expulsion from school.

Student Handbook

A copy of this procedure will be published in student handbooks.

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