



**AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
STUDENT HANDBOOK AND DISCIPLINE CODE

**2022 - 2023**

**Revised: August 2022**

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Dr. Jeff Hadley, Superintendent  
Dr. Jillian Bichsel, Assistant Superintendent  
Dr. Ashlea Rineer-Hershey, Director of Student Services





Dear Parents/Guardians:

This handbook has been compiled to help guide the student and the parent or guardian through the school year. These policies have been established by a committee and have been approved by the Avonworth Board of School Directors. The goal is to establish clear guidelines for a safe environment, in which students can receive a sound education by minimizing unnecessary distractions to the educational process. It is our mutual task to guide students to make responsible decisions. This handbook also has valuable information about attendance, grading, athletics and co-curricular activities, and consequences for behavior.

Common sense is always the best approach to following rules and regulations. At Avonworth, we strive to help all students become responsible thinking citizens. Thinking before speaking or acting can avoid problems. We encourage you to review this handbook with your child and help him or her to make appropriate, responsible choices. After reviewing the Handbook and Discipline Code, you and your child are asked to sign the signature page at the end of the booklet and return it to your child's homeroom teacher. It is very important that you return the form; failure to return it could result in a loss of school privileges for your child.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Miller, APC Principal  
Dr. William Battistone, AES Principal  
Mr. Robert Eastwood, AES Asst. Principal  
Dr. Michael Hall, AMS Principal  
Dr. Keera Dwulit, AHS Principal  
Dr. Kaitlin Remensky, AMS/AHS Asst. Principal



# Avonworth School District

## Anti-Racist/Inclusive School Climate

Dear Avonworth Students,

At Avonworth School District, our administration, faculty, and staff are committed to the creation and maintenance of "inclusive learning" spaces. These are classrooms and places of learning where you will be treated with respect and dignity and where all individuals are provided an equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed. In our classrooms, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Your success at Avonworth and beyond is enhanced by the innovation and creativity of thought that inclusive classrooms facilitate. The success of an inclusive classroom relies on the participation, support, and understanding of you and your peers. We encourage you to speak up and share your views but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others.

Avonworth School District supports an inclusive learning environment in which diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. We believe that all students benefit from experiences that will help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our school community must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's or group's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity/expression, religion, sexual orientation, or other diverse identities are contrary to the mission of the Avonworth School District. We expect that all Avonworth students, faculty, and staff will promote an atmosphere of respect for all members of our Avonworth school community.

Civility and respect for the opinions of others are very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. Courteous behavior and responses are expected at all times. When you disagree with someone, be sure that you make a distinction between criticizing an idea and criticizing the person. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's or race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity/expression, religion, sexual orientation, or other diverse identities are contrary to the mission of the Avonworth School District and will not be tolerated.

At the July 13, 2020 meeting of the Avonworth School District Board of Directors, the School Board adopted a resolution supporting an anti-racist school climate and listing action items. In a letter to the community that followed, the School Board "reaffirmed [their] commitment to support and maintain an anti-racist, safe, and school inclusive school environment that provides an equal opportunity for all students in each and every one of our programs. There is no place for racism in our country, especially in our nation's schools." For the full text of the letter and resolution, visit our website or click on the link below:

[Supporting an Anti-Racist School Climate](#)

The Avonworth School District Administration will continue to support the creation and maintenance of an anti-racist and an inclusive school environment. Behavior, comments, or actions contrary to our District's mission of creating this school environment will not be tolerated and will be disciplined accordingly. We need to have a school environment that makes each of us feel we belong and that we can all be proud of. We are one school community and we need to take care of, support, and respect each other. We thank each of you for your contribution to making Avonworth the amazing school district that it is.

Dr. Jeff Hadley, Superintendent

Dr. Jillian Bichsel, Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Brad Waters, Director of Business Services

Dr. Ashlea Rineer-Hershey, Director of Student Services

Mrs. Andrea Patton, Athletic Director

Dr. Keera Dwulit, High School Principal

Dr. Mike Hall, Middle School/9th Grade Principal

Dr. Kaitlin Remensky, AHS/AMS Assistant Principal

Dr. Bill Battistone, Avonworth Elementary Principal

Dr. Scott Miller, Avonworth Primary Center Principal

Mr. Robert Eastwood, AES Assistant Principal



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## INTRODUCTION

### **Mission Statement**

The Avonworth School District empowers students through authentic experiences to become innovative thinkers and creative contributors to our world.

### **District Beliefs**

1. Students' strengths and talents are nurtured in a safe and supportive environment.
2. The school district supports diversity, empathy, and respect.
3. Developing essential skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and communication prepares students to navigate a complex world.
4. Learning takes place within and beyond our school walls.
5. The school district and community partner for mutual benefit.

### **Pillars of Our School Community**

These pillars are the foundations of everything we do together as students, educators, families, and neighbors of Avonworth School District.



We understand that it is the responsibility of the Avonworth School District to provide an atmosphere that is orderly, promotes safety, and is conducive to learning. We know that it is our responsibility to recognize the individual differences that exist among our students and that we must provide a positive educational experience for all our students.

In pursuit of this goal, we believe in helping all our students to develop and exhibit:

- Courtesy
- Ethics
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Self-Control
- Self-Discipline
- Self-Motivation
- Self-Respect
- Tolerance

We expect students to follow the rules of the school, to comply with state and federal regulations, and to fulfill individual educational requirements while not disrupting the education of others.

To maintain this positive learning environment, each teacher will enforce classroom rules promoting these positive behaviors and will instruct, praise, and reward the students for achieving those positive behaviors. If these positive behaviors are not followed, certain consequences will follow.

### **Supports to Promote Positive Behavior**

The faculty, staff, administration, and School Board of Directors at Avonworth School District have established the following support to encourage positive behaviors in students.

#### ***Self-Discipline and School Rules:***

Students are expected to practice self-discipline. This means that each person is responsible for his or her individual behavior. This behavior should be in line with rules and regulations that are established by the Avonworth School District. Common sense should govern students' behavior at all times. If students are not sure about a rule, they should ask one of the school staff. Students should not act first and then hope that a disruptive action will be overlooked because it is not specifically listed in the handbook. The image of the student body and the school, as an institution, is dependent upon the behavior of each student as an individual.

#### ***Classroom Rules:***

It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain the proper learning environment. To maintain this environment, it is necessary for the students to follow basic rules, and therefore, to be responsible for their own behaviors and actions. Teachers will set up rules for their classrooms that are consistent with the policies of the Avonworth School District.

#### ***Counseling Services:***

Counseling services are part of the regular educational program for all Avonworth students. Students are seen either individually or in small groups. Students receiving counseling may be assisted in making decisions, setting goals to improve class performance, and discussing personal or social issues. The counselors work closely with teachers, parents, and other school staff. They may also work with people from other local agencies. The goal of the counseling staff is to make school experiences rewarding and meaningful.

#### ***Homework:***

We believe that homework should be meaningful and grade-appropriate and can significantly enhance learning when used as an extension to classroom activities. Homework is expected to be completed as assigned. Any student experiencing difficulty completing homework should request help from the teacher. Repeated failure to complete homework may result in academic and/or behavioral interventions.

#### ***Unlawful Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy:***

The Avonworth School District believes that all students have the right to a safe and healthy school environment. We promote mutual respect, acceptance, and tolerance, and will not permit behavior that infringes upon these principles. No student shall harass, intimidate, or verbally abuse another student. Hitting, shoving, teasing, name-calling, manipulating, or shunning other students is prohibited. This policy is in effect when a student is at school, en route to or from school, or at any school-sponsored event.

Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations outlined in School Board Policies 248 and 249.

If the alleged bullying, cyberbullying or harassment happened outside of the school setting, the school district does not have jurisdiction to issue consequences based on School Board Policy 249. This includes, but is not limited to, interactions taking place over social media or personal devices outside of school or school events.

Staff and administration will contact and show support to parents/guardians in the event that a student has been hurt either by physical or emotional aggression while in school. Counselors, administrators, teachers, and/or other staff members will follow-up as necessary with parents/guardians/students to ensure a level of comfort and a safe environment for students who have been bullied or physically hurt.

***Child Study and Student Assistance Program:***

Students may be referred to Child Study or the Student Assistance Program (SAP) if they experience behavioral difficulties that impede their learning or the learning of others. When appropriate, referrals of a student to Child Study or SAP may result in the Child Study or SAP team assisting the classroom teacher in developing individualized positive behavior interventions.

***Communication with Parents/Guardians:***

Parents/guardians should receive regular contact from teachers for every student relative to positive academic or behavioral occurrences. This correspondence can occur in person, by phone, email, or letter.

If a student's grade drops significantly (by two or more letter grades or from a pass to a fail) parents should be contacted by the teacher in the same manner as above and invited to come in for a conference.

For chronic classroom behavioral issues, prior to any discipline referral advancing to the administrative level, teachers must contact the parent/guardian in person, by phone, email, or letter before sending a written referral to administration. The administration may ask that a specific mode of communication is used before sending a written referral.

Administrators will contact parents/guardians prior to any discipline referral resulting in a Saturday detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. Contact will be in person, by phone, email, or by letter.

***Recognition:***

Recognition is used to encourage positive behaviors that are being exhibited by students. Every effort is made to recognize and reinforce positive behaviors. In addition to formal awards, this may be done through announcements, bulletin boards, parental notification, certificates, etc.

***Student Discipline Procedures (School Board Policy 218)***

The Avonworth School District recognizes the importance of establishing clear policies and consistent disciplinary consequences for violations of District rules. It allows the Avonworth community to build and maintain a positive, safe, and trusting environment in which our students can learn. We expect our students to act as mature, responsible, and considerate citizens, treating each other with dignity and respect.



When a student violates District rules and regulations, the student will be subject to an appropriate form of discipline. The information that follows shows the normal sequence and/or combination of disciplinary actions that will be taken for violation of school rules and regulations. Multiple or repeated infractions will result in a higher level of consequences, a different combination of consequences and/or a restorative action.

Once a referral to the principal has been written, the referral is handled according to the Progressive Discipline Procedure. It is understood that behaviors are developmental in nature, some infractions are more serious than others, and that repeated infractions may warrant stricter consequences. When appropriate, restorative or alternate consequences directly connected to the infraction may be used with the goal of teaching positive and proper school behavior. In some cases, the development of an individualized behavior plan may be appropriate. In all cases, consequences are subject to parameters of state and federal law.

If a student violates any policy set forth by the Avonworth Board of School Directors, the teacher, principal or his/her designee is to follow the regulations outlined in the Student Handbook and Discipline Code. The administration of each individual school is given the authority to take appropriate action to ensure compliance with Board policy.

*In all cases, the Administration retains the right to use its discretion in evaluating cases.*

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## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### **Screening and Evaluation**

Avonworth School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating the specific needs of school-age students requiring special programs and services. These procedures, as required by law, are as follows:

The district, as prescribed by Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity (grades kindergarten-3, 7, and 11); visual acuity (grades kindergarten-12); and speech and language skills (grades kindergarten-12). Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social and emotional skills are assessed by teachers and support staff on an ongoing basis. Screening activities include a review of group-based data such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, ability, and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources as well as information obtained from parents/guardians and outside agencies are assessed, noted within student records, and discussed with parents/guardians. These school records are always open and available to parents/guardians and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" about the child.

Information from records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission by parents/guardians.

If a parent/guardian or the school team feels a more comprehensive assessment of a student is necessary, an evaluation may be recommended. Parental consent is required before a comprehensive evaluation may take place. Evaluations may include a review of the student's records, classroom observations, a gathering of parent/guardian and teacher input, individually administered assessments of achievement and cognitive ability, and other assessments as necessary.

After all of the assessments are completed, an Evaluation Report that includes specific recommendations for the types of interventions necessary to support the child's specific needs is prepared and shared with parents/guardians. In accordance with state regulations, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting, with parent/guardian involvement, may be scheduled to develop an appropriate IEP for the student. Parents/Guardians are then notified of the proposed placement and services with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). Parents/Guardians of students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education services may request multidisciplinary evaluations of their child through a written request to the building principal or Director of Student Services.

### **Student Services**

All students in the Avonworth School District have access to the following services which address students' needs throughout their district enrollment: school counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services, and social work services to support students in addressing academic, behavioral, health, personal, career and social development issues.

***Services for School-Age Exceptional Children:***

Avonworth School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to exceptional students according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet the eligibility criteria for mentally, gifted, and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Emotional Disturbance
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Speech or Language Impairment

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include annual development of an IEP, multidisciplinary re-evaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, and placement in a part-time or full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location of the delivery of such services are determined by the parents/guardians and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student’s identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and level of intensity of the specified intervention.

The school district also provides related services such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits. Prior to the initiation of services parents/guardians are presented a “Notice of Recommended Educational Placement” (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents/guardians disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation, and/or due process hearing.

***Independent Educational Evaluations:***

Parents/guardians have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense if there is disagreement with an evaluation obtained by a District (34 CFR 300.503). However, the district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, parents/guardians still have the right to an IEE, but not at public expense.

***Admission of Service Animals to Schools:***

A student or an employee with a disability may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational or employment purposes. However, there is no automatic right to be accompanied by a service animal in the school setting.

Parents/Guardians of students with disabilities who believe the student needs to bring a service animal to school in order to receive a free and appropriate public education shall notify the building principal or the Section 504 or IEP team. The appropriate team shall evaluate the request to use the service animal in school, gather necessary information, and determine whether the student requires the service animal during the school day or at school activities. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities shall be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student’s IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement.

***Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools:***

Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time basis in a special education program operated in a public school. Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following multidisciplinary evaluations and the development of an IEP. Parents/ guardians of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request multidisciplinary evaluations and development of an IEP. Parents/Guardians of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request multidisciplinary evaluations of their child through a written request to the Director of Student Services.

***Services for Protected Handicapped Students/504 Plans:***

Avonworth School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aides, services, or accommodations, which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. Additional information about the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students is available by contacting the Director of Student Services.

***English as a Second Language Instruction:***

When registering their students at Avonworth, all parents/guardians will be required to fill out a Home Language Survey. Based upon the responses to this survey, those children who qualify will be referred for an "English Language Learner Assessment". The results of this assessment will determine if a student requires English as a Second Language instruction. Parents/guardians may not opt their children out of English language learner assessment or ESL instructions if found to be eligible.

***Homeless Children:***

In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Avonworth School District is attempting to identify all children within the district who may be experiencing homelessness.

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes individuals:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- Living in substandard housing (no running water or working utilities, infestations, etc.).

Children who are experiencing homelessness may qualify for assistance with free school lunch, school supplies/materials, tutoring, and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin throughout the duration of their homeless episode.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact the Director of Student Services Dr. Ashlea Rineer-Hershey at (412) 366- 7171 ext. 1901 or arineerhershey@avonworth.k12.pa.us.

If your living situation changes during the school year, and you and your children become homeless, please be sure to contact the school. We will work with you so that your child(ren)'s education is disrupted as little as possible.

### **Gifted Services**

#### ***Determining Gifted Eligibility:***

Mentally gifted is defined as “outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.” A child may be eligible for gifted education if he/she:

- Is a year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects.
- Demonstrates an observed or measured rate of mastering new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability.
- Demonstrates achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas.
- Shows early and measured use of high-level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communication skills, foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise.
- Has documented, observed, validates, or assessed evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

#### ***Screening and Evaluation:***

The term mentally gifted includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher and other factors that indicate gifted ability. Gifted ability cannot be based on an IQ score alone. If the IQ score is lower than 130, a child may be admitted to gifted programs when other conditions strongly indicate gifted ability. The other factors to be considered may include achievement test scores that are a year or more above level; observed or measured acquisition/retention rates that reflect gifted ability, achievement, performance, of expertise in one or more academic areas that demonstrate a high level of accomplishment; higher-level thinking skills and; documented evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

#### ***The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE):***

A Gifted Multidisciplinary evaluation is a process to gather the information that will be used to find out if a child qualifies for gifted education and, if so, the types of programs and services needed. Part of this process includes an evaluation by a certified school psychologist.

A child may be referred for the first GMDE in several ways:

- Parents may request the school to give their child a GMDE at any time, but there is a limit of one request per year.
- A child's teacher may also ask to have a child evaluated.

***The Gifted Written Report (GWR):***

A multidisciplinary team reviews all materials and prepares a GWR that recommends whether a child is gifted and needs specially designed instruction. As a member of the GMDT, a parent may present written information for consideration. The GWR must include the reasons for the recommendations and list the names and positions of everyone who was part of the team. The entire GMDT process must be completed within 60 calendar days, excluding summer vacation, from the date the school district receives the parent's written permission on the Permission to Evaluate form.

***The Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP):***

If the GIEP team decides the student is gifted and in need of gifted education, the team writes the GIEP at the meeting. The GIEP is based on the unique needs of the gifted student and enables the gifted student to participate in acceleration or enrichment programs, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to the student's intellectual and academic abilities and needs.

***Notice of Recommended Assignment:***

Upon completion of the GIEP, the parent will receive a NORA and a Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children. The NORA will indicate the educational placement for the student and requires parent approval before the school district will begin implementation. The Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children describes your rights and the procedures that safeguard your rights.

***Parent Rights:***

At all times, a parent has certain rights with all gifted education services received by their child:

- The right to be notified about a child's program and progress and any changes that take place;
- The right to approve or reject programs and testing;
- The right to privacy

***Services for Preschool-Age Children:***

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool-age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. The Pennsylvania Department of Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. For additional information, please contact the Early Learning Institute, 2500 Baldwick Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, or call (412) 837-1502. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool-age children from ages three through five. For additional information contact Project DART, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, or call (412) 394-5816.

***Parents' Rights: Directory Information & FERPA Notification***

The Avonworth School District is required each year to provide you with notice of your rights with respect to your child's educational records. The purpose is to advise you of the types of information that may be disclosed to the public throughout the course of the school year. Furthermore, this letter advises you of your right to

review your child's educational records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Should you have any questions regarding the information contained herein, please feel free to call the office.

***Directory Information:***

During the course of the school year, information relating to Avonworth students may be disclosed to individuals and/or the media. For example, individual and/or group interviews, photographs or videos of the students may be taken for use by the District in various publications, or for use in local newspapers. This publicity provides the community with information about various school programs and achievements.

The District may also disclose additional directory information relating to students for various reasons throughout the school year without prior parental consent. "Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degree, and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. Interviews, photographs, and videos, as described above, are also considered to be directory information. (34 CFR §99.3). Directory information does not include disciplinary information, medical records, evaluation records, grades, special education records, or other information that would be considered private in nature.

You have the right to refuse to let the District release directory information pertaining to your child. If you refuse to permit the District to release any or all directory information pertaining to your child, your objection must be in writing. Telephone calls or voice messages will not be sufficient. Should you desire to exercise this right, please write a letter indicating your objection to your school's office within 14 calendar days of the date of this notification. If you do not provide other written objections, directory information as identified above may be released.

***FERPA Notification-Confidentiality of Student Records:***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day Avonworth receives a request for access. The parents/guardians of eligible students should submit to the building principal, or appropriate Avonworth official, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
  
- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Avonworth to amend a record should write to the school principal, or appropriate school official, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If Avonworth decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the Avonworth School District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-8520

With concern or to register a complaint please contact:  
Avonworth School District  
Dr. Ashlea Rineer-Hershey  
Director of Student Services



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## SAFETY MEASURES

Proactively approaching safety is the best way to maintain a safe environment. We work hard to find ways to be proactive in identifying students and families in need of assistance. We do this by utilizing all available resources. Forging relationships between students, parents, teachers, staff, and administration is paramount to maintaining a supportive culture. Within the school this is fostered through mentoring programs, advisory, and connections programs. Along with a relationship with their families, we want all students to have a go to adult in their school. A team approach allows for adults to become aware of student needs and proactively address them.

From a proactive support perspective, we have the following programs/resources.

School Counselors - Each building has a school counselor. After the teachers, the counselors are the next level of support for all school related matters from social relationships to school performance.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)- Group of teachers, counselors, and administrators trained to support students and families in need. The SAP team can help families navigate challenges by providing resources as needed.

Family Behavior Resources-School Based Therapy The District has liaison partnerships with FBR, Mercy Behavioral Health on-site mental health services, as well as partnerships with Department of Human Services and the Office of Behavioral Health.

Social Worker -Works K-12 to coordinate student support through connecting schools, home, and community resources for mental health interventions, crisis management, and support services

Licensed Professional Counselor- Works K-12 to coordinate student support through behavioral plans, mental health interventions, crisis management, and support services.

School Resource Officer- The Avonworth School District has a fantastic relationship with the Ohio Township Police Department (OTPD), the Ohio Township Fire Department (OTFD), as well as other local municipality support. The District has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ohio Township Police Department that formalizes this support relationship. Included in the support that the OTPD provides is a school resource officer.

Safe 2 Say- Act 44 mandates the establishment and use of the “Safe2Say Something”(S2SS) anonymous reporting system by every Pennsylvania school entity.

S2SS is a life-saving and changing school safety program that teaches students, educators, and administrators how: (1) to recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others and (2) to anonymously report this information through the S2SS app, website, or 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline.

Threat Assessment Teams (School Board Policy 236.1)

Avonworth School Districts has a trained threat assessment team for both campuses. Any and all threats of violence are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Team construction is listed below. The entire process is used to determine the level of the threat and the levels of support needed moving forward.

School District Safety & Security Coordinator:	Mike Hall (both teams)
Elementary/Primary Campus Team	Scott Miller, Bill Battistone, Barb Baur, Emily Hough, Barb Bauer
Middle/ High School Campus Team	Keera Dwulit, Kaitlin Remensky, Aaron Pellicano, Dave Como, Nicole Levis
When Needed On Both Teams	Ashlea Rineer-Hershey (Student Service Director) Nadine DeLeo (Social Worker) Chris Simcoviak (Ohio Twp SRO) TBD (School Psychologist)

**Reactive Systems:**

Unfortunately, we also need to be prepared and able to react to an emergency situation if it were to arise. Below are some of the training and systems we have in place should an emergency situation present itself.

**Lockdowns**

We conduct “Lockdowns” for a variety of reasons. The can be three general categories are explained below:

General Lockdown/Shelter In Place - This is used when we need the hallways clear for medical reasons or a routine canine search of the building/parking lot. It allows for confidentiality to be preserved.

Lockdown-Exterior Threat - This would be a for when students are not permitted to be outside the school building due to some type of emergency that may be happening in the community.

Lockdown -Interior Threat - This would be for the worse case scenario. This is **one** “Hide” option if there would be an active danger in the building. (Run-Hide-Fight approach)

**Run-Hide-Fight**

RUN. When an active shooter is in your vicinity:

- If there is an escape path, attempt to evacuate.
- Evacuate if the situation warrants.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape if possible.
- Call 9-1-1 when you are safe.

HIDE. If an evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide.

- Lock and/or blockade the door.
- Silence your cell phone.
- Hide behind large objects.

- Remain very quiet.
- Turn lights off, close blinds, move students to an area of the room out of sight of the door.

FIGHT. As a last resort, and only if your life is in danger:

- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- Act with physical aggression.
- Improvise weapons.
- Commit to your actions.

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## BUILDING LEVEL DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

### AVONWORTH PRIMARY CENTER/AVONWORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

#### Avonworth Primary Center

1310 Roosevelt Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
412-366-7171  
Dr. Scott Miller, Principal

#### Avonworth Elementary School

1320 Roosevelt Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
412-366-7170  
Dr. William Battistone, Principal

#### ***Discipline Philosophy***

Avonworth Primary and Avonworth Elementary Schools are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all our students. No student will be allowed to disrupt the learning process or limit the opportunity of others. Students may not fight, steal, use profanity, or in any way endanger the welfare of their classmates while in school, on our buses, or when coming to or going home from school. Any of the listed infractions will result in disciplinary action.

Our elementary campus discipline system is based upon a **progressive discipline** approach – each succeeding offense/infraction will result in a more severe consequence. The purpose of this approach is rehabilitation and the development of self-control and self-motivation. All discipline decisions will be based on what is best for the child, as an individual, and the impact of the actions on the good of the school. Discipline penalties and consequences will be fair and consistent based upon the age level and behavior record of the student. Any questions or concerns as to our discipline system and its applications may be addressed to the building principal.

#### ***Classroom Rules***

It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain the proper classroom environment consistent with district policy.

Minimum Primary and Elementary School classroom expectations are:

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Respect your school

Violations of rules may result in office referrals. Office referrals may result in a written warning, phone call to parents, documentation in the student's file, detention, suspension, etc. A behavior form will accompany or follow any student who is sent to the office. This form will indicate why the student was sent to the office and the course of action taken by the administration. Continual refusal to follow school rules can lead to expulsion.

### **Intervention Procedure**

Disruption to the learning environment may result in the removal of the student from the situation.

It is the responsibility of the Avonworth Primary and Avonworth Elementary School staff to maintain a positive learning environment. To maintain the environment, it is necessary for the students to follow basic school and classroom rules. Each teacher will be responsible for the promotion of those positive behaviors and will always first implement corrective strategies within the learning environment. If at any time a student becomes disruptive to the educational process of others, that student may be removed from the situation and a time-out will be implemented. If disruptive behaviors continue, students can be referred to the principal, and the Progressive Discipline Procedure will be implemented at the administrative level.

**Administrative Intervention Step 1:** The teacher contacts the parent (call or email) and Principal conferences with the student.

**Administrative Intervention Step 2:** The Principal contacts the parent (call or email) and conferences with the student.

**Administrative Intervention Step 3:** The Principal notifies parents of a meeting with the principal and other involved staff members, including the counselor. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Lunch/recess detention
- Loss of privileges (i.e. activities/assemblies)
- Possible referral to Response to Intervention Team
- Out-of-School Suspension

*Note:* The “X” is the starting point for the first offense of each infraction.

**Progressive Disciplinary Consequences**

Infraction	Administrative Intervention		
	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
Bullying (teasing, meanness)	X		
Cheating (copying, cheat sheet, parents do your work, signing someone's name or erasing a name)		X	
Computer Misuse (refer to Acceptable Use Policy)	X		
Discrimination (making fun of others race, religion, or gender)			X
Disrespect (towards other students, adults, or property)	X		
Dress Code (refer to School Policy)		X	
Hazing/Harassment (unwanted contact with someone)			X
Leaving Class Without Permission	X		
Leaving School Grounds			X
Minor Physical Confrontation at teacher/administration discretion (touching others or property)	X		
Major Physical Confrontation at teacher/administration discretion			X
Possession of Alcohol, Cigarettes, or Drugs			X
Possession of Electronic Devices (Cell phone, portable media player, handheld video game system)	X		
Possession of Weapons			X
Stealing		X	
Terrorist Action (bomb threats, arson, pulling fire alarm)			X
Vandalism (damaging school property or personal property)			X
Verbal Confrontation (swearing, defiance)			X

# AVONWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL/AVONWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

## **Avonworth Middle School**

256 Josephs Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
412-366-9650  
Dr. Michael Hall, Middle School Principal  
Dr. Kaitlin Remensky, Asst. Principal

## **Avonworth High School**

304 Josephs Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
412-366-6360  
Dr. Keera Dwulit, Principal  
Dr. Kaitlin Remensky, Asst. Principal

In 2021 Avonworth Middle School was redesignated as a prestigious Don Eichhorn Schools to Watch for the fourth time. High performing Schools to Watch middle schools embody academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structure.

Avonworth High School students benefit from personalized attention while choosing from a wide array of educational and self-development opportunities. High expectations and individual support prepare graduates to pursue their goals beyond Avonworth and regularly excel in their chosen fields.

Secondary level staff members have been trained in developmental responsiveness and social equity, and the academic focus is based upon rigor and differentiating instruction to meet varying needs of students. The school is structured to help all students be successful academically, socially, and behaviorally.

## **Progressive Discipline Consequences**

Descriptions include examples of infractions and consequences, but are not limited to those listed. In all cases, the Administration retains the right to use its discretion in evaluating cases. When appropriate, alternate consequences or restorative actions directly connected to the infraction may be used with the goal of teaching positive and proper school behavior.

Most infractions within classrooms will be handled by a teacher. Prior to referring a student to administration, teachers should speak with the student and contact the student's parent/guardian regarding their concerns.

If an infraction occurs in a common area, staff members should intervene, as it is safe and appropriate to do so, then follow-up with a disciplinary referral.

**Level 1:** If a disciplinary referral is needed, the following consequences may be applied: Verbal or written warning; teacher conference; parent contact; lunch detention; after school detention; LEAD or Open Mod detention.

**Level 2:** Saturday detention; partial day in-school suspension; loss of privileges

**Level 3:** In-school suspension (partial, full, or multiple days), loss of privileges

**Level 4:** Out of school suspension; loss of privileges; administrative referral to school board (for possible expulsion); charges filed if appropriate, building level hearing

Parental notification is mandatory for each occurrence at Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Exclusion from co-curricular and athletic activities is mandatory for Level 3 and 4 offenses and may be appropriate at other levels as well.

Any time a student is assigned a level 3 or 4 consequence, additional interventions may occur. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Regular meetings with school counselor
- Referral to the Student Assistance Program
- Contact law enforcement authorities
- Meeting with parents

***Detentions:***

Detentions during lunch, LEAD, an Open Mod or after school may be assigned by the teacher or principal for minor behavior infractions. Twenty-four hour notice will be given to the student. Failure to serve assigned detentions may result in students being assigned additional detentions, Saturday detention(s), suspension(s) or restorative action(s).

***Saturday Detention:***

Saturday detention will be held from 8:30 am until 11:30 am Saturday mornings. The room will be announced.

Students must arrive on time. Students will not be admitted into detention after 8:30 am and must make up the detention and serve an additional Saturday detention.

Students must bring educational materials and use time wisely. Students are not permitted to sleep or eat food. Disruptive students will be directed to leave the detention room and must make up the detention. Further disciplinary action will result.

No radios, iPod, electronic devices, etc. are permitted in detention except at the discretion of the detention supervisor.

The detention supervisor may establish additional rules. Students who fail to serve a Saturday detention without previous notification from a parent may be assigned additional detentions, Saturday detention(s), suspension(s) or restorative action(s).

***In-School Suspension:***

Students who are assigned in-school suspension will sit in a designated area during the school day and be supervised by a staff member. They will be expected to complete work given to them by their teachers and are not permitted to participate in any after-school activities during their suspension. Students may be asked to also work on a restorative action during this time.

***Out-of-School Suspension:***

Students who are on suspension are not permitted on school property during suspension. Students are responsible for the work that they miss and must be prepared to participate in their classes upon their return to school. Students may be asked to also work on a restorative action during this time.



Descriptions below include examples of infractions and consequences, but are not limited to those listed. Administration reserves the right to modify the discipline steps when appropriate.

Infraction	1st offense	2nd offense	3rd offense	4th offense
Acceptable Use Violation (including inappropriate use of phone)	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3 with loss of privileges	Level 3 with loss of privileges	Level 3 with loss of privileges
Assault (Physical)	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Assault (Verbal)	Level 2-4	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Bullying/Cyberbullying in a School Setting	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Bus Misconduct	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3 and possible bus suspension	Level 3 or 4 and possible bus suspension	Level 4 and possible bus suspension
Cheating/ Plagiarism/ Doing Another Student's Work/ Turning in Another Student's Work as One's Own	Level 2 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment	Level 2 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment	Level 3 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment	Level 4 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment
Class Cut/Leaving School Grounds without Permission	Level 2 and possible loss of parking privileges	Level 2 and possible loss of parking privileges	Level 3 and possible loss of parking privileges	Level 3 and possible loss of parking privileges
Computer Misuse	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Conduct Detrimental to the Orderly Operation of School	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4
Confrontation (Verbal)	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4
Drugs/Alcohol	Level 4 & possible alternate placement per SB Policy 227	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 227	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 227	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 227
Fighting	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department/possible expulsion hearing & alternate placement	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department/possible expulsion hearing & alternate placement	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department/possible expulsion hearing & alternate placement
Gambling	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
Hazing	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Horseplay/Disruptive Behavior	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 4
Inappropriate Display of Affection	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4
Inappropriate Items/Dress	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4

Insubordination/Disrespectful to Staff	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4
Minor Physical Altercation	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Parking/Driving Violation	Level 1 or 2 & possible loss of parking privileges	Level 2 or 3 & possible loss of parking privileges	Level 3 or 4 & possible loss of parking privileges	Level 4 & possible loss of parking privileges
Smoking/Vaping/Tobacco (Use or Possession)	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program
Swearing at Staff/Blatant Disrespect to Staff	Level 2, 3 or 4	Level 2, 3 or 4	Level 2, 3 or 4	Level 2, 3 or 4
Tardiness/Excessive Tardiness to Class	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2
Tardiness/Excessive Tardiness to School	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3
Terroristic Action or Threat	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Theft / Stealing	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Throwing Food/Objects	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
Trespassing	Level 3 or 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department
Truancy	See Attendance Policy			
Unlawful Harassment/ Sexual Harassment	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Use of Inappropriate Language	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4
Use of Offensive Language, Gestures or Symbols (including use of racial slurs and hate speech)	Level 2 - 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4
Vandalism	Level 3 or 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department
Weapons	Level 4 & informal hearing/expulsion hearing per SB Policy 218.1	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 218.1	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 218.1	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 218.1

## **Infraction Definitions**

*Descriptions below include examples of infractions, but are not limited to those listed.*

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Acceptable Use Violation	Using the internet for non-educational purposes, abusing computer equipment or resources and/or using personal electronic devices during class without a teacher's permission.
Assault (Physical)	Acting with intent to cause fear in another person of immediate bodily harm or death, or intentionally inflicting or attempting to inflict bodily harm upon another person. Ex: Premeditated fighting, kicking, punching, pushing, tripping, etc.
Assault (Verbal)	Oral or written language toward another person that is intended to intimidate or cause fear of bodily harm or death Ex: Threats to harm another or put another in harm's way
Bullying/Cyberbullying	<p>An intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts are directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: substantially interfering with a student's education, creating a threatening environment within the school, or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school</p> <p>School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.</p> <p>An imbalance of power between the target(s) and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior exists.</p> <p>If the alleged bullying, cyberbullying or harassment happened outside of the school setting, the school district does not have jurisdiction to issue consequences based on School Board Policy 218. This includes, but is not limited to, interactions taking place over social media or personal devices outside of school or school events.</p> <p>Ex: treating another person in an overbearing or intimidating manner, forcing one's way aggressively or by intimidation, teasing, coercive behavior, mean-spirited conduct, etc.</p>
Bus Misconduct	Any behavior on school transportation that creates a distraction to the driver, thereby threatening the safety of all riders.
Cheating/ Plagiarism/ Doing Another Student's Work/ Turning in Another Student's Work as One's Own	<p>Cheating includes, but is not limited to copying, forgery, plagiarism and collusion. <i>Forgery</i> is writing and using the signature or initials of another person.</p> <p><i>Plagiarism</i> is the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit.</p> <p><i>Collusion</i> is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.</p> <p>Ex: Copying from another student's test or homework, using material during a test that is not authorized by the person giving the test, possession of materials to be used for cheating, collaborating with another student before or during the test without authority, knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one's self, to take a test, bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered, securing copies of the test or answers to the test in advance of the test, etc.</p>

Class Cut/Leaving School Grounds Without Permission (multiple class cuts can constitute truancy, see attendance policy for info on truancy)	Not in attendance in the designated/assigned area at the designated time without permission Ex: Reporting to the library instead of the classroom, leaving school grounds, reporting to another classroom or cafeteria instead of assigned room.
Computer Misuse	Technology Misuse is the misuse of computer equipment, deletion or violation of password-protected files, computer programs, or data or system files; inappropriate accessing of files, unethical use of information, violation of copyright laws or writing/sending disparaging or threatening remarks. Refer to Avonworth Technology Policy and Harassment Policies.
Confrontation (Verbal)	Language towards others that is argumentative, disrespectful, or defiant. Ex: Swearing, provoking a fight, disrespectful language, etc.
Drugs/Alcohol	Possessing, distributing, using or being under the influence of any controlled substance during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during time traveling to and from school and school sponsored activities. Controlled substances includes controlled substances where use, distribution or use is prohibited by federal and state laws, alcohol, narcotics, vaping fluids/devices containing THC, anabolic steroids, drug paraphernalia, volatile solvents or inhalants, look-alike drugs, substances that when ingested cause a physiological effect similar to the effect of a controlled substance as defined by state or federal law, prescription or nonprescription medications except those for which permission for use in school has been granted pursuant to School Board Policy 210. For more details see School Board Policy 227. Ex: Illicit drugs, alcohol; possession, use, distribution, etc.
Fighting	A hostile encounter where two or more parties make physical contact, usually with intent to physically harm participants.  Self-defense is defined as “using enough physical force to remove oneself from a situation”.
Gambling	Gambling includes but is not limited to <i>playing</i> a game of chance for stakes or possession of gambling devices such as video games, machines and other items used to promote a game of chance, or <i>participating</i> in games of chance for the purpose of exchanging money or other items of value.
Hazing	<i>Hazing</i> any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully damages, destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in, any organization.  Any activity upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be “forced” activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding  Examples include but are not limited to: whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, etc. For more details see School Board Policy 247.
Horseplay/Disruptive Behavior	Any action that disrupts instruction, the normal order of the school day or causes concern for safety or order.

Inappropriate Display of Affection	Inappropriate display of affection is physically demonstrating affection for another person in public Ex: Holding hands, inappropriate touching, kissing, etc.
Inappropriate Items/Dress	Inappropriate clothing as described in the Dress Code and in School Board Policy 221.
Insubordination/ Disrespectful to Staff	Insubordination is a single instance of refusal or failure to comply with school board policies, rules, regulations, instructions, or directions. It is also the failure to accept and carry out reasonable instructions given by one in authority. Ex: Behavior disruption, blatant disrespect, refusal to comply, failure to serve detention, failure to comply with safety guidelines, etc.
Minor Physical Altercation	Refers to any altercation that occurs involving two or more persons where unwanted bodily contact is made. Ex: Pushing, tripping, poking, etc.
Parking/Driving Violation	Parking without permit or in a place where it is not permitted; driving recklessly or dangerously on school property
Smoking/Vaping/ Tobacco (Use or Possession)	Use, sale, or possession of any tobacco or tobacco-like product, including chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, lighters, vaping mods/pens, e-cigarettes, Juuls, vaping oils/liquids/juice, vaping pods, products containing nicotine and chargers. For details on tobacco possession/use see School Board Policy 222.
Swearing at Staff/Blatant Disrespect to Staff	Purposeful use of profane language directed to staff members, intended to show contempt or defiance.
Tardiness/Excessive Tardiness to Class	Tardiness is not being in one's assigned seat or location at a scheduled time. Ex: Late to school, class or assembly, etc.
Tardiness/Excessive Tardiness to School	Tardiness to school is not being in one's assigned seat or location when the first bell rings. Tardy to school includes entering the classroom after class has begun. Excessive tardiness is defined as being tardy 4 or more times in a semester.
Terroristic Action or Threat	<i>Terroristic threat</i> shall mean a threat communicated (conveyed in person or by written or electronic means) either directly or indirectly to commit any crime of violence with the intent to terrorize another; to cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation; or to otherwise cause serious public inconvenience, or cause terror or serious public inconvenience with reckless disregard of causing such terror or inconvenience <i>Terroristic act</i> shall mean an offense against property or involving danger to another person that may include but is not limited to recklessly endangering another person, harassment, stalking, ethnic intimidation, and criminal mischief. The Board prohibits any district student from communicating terroristic threats or committing a terroristic act directed at any student, employee, Board member, community member or school building. Ex: Bomb threat, pulling the fire alarm, etc. For details see School Board Policy 218.2
Theft / Stealing	Theft, Receiving or Possession of Stolen Property is the unauthorized taking, receiving, using, transferring, hiding, or possession of the property of another person.
Throwing Food/Objects	Throwing an object, whether intending to hit a person, object in the room or simply to cause distraction.
Trespassing	Knowingly entering or gaining entry to school building or grounds without an authorized reason to do so; gaining entry to a building by force, breaking, intimidation, unauthorized opening of locks or through an opening not designated for human access

Truancy	Incurring three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance. Habitually truant is defined as incurring six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. A maximum of ten (10) cumulative days may be excused by a parent/caregiver. For more details see School Board Policy 204.
Unlawful Harassment/ Sexual Harassment/ Discrimination	<p><i>Harassment</i> is verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation/identity, 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.</p> <p><i>Sexual harassment</i> consists of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic status. 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual. 3. Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment. 4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i> is racial, sexual, and religious harassment.</p> <p>An imbalance of power between the target(s) and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior exists.</p> <p>For more details, see School Board Policy 248.</p>
Use of Inappropriate Language	Any use of swear words or language inappropriate for a learning environment
Use of Offensive Language, Gestures or Symbols (including use of racial slurs)	Any use of offensive language (verbal or written), gestures or symbolic representation unsuitable to the school environment and/or likely to interfere with the educational process. Ex: racial slurs, hate speech, sexual jokes, swastikas, symbols/gestures indicative of extremist organizations, etc.
Vandalism	Vandalism is defacing, cutting or damaging any of the following but not limited to: property, technology, or telecommunication equipment that belongs to the school district, other students, staff members or other individuals. For more details see School Board Policy 224.
Weapons	<p><i>Weapons</i> include but are not limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon, any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.</p> <p><i>Weapon Possession</i> is when a weapon is found on the person of a student; in the student's locker; and under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to or from school</p> <p>Ex: Possession, use, distribution, etc. Can include tools such as: hammers, screwdrivers, etc.</p> <p>For more details, see School Board Policy 218.1</p>

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## **ATTENDANCE, ACADEMICS, ATHLETICS & CO-CURRICULARS**

The parent or guardian of the student is totally responsible for the attendance and actions of their child while enrolled in the Avonworth School District. A student will not be released from school without communication with a parent or approved guardian.

Student attendance and participation in class is crucial to the learning process. Attendance and tardy patterns are very important parts of a student's permanent record. Parents/Students will be notified by letter or by deficiency notice if the student establishes a pattern of absences, cuts or tardies that could lead to a failing grade under the school policy.

Student attendance is required in the specific model in which the student is attending each school day. This required attendance can be virtual or in-person, depending on the student situation and building-provided options.

### **PA School Attendance Laws**

Pennsylvania School Code is the basis for laws governing school attendance throughout the Commonwealth. Act 138 (2016), Act 39 (2018) and Act 16 (2019) outline compulsory attendance requirements, define unlawful absences and set up required steps for school attendance improvement. The Avonworth School District meets the requirements of these laws through School Board Policy 204. Parents/caregivers will receive written notification when their student is in violation of PA School Attendance laws.

### **Attendance Policy (School Board Policy 204)**

In Pennsylvania, school attendance is mandatory for students between the ages of 6 and 17 through state law and school district policy. When a student misses school, their parent/caregiver must submit a written notification within 3 days of their return to school. A parent/caregiver or medical practitioner note is needed even if a call was made to the school to report an absence and should include the student's name, the dates of the absences and reason for the absence.

If a written excuse is not turned in within 3 days of a student's return to school or the reason for the absence is not among the listed acceptable excuses, then the absence will be recorded as unexcused. By law, the school district must send a written notice home once a student accumulates 3 unexcused absences. If a student accumulates 6 unexcused absences, then they are considered, by law, to be habitually truant. A "Student Attendance Improvement Plan" must then be put into place that clearly outlines consequences for further absences. Consequences may include loss of credit or a citation to the magistrate where fines, community service or other consequences as allowed by law may be assigned.

According to Avonworth School Board Policy 204, once a student accumulates 10 absences (whether they are excused or unexcused), medical excuses should be sent for any further absences. If a student will be missing school for a planned trip, an approved absence form should be completed and turned in to the main office BEFORE they leave. Students must have a doctor's excuse upon return if he/she is out for more than three (3) consecutive days. If a note is not received within three days, all days out will be considered unexcused.

Every effort should be made to schedule medical or dental appointments, as well as driver's examinations, during non-school hours. If appointments must be made during school hours, the student must present a signed parental note or email (with phone number of where parents can be reached) prior to being excused.

***Students must check out in the main office before leaving in order for an early dismissal to be excused (unless a student has prior administrative permission to leave on a regular basis to attend school or work). Failure to do so will result in consequences for cutting class or leaving school grounds without permission.*** Students are responsible for all class work missed due to an appointment.

Absences, tardies or early dismissal are legally **excused**, as determined by the PA School Code, for the following reasons:

- Personal: Student's own illness or quarantine; death in family
- Tutorial programs and/or counseling programs, which are not available in the school and which do not conflict with the regular school program.
- Observance of religious holidays.
- Educational tours and trips conducted under the supervision of an adult acceptable to the superintendent/designee and to the parent or guardian.
- Suspension

With prior notification, the following will be acceptable for excused absences:

- Medical/dental appointments.
- Preplanned education tours or trips (including college visits). One (1) week advance notice is required. Educational Trip/Tour forms are available in each building office or on the district website.

Absences, tardies or early dismissals are legally **unexcused**, for the following reasons:

- Missed Bus
- Oversleeping/missed alarm
- Childcare for another sibling and/or family member
- Frequent/excessive transportation issues (transportation not provided by School District)

In case of absence, parents/caregivers of students in grades K-6 should notify the main office each morning for each day of the absence at 412 366-7170 (Elementary School) and 412-366-7171 (Primary Center). A written excuse should still follow when the student returns to school.

Parents/caregivers of students in grades 7-12 will receive a phone call or text each day from the Middle or High School when their child is not in attendance at school. A written excuse should still follow when a student returns to school.

***Appeals Process:***

Students who have experienced extenuating circumstances can submit a written appeal to the Principal. The final decision will be made by the administration.



**Attendance Procedure:**

When students arrive in the morning, they are to go straight to their respective cafeteria, and then to their assigned rooms for attendance at the designated time. Attendance is taken each day for each course. Once a student enters the building, they are not to leave for any reason unless given specific permission from the administration.

**High School:** Students must be in their first period classroom by 8:00 am unless prior arrangements have been made with building administration. Students who arrive after 8:00 am must enter through the main doors of the High School. Students should then report to the High School Office for a late admission slip or sign into the building if they are permitted to have a flexible start time. Students with four or more unexcused tardies may receive disciplinary action and/or loss of driving privileges. Excessive tardies may result in further intervention and/or a citation to the magistrate.

**Middle School:** Students must arrive to class by 8:00 am. Students who arrive after 8:00 am must report to the Middle School Office for a late admission slip. Students with four or more unexcused tardies may receive disciplinary action and/or loss of driving privileges. Excessive tardies may result in further intervention and/or citation to the magistrate.

**Elementary School:** Students are permitted in the building at 8:45 and are late at 9:00 am. They are to report directly to their classrooms or the cafeteria if they wish to purchase breakfast.

**Primary Center:** Students are permitted in the building at 8:45 and are late at 9:00 am

**Consequences for Unexcused Absences, Tardies, and Class Cuts at Middle and High Schools:**

**High School:** Students who have 8 or more unexcused absences for a semester course or 16 or more unexcused absences for a year-long course shall not receive credit for that course.

Students who have 4 unexcused tardies to school may receive detention. Students who have 5 unexcused tardies to school may receive a Saturday detention. Every 2 unexcused tardies after the 5th may result in an additional Saturday detention or further disciplinary action. 10 or more unexcused tardies in a semester may result in a referral to a community resource or the magistrate.

**Middle School:** Students who have 16 or more unexcused absences for a year-long course or 4 or more unexcused absences for a quarter-long course shall not receive credit for that course.

In extenuating circumstances, a written appeal may be made to the building principal.

In the Middle School/High School, teachers will submit the name of any student with three or more tardies to class to the main office for disciplinary action after contacting the student's parent/guardian.

A student who cuts a class will be responsible for the information missed during the class and will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Additional violations may result in more stringent disciplinary action.

**Dismissal Times:**

Student dismissal times are as follows:

High School: 2:55 pm

Middle School: 2:55 pm

Elementary School: 3:25 pm

Primary Center: 3:25 pm

Students are not permitted to leave the building once they have entered nor will loitering be permitted in the halls. Students must be in attendance 4-1/2 hours to be considered present for a full day. Anything less than 4-1/2 hours is considered a half-day attendance unless prior arrangements have been made with the school administration.

Students requesting an early dismissal should stop in the main office when they arrive in the building to receive an early dismissal slip. No student may leave the building without written permission from parent/guardian. If it is necessary to be dismissed from school (other than a school related function), the student must have a written note that contains:

- Dismissal time
- Reason
- Parent phone number
- Parent signature\*

\*We may contact parents or guardians for verification.

***Students granted an early dismissal must check out in the main office before leaving in order for an early dismissal to be excused (unless a student has prior administrative permission to leave on a regular basis to attend school or work). Failure to do so will result in consequences for cutting class or leaving school grounds without permission.***

**Enrollment:**

Documentation establishing proof of residency is required for enrollment. New students enrolling in Avonworth School District must report to the guidance office and complete an enrollment packet. If the student is not living with his/her parents, an affidavit of residency will be required.

Under Pennsylvania's Act 26, prior to admission to the school district, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of a student shall, upon registration for admission, provide a sworn statement of affirmation stating whether the pupil was previously suspended or expelled from any public or private school of the Commonwealth or any other state for an act or offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs or for the willful infliction of injury to another person or for any act of violence committed on school property. Such registration shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record. Parents and guardians shall be advised that any willful false statement made under this section shall be a misdemeanor of the third degree. When a student transfers to this school district, a certified copy of the student's disciplinary record shall be requested and obtained from the school entity from which the student is transferring. This record shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record and shall be available for inspection as required by law. No child will be enrolled without a certificate of immunization.

For more details see School Board Policies 200, 201, 202 and 203.

## **Academics**

### ***Graduation Requirements:***

All seniors must meet credit requirements listed in the Course Selection Book published each spring and in School Board Policy 217 in order to be considered for participation in senior activities including, but not limited to, commencement.

Failure to meet the credit requirements established by the Avonworth Board of School Directors will result in a loss of these privileges.

### ***Make-Up Work & Homework:***

Students or parents are encouraged to request make-up work and homework when a student will be absent for an extended period of time. Requests should be made through students' respective Middle School or High School Counseling Offices or the main office in the Elementary School. A reasonable time to complete work will be given to the student. A failing grade on each assignment will result for work not completed to the teacher's specifications within a reasonable time period. Number of days permitted to make up work will be the same as the number of days absent unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Students who are legally absent; who have been excused from class or are serving a suspension shall be given the opportunity to make up any and all tests.

Students who cut class or are illegally absent are responsible for information missed during the class and may not receive credit for work completed during that time.

### ***Summer Work:***

Summer work may be assigned to students. The goal of summer work is reading preparation, connection to class material and work that may enhance the learning anticipated in the school year ahead. All work assigned must be communicated with students via email and/or letter and must be accessible from the high school website. A timeline for the completion of summer work may be suggested, but no work may be required for turn-in prior to the first day of school.

## **Athletics and Co-Curriculars**

Students are encouraged to participate in after-school athletics and co-curricular activities, to develop physical skills, sportsmanship, leadership qualities, and promote school spirit among the students and faculty. It is important, though, to recognize that participation in athletic competition and/or co-curricular activities is a privilege.

Students placed on the *Restriction List*, due to violations against the attendance or academic policies of the District will be ineligible to participate in athletics or co-curricular activities.

Students participating in PIAA sports shall adhere to PIAA rules in addition to District rules.

### ***Eligibility:***

In order to participate in any extracurricular activity or sport, students must have been in attendance in school

**no later than 10:30 am for High School and Middle School** on the day of said activity. In cases of early dismissals, students must be in attendance at least 4½ hours.

The only exceptions are physician or court issued excuses. These excuses must be signed by the physician or court officers and presented to the attendance secretary upon arrival. If these procedures are not followed, participation in sports and activities will not be permitted that day.

Attendance at funerals, college visitations by juniors or seniors, and school-sponsored field trips are permitted and will not affect a student's ability to participate in sports or activities, however, notification beforehand is required.

A student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the principal as a full-time student and must maintain acceptable grades in all classes in order to maintain eligibility. Eligibility is cumulative from the beginning of each grading period, and is reported on a weekly basis. In order to be eligible, a student cannot be failing more than one full-credit course at a time.

Participation in athletic competition and/or extra-curricular activities is a privilege. It is expected that students will be positive role models and examples of good behavior. Students suspended in school or out of school for disciplinary infractions will not participate in or attend practice, games, or activities during the time of the suspension. The building Principals will have final jurisdiction regarding eligibility questions.

For more details, please see the **Athletic/Activities Handbook**.

***Concussion/Traumatic Brain Injury Report:***

Each school year, prior to participation in an athletic activity, every student athlete and his/her parent/guardian shall sign and return the acknowledgement of receipt and review of the Concessional Traumatic Brain Injury Information Sheet (Board Policy 122).

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## POLICIES & DEFINITIONS

### **Access to Students:**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), an LEA must provide notice to parents of the types of student information that it releases publicly. This type of student information, commonly referred to as “directory information,” includes such items as names, addresses, and telephone numbers and is information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The notice must include an explanation of a parent’s right to request that the information not be disclosed without prior written consent.

Additionally, § 9528 requires that parents be notified that the school routinely discloses names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters upon request, subject to a parent’s request not to disclose such information without written consent. A single notice provided through a mailing, student handbook, or other method that is reasonably calculated to inform parents of the above information is sufficient to satisfy the parental notification requirements of both FERPA and § 9528. The notification must advise the parent of how to opt out of the public, nonconsensual disclosure of directory information and the method and timeline within which to do so.

A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing described in the preceding paragraph be excluded from the list and not be released without prior written parental consent. The local educational agency shall notify the students and parents of the option to make such a written request at least 21 days prior to compilation of the list, and shall comply with any request.

### **Same Access to Students:**

Each local educational agency receiving assistance under the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, shall provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as is provided generally to post-secondary educational institutions or to prospective employers of those students.

Student directory information will be used specifically for armed services recruiting purposes and for informing young people of scholarship opportunities.

### **Assemblies:**

Assemblies are called periodically as part of the academic program offered at Avonworth. All students are expected to adhere to the same District rules as defined in this handbook. Additionally, students will be expected to:

1. Stand when requested by the faculty or administration to show respect for the speakers.
2. Be quiet, courteous and respectful.
3. Sit appropriately, keeping feet off the chairs and away from the aisles.
4. Refrain from eating or drinking anything during this time.

Disruptive students will be removed by the administration or faculty and are subject to further disciplinary action.

**Alcohol and Drug Policy (School Board Policy 227):**

The Avonworth Board of School Directors recognizes the abuse of alcohol and/or chemical substances as a serious problem with legal, physical, emotional and social implications for the whole school community and adopts the position that a student must be free of illegal and harmful substances.

These substances include, but are not limited to beer, wine, liquor, any other alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, marijuana, hashish, narcotic drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, opioids, chemical solvents, look alike substances and any capsules or pills not registered with the nurse and/or given in accordance with school district policy.

The District's policy is to prevent and prohibit the possession, use and/or mimic of use, sale and/or mimic of sale, distribution of any illegal or controlled mind-altering chemical medication or chemical substance not approved by the health office, on school property, at school-sponsored events or functions including athletic events (even at another school), on school buses, en route to and from school by any mode of travel. This policy applies anywhere that students are under the jurisdiction of the school district. If a violation occurs at a school event, the student involved may be prohibited from attending any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsals, for a specified amount of time, determined by a building principal.

In the event of any violation of this policy, the District Resource Officer will be notified, as well as police from the Municipality in which the school event takes place. Charges may be filed on any student involved in the violation. During an investigation, students will be asked to complete a written student statement. This statement will be requested by District Administration and/or the Resource Officer/police. The student/parent/guardian will receive written notice (by regular mail, electronic mail and/or hand delivery) of the suspension and the scheduling of an informal hearing.

**Possession/Use/Under the Influence First Offense:**

A student possessing, using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance(s) shall be initially suspended by the building Principal or Administrator on site for a period of not less than three (3) school days and not more than ten (10) days. If a suspension, either by way of initial imposition or extension, exceeds three days, an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days. Also, in addition to the mandated minimum requirements applicable for a 1st offense violation, the student may be recommended to the Administration and School Board for other further discipline, including expulsion.

***Mandated minimum requirements of student for 1st Offense violation:***

1. Drug & Alcohol Evaluation at accredited organization; at cost of student and/or family.
2. Educational Teen Outreach Program (or other consistent program approved by District Administration); at cost of student and/or family.
3. Referral to the HS Student Assistance Program Team
4. Community Service - minimum 24 hours
  - a. Community Service may begin to be served following the Informal Hearing.
  - b. Community Service must be approved by the building Principal, but will occur off school grounds.
  - c. Community Service must be served and confirmed by the building Principal *PRIOR TO* returning to or beginning any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsals.
  - d. Although a building Principal may recommend options, it is the responsibility of the student and/or family to find or identify a community service option acceptable to the Building Principal.
5. A transition team meeting will occur prior to the student's return from suspension and participation in any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsal.

Academic work will be completed for credit while suspended, but students must coordinate that work with teachers. Students may not be on school grounds during the suspension [see Suspension procedures]. Exclusion from all school activities is a condition of suspension.

The above mandated minimum requirements for a 1st offense violation of the drug and alcohol policy does not limit or preclude the imposition of further discipline. As stated above, other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation may lead to further disciplinary actions, including expulsion.

***Subsequent Drug & Alcohol Offenses:***

If a student violates the drug and alcohol policy more than once, the student will be suspended for 10 days and an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. The student will be recommended for expulsion to the School Board.

***Distribution:***

In the case of drugs and alcohol distributed through sale, exchange or other consideration, a recommendation will be made to the School Board for possible expulsion. If a student is apprehended distributing drugs or alcohol at school or at a school-sponsored event, without a sale, exchange or other consideration, the process and discipline relating to a student possessing, using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance(s) will apply, as set above, with such distribution being an additional factor as to the scope of disciplinary action.

***Asthma Inhalers/Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (School Board Policy 210.1):***

Students may possess and self-administer asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors. Written requests for

such medications from the parent/guardian and the licensed medical personnel are required to be submitted annually to the nurse's office.

**Bus Policy:**

1. All school rules apply on school district transportation. The bus driver is in charge and his/her directives must be followed. Students are expected to be courteous, cooperative, and punctual. Infractions may result in disciplinary action by the school administration, including suspension from riding the bus.
2. All students must ride their assigned bus.
3. Parents/guardians are liable for damages done by students to school property or bus property.
4. If a bus arrives late to school due to inclement weather or emergency, all students on that bus should report to the attendance office.
5. Students are not to extend heads or arms from the bus windows or doors or to throw objects from the bus.
6. Charges will be filed with the District Magistrate for any damages done by a student.
7. Kindergarten students must have a parent/guardian waiting at the bus stop to escort the child home. If no parent/guardian is at the stop to meet the child, he/she will not be permitted to exit the bus. The bus will return the student to the Primary Center.
8. The School Board of Directors authorizes the use of video and audio recording on school buses and school vehicles.

**Discrimination, Intimidation, Bullying, or Harassment (School Board Policies 248 & 249):**

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation/identity, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability.

According to School Board Policy #249, bullying is an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of creating a threatening environment within the school.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

An imbalance of power between the target(s) and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior exists.

If the alleged bullying, cyberbullying or harassment happened outside of the school setting, the school district does not have jurisdiction to issue consequences based on School Board Policy 249. This includes, but is not limited to, interactions taking place over social media or personal devices outside of school or school events.

Complaints of bullying will be investigated promptly, and corrective action will take place when allegations are verified. Students who have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, mandatory counseling, parental conference, loss of school privileges, detentions, exclusion from school or school-sponsored activities (including bus transportation), or referral to law enforcement.



According to School Board Policy #248, unlawful harassment consists of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation/identity 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. For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic status. 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual. 3. Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment. 4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. Staff and administration will contact and show support to parents/guardians in the event that a student has been hurt either by physical or emotional aggression while in school.

Counselors, administrators, teachers and/or other staff members will follow-up as necessary with parents/guardians/students to ensure a level of comfort and a safe environment for students who have been bullied or physically hurt.

**Tobacco and Smoking Policy (PA Act 93 of 2019 & School Board Policy 222):**

Smoking and use of tobacco or nicotine products (including chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, lighters, vaping mods/pens, e-cigarettes, Juuls, vaping oils/liquids/juice, vaping pods, and chargers) will not be permitted in any indoor or outdoor school area, stadium and field areas, any areas within sight of school property during the time to and from school, and other school district property including busses.

Per Pennsylvania Act 93 of 2019, smoking and all other uses of tobacco by students will not be permitted during any school-sponsored game or practice taking place on or off school property. This policy shall apply to all users of school district facilities.

Once Administration has determined that a student has used or is in possession of an item in violation of this policy, the prohibited items will be confiscated and given to the School Resource officer. As some of these items can be a means to use illegal substances, the School Resource officer may test the confiscated item(s) for the presence of such a substance. If such a substance is detected, then the Drug & Alcohol Policy (SB Policy 227) will apply.

**If no illegal substance is indicated, then the following consequences will apply:**

***First Offense:*** One day out of school suspension and mandatory attendance at Smokeless Saturday (sponsored by the American Lung Association) assigned at cost of the student. If students fail to attend then a citation is filed with the District Magistrate (to include fine and court costs) and Saturday Detention or In School Suspension.

***Second Offense:*** Citation, 3 days out of school suspension and a referral to Student Assistance Program

***Third Offense:*** Citation and immediate 3 day out of school suspension and an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days.

***Fourth and Subsequent Offenses:*** Citation and immediate 3 days out of school suspension and an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days. The student may be recommended to the Administration and School Board for other further discipline, including expulsion or alternative placement.

**Vandalism (PA Act 26 of 1995 & School Board Policy 224):**

Students who willfully or carelessly damage school property (books, equipment, lockers, school buses) will be assessed the cost of the repair. Act 26 of 1995 lists vandalism as an infraction that must be reported to the state, outlines reporting to the state of monetary damages to school property, and lists sanctions the district can set for vandalism. Suspension will be issued, and will be determined by the severity of the damage caused. School records will be withheld until all debts resulting from damage or destruction are paid.

**Weapons Policy (PA Act 26 of 1995 & School Board Policy 218.1):**

No person shall possess, handle or transmit any knife, cutting instrument or tool, brass or metal knuckles, cane, machete, firearm, shotgun, rifle, B.B. or pellet gun, look-alike gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and/or other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury in any school building, on any school premises, or on any school bus, on or off the school grounds at any school activity, event or function.

Any person discovered to have any weapon or other item in violation of this policy in his/her possession (including locker or car) or threatens to use a weapon on another person shall not be permitted to remain in any school building, or on any school bus, or at any school activity, event or function. Where any person violates this policy, the police department of the appropriate jurisdiction shall be notified.

The school district shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year any student who violates this weapons policy. This is mandated under Pennsylvania Act 26 of 1995. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law.

Act 26 also requires schools to maintain records on acts of violence and weapon possession and must forward student discipline records should a student transfer to another school.

Any violation of Act 26 results in an initial consequence of exclusion from school.

**School Wellness (School Board Policy 246):**

Avonworth School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn in accordance with federal and state laws.

**Student Acceptable Use Policy: Access & Use of District Technology Systems**

Please read the following carefully before signing the Acceptable Use Policy. *Your account will be activated within 2 days of the return of this application. Your username and password may be retrieved from the main office of your school.*

High Speed Internet access is available to students and staff at the ASD. The goal in providing this service to staff and students is to promote educational excellence via online resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. ASD has taken available precautions in conjunction with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), to restrict access to inappropriate materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information. ASD firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with our educational goals.

***Policy:***

The use of technology for purposes other than those defined by the policies and programs of the Avonworth School District (ASD) is prohibited. Adherence to copyright laws and licensing agreements is required at all times.

These prohibitions and requirements apply to technology related systems which may be internal or external to the school district, but which clearly exist within the District's legal jurisdiction.

Unauthorized accessing, copying, altering, damaging and/or destroying of any technology by students, employees or others will result in an appropriate response by District officials. Such a response may include warnings, loss of computer privileges, disciplinary and/or legal action.

***Definition:***

Technology is the hardware, networks, software, data/information, documentation or any combination of these or other components, which constitute the data processing systems of the ASD.

### **Terms and Conditions:**

1) *Acceptable Use* - The purpose of the Internet is to support research and education in and among academic institutions in the U.S. by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the Internet resources may not be used in violation of any U.S., state or local regulation. The Internet resources may not be used to upload, view, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, or threatening material. The Internet resources may not be used to infringe on copyright or to plagiarize materials.

2) *Proper Network Etiquette* - You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Be polite. Do not write or send abusive messages to others. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language. Do not distribute offensive, pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit materials.
- Do not reveal your full name, personal address or phone numbers or that of other students and colleagues.
- Note that electronic mail (email) is provided for students for educational purposes only. E-mail and electronic forms are not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.

3) *Students will not respond to unsolicited online contact.*

4) *Security* - Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you feel you can identify a security problem during Internet access, you must notify a system administrator. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not use another individual's accounts. Do not give your password to any other individual. Attempts to log in to the system as any other user will result in disciplinary consequences. Any attempts to log in to the network as a system administrator will result in disciplinary consequences.

5) *Vandalism* - Vandalism will result in disciplinary consequences and may be reported to the authorities. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user. Vandalism includes the defacing or destruction of any computer hardware, software or equipment contained within the district. This also includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

6) *Commerce* - It is possible for students to **purchase goods and services** via the Internet, and that these purchases could potentially result in unwanted financial obligations. Any purchasing of goods and/or services via the Internet is strictly prohibited on the ASD network.

7) *The ASD will not be held liable for:*

- Information stored on school district ~~diskettes~~, hard drives, flash drives or servers
- Information retrieved through the school district computers, networks, or online resources
- Personal property used to access school district computers, networks, or online resources
- Financial obligations resulting from the use of the ASD network.
- Illegal Activity
- Technology support or maintenance of personal devices

8) *Intellectual property* - All information and/or material created with or placed on the ASD network or ASD computers becomes district property, and the district reserves all rights to any material stored in files which are

generally accessible to others. The district will remove from the network any material, which the district, in its discretion, believes may be unlawful, obscene, pornographic, abusive or otherwise objectionable.

9) *Downloads* - The ASD's Technology Coordinator must approve downloading any material. **Downloading music files, video files, mp3 files, or any files related thereto is strictly prohibited.** Your user account will be disabled. Files as mentioned above use great amounts of bandwidth and slow other network and Internet procedures down dramatically.

10) *Electronic Devices* --Student use of electronic devices which are used for instructional or educational purposes may be used in classes with the teacher's prior permission. Electronic devices are defined as all devices that can take photographs; record, play or edit audio or video data; store, transmit or receive calls, messages, text, data or images; operate online applications; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. Classroom teachers will decide what devices may be used, when they may be used, and how they may be used in the classroom. Students may only use electronic devices for entertainment purposes on school property with the explicit permission from a staff or faculty member

11) *Google Apps in Educational Applications* - ASD is offering users a free, educational suite of applications to enhance teaching and learning. Google Apps introduces a concept known as "cloud computing", where services and storage are provided over the Internet. ASD is providing users with Google Message Security. This service provides System Administrators with the capability to limit messages based on their origin, their destination, or their content. ASD will use this technology protection measures to block or filter, to the extent practicable, access of visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, and/or harmful to minors over the network.

In order for users to gain access to Gmail and his/her Educational Google Applications account on the Internet, ASD must obtain parental permission for anyone under 18 years of age. Students 18 years and older are also required to acknowledge and accept ASD's terms and conditions prior to obtaining access to technology within our schools. Under both circumstances, this may be accomplished by completing an AUP form (attached).

12) *Student Email (ASDlopes.org)* - Access to and use of student email is considered a privilege afforded at the discretion of the ASD. Students should expect email to be subject to monitoring at all times and should not expect any email to be private. The district maintains the right to immediately withdraw the access and use of student email when there is reason to believe that violations of law or district policies have occurred. ASD uses a closed network email system (mail can only come from certain educationally oriented domains). Parents are encouraged to log on to a student's email to view their correspondence and files.

Student email accounts are to be used for the following purposes only:

- Teacher-student correspondence.
- Accessing/submitting classroom assignments or materials.
- Accounts for classroom web-based tools, such as blogs, wikis, etc.
- Correspondence with students/partners in collaborative class activities.

Students may not use email accounts for:

- Unauthorized personal communication.
- Bullying or harassment of other students and/or staff.
- Forwarding of chain email, spam, or commercial content.
- Sending inappropriate content or language.

**If you have any questions please contact your school's office.**

### **Personal Electronic Devices**

Before our school district moved to a 1 to 1 device model, there was an educational reason for personal cell phones in the classroom. All students are now provided with a district issued device for all school purposes.

Many adults find it hard to manage the constant mental pull to check alerts and notifications. In fact, gaining this attention is the exact intention of social media businesses. It is difficult to expect students to have the ability to self-regulate when many adults struggle to do the same. Social media advancement and addiction to apps such as Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, etc. has unfortunately become a major distraction to the learning process.

Though rare, the classroom teacher may determine a need to permit cell phone use for educational reasons. We aim to help students learn the appropriate use of their phones while in an educational environment. Adjusting and providing more formal guidelines and expectations will help students manage their cell phone use.

There is value to students connecting and socializing online with peers. It is this generation's way of staying connected. In addition, we recognize that parents want to be able to reach their child. Trying to balance the need for connection with helping students stay focused during instructional time, is the ultimate goal. The guidelines and procedures below are meant to establish this balance.

1. Though it is strongly discouraged, students may bring personal electronic devices to school at their own risk. Electronic devices are defined as all devices that can take photographs; record, play or edit audio or video data; store, transmit or receive calls, messages, text, data or images; operate online applications; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. The school is not responsible or liable for lost, broken, damaged, or stolen devices nor are they responsible for charges incurred by students on their personal technological devices.
2. The school is not responsible for the security and maintenance of student-owned technology. If a student's personal device is lost or stolen, the school administration will investigate within a reasonable amount of time. Law enforcement will be informed if an administrator determines it necessary to do so.
3. Students who bring personal electronic devices to school are advised to purchase and use their own combination lock for their locker (combination locks are not sold at school). This enables the student to safely store his/her device when they are not permitted to use it. It is advised that combinations to all student locks are provided to the student's homeroom teacher.
4. Students are only permitted to use personal electronic devices during class time with teacher permission. Any cheating through the use of a personal electronic device is prohibited. The teacher may request that the device be stored in a designated area during class time. The district is not responsible

for any loss or damage to a personal device stored in such an area. The student is expected to comply with classroom rules and the inability to do so may result in disciplinary action.

5. Students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices at the following times and/or in the following locations: during any state testing windows (i.e. PSSAs or Keystone Exams), in the locker rooms, and restrooms. For more details see School Board Policy 237.
6. Any message that needs to be delivered to a student by a parent/guardian/family member should go through the school office. Please refrain from calling/texting your child during the school day, as this is a disruption to the instruction taking place in the classroom.

Consequences for the disruption of class due to phone calls, text messages, or other means related to the use of an electronic device are:

*1<sup>st</sup> Offense* –Electronic device is turned off, put in a locker or classroom designated cell phone area, and a warning is issued by the teacher.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Offense* – Electronic device is turned in to the teacher who takes it to the office for the student to retrieve at the conclusion of the school day.

*Additional offenses* – A referral is made to the office for an Acceptable Use Violation.

7. Students are not permitted to share personal technological devices with other students. Only the owner of a device has the right to use the device in the school setting. The owner of the device is responsible for the device at all times.

If a student is found to be in possession of a device that is not their own, they may face consequences for theft according to the Avonworth School District's policy outlined in the Student Handbook and Discipline Code.

8. Students may not take photographs or video of themselves, other students, or any district employee without that person's express permission. Students who post photographs or videos of other students and/or district employees taken during the school day on the internet, including social media sites, without teacher permission or for non-educational purposes, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students using technology for gaming purposes that are not educational may also face disciplinary consequences. Additional consequences may apply at the discretion of the building administrator.

9. Students are expected to responsibly use their device when accessing information via the Internet, apps, or other electronic means. The student may not disrupt the classroom or school environment by using their personal electronic device. Cyberbullying and cyber-baiting will not be tolerated during the school day. Consequences follow the Avonworth School District's policy outlined in the Student Handbook and Discipline Code.

The student understands that bringing on premises or infecting the network with a Virus, Trojan, or program designed to damage, alter, destroy, or provide access to unauthorized data or information is in violation of the AUP policy and will result in disciplinary actions. The student realizes that processing or

accessing information on school property related to “hacking”, altering, or bypassing network security policies is in violation of the AUP policy and will result in disciplinary actions.

10. A student does not have the right to use his or her private laptop, cell phone or other electronic device while at school. Student participation in B. Y. O. T. is a privilege which can be lost due to irresponsible use. The district reserves the right to confiscate such a device at any time to be returned to the student or a parent/guardian at the discretion of district staff.

\*Administrative discretion will be used for any issue that arises which is not covered under these guidelines, and discipline will be determined on a case by case basis. For more information, see School Board Policy 237.



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## EXPECTATIONS & RULES

### **Cafeteria Rules:**

The cafeterias in the Avonworth School District strives to offer a quality breakfast and lunch program for our students. No students are permitted to leave school grounds for lunch or have lunch delivered from an outside service.

The following rules must be followed when students are in the cafeteria:

1. Food and drinks are not to be taken from the cafeteria.
2. Students are asked to refrain from loud talking or yelling while in the cafeteria.
3. Students are not permitted to cut serving lines.
4. Trash is to be deposited in the proper receptacles. Trays, silver, and dishes are to be returned to the proper collection area. Each student is responsible for the cleanliness of the area where they eat. Chairs should be placed back in the proper position before exiting.
5. Throwing objects or engaging in food fights is unacceptable behavior. After eating, students must remain in the cafeteria area until the end of the lunch period.
6. Students not following cafeteria rules may be assigned to an alternative lunch program.

### **Cheating:**

Any student caught cheating on a test or assignment will receive a grade of “zero” for that test or assignment. Details of the incident will be submitted by the teacher to the administration. Parents will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken.

### **Classrooms & Hallways:**

The classroom teacher is in control in their classroom and has a right, an expectation, and a duty to establish clear rules and expectations for proper student conduct. Failure to follow specific directions from a classroom teacher on student conduct will result in detention with the teacher and/or administrative disciplinary action. Repeated incidents will result in removal from the class for a period of time to be determined by the Administration.

Disrespectful language or behavior will not be tolerated.

Any action that interferes with the education or safety of fellow students will not be tolerated.

### **Class Cuts:**

Students are expected to be in the areas they are assigned to be in at all times. Students who miss classes without permission from the proper authority will be subject to disciplinary action. Students may not leave school grounds during school hours without prior, written parental permission or administrative authorization. Unless a student has an early release form on file, students are expected to check with the main office before either entering or leaving school grounds during school hours. Failure to follow these procedures will result in

disciplinary action.

**Computer Use:**

All students and parents must sign off on a separate *Acceptable Use of Computer Agreement* form each year, outlining in further detail the rules of computer use at Avonworth. Failure to return this form will result in loss of computer privileges. Computer misuse will result in disciplinary action. Information and programs stored on Avonworth computers, storage systems, or peripherals are the private property of the individual creator of Avonworth School District, and shall not be duplicated.

**Dress Code:**

The Dress Code Policy is intended to support the creation of an educational environment promoting self-respect and appropriate exposure while not inhibiting self-expression. Faculty and administration have the right to question a student's dress if perceived as inappropriate and/or offensive. Dress should be appropriate for a school environment as preparation for appropriate dress in the workplace.

Parents will be notified and be required to bring a change of clothing if the student cannot make adequate adjustments. Classes missed by the student as a result of the dress code violation will count against the school's attendance/discipline policy.

Students are not permitted to wear sunglasses in the building during the school day. No clothing, including coats, which interferes with the function of the class is to be worn.

Clothing that is obscene and vulgar or promotes the use of illegal substances (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, guns and/or gangs/violence) sexual innuendo or discrimination may not be worn.

Tops exposing the chest or a bare midriff are not permitted and must be able to meet the top of the student's pants, shorts or skirt while standing up. Shorts and skirts must be of a length that does not expose the buttocks.

It is strongly suggested that students not wear flip-flops. Slippers are not permitted to be worn. Flip-flops and slippers are unsafe footwear for the halls, stairs, buses, and playground.

**Field Trips:**

If a student requires medicine during the school day, it is required that a school nurse attend the field trip or the student must take the required medicine prior to leaving school for the field trip.

Students and chaperones attending overnight field trips are subject to bag searches prior to leaving and may include a search completed by the K-9 unit. Students and chaperones may not bring baked goods on any field trips. All food and drink items must be factory sealed.

**Gambling:**

Any form of gambling is prohibited. Money or materials will be confiscated. Appropriate discipline will be assigned, including, but not limited to, the assignment of a Saturday detention in Middle School/High School for

a first offense.

**Hazing (School Board Policy 247):**

Hazing of any student, on or off school property, as it relates to school sponsored activities is prohibited and will be dealt with immediately. Those involved in such acts will be suspended out-of-school for a minimum of three (3) days. They may also face a Board hearing for possible expulsion proceedings as well as face charges filed with the local police department.

**Library:**

The library staff works hard to make the library materials accessible and to assist all students, faculty members and school staff with research, reading enrichment and personal development. The library is appropriate for quiet study; students who are noisy or disturb others may be asked to leave.

Each student is expected to observe the rules for signing out and returning books and magazines, and for the use of other library materials. It is expected that books, magazines or material taken from the library be to be signed out at the circulation desk even if they are to be used for part of a school period. If the materials are taken without being signed out, they are considered stolen and students caught stealing library materials will be disciplined. A fee will be charged for each book not returned by the end of the school year. Additionally, any theft or damage done to materials or furniture in the library will be met with charges for restitution and disciplinary action.

Student's records will be withheld until their fines are paid unless special arrangements have been made with the librarian and/or building principal.

**Lockers:**

Students shall not expect privacy regarding items placed in school lockers. The Avonworth School District will not be held responsible for articles missing or destroyed in/from a student's locker.

The administration reserves the right to open and search lockers in case of an emergency or reasonable suspicion (School Board Policy 226). School officials may conduct random, periodic sweeping searches, including canine drug searches of all lockers.

The main office will assign lockers to students in their first period class/homeroom after the students have signed the locker permission form. Only books and clothing should be left in the lockers. No trash is to be stored in lockers. Accumulation of trash will result in a loss of locker privileges. For health reasons, gym clothes should be taken home at the end of the day.

The administration will not tolerate entering, destroying or stealing from lockers. Any student entering a locker, other than their own, destroying locker contents and/or stealing will be prosecuted to the fullest limit of the law. Action will be taken by the administration through the local police department.

In the event a lock has to be "cut", the student is to obtain permission from the administration at the respective main office.

**Media (School Board Policy 235.1 & 816):**

Throughout the school year, the news media may have an occasion to visit the building. They may ask students questions or take pictures or a video of the school for their use. The school district also operates and authorizes social media accounts which are subject to guidelines in School Board Policy 816. Pictures or video may be used on these accounts as a representation of the district and its activities. If a parent or guardian does not want their student depicted through any type of media, a letter must be sent to the building principal requesting that this not occur. If a letter is not received, it will be assumed that this will not be a problem and permission therefore will be granted.

**Off-Campus Student Behavior and Expression (School Board Policies 218 & 220):**

According to the Supreme Court decision in Mahoney Area School District v. BL (2021), the school district is limited in applying disciplinary action to activities and expression that take place off school property. Expression includes verbal, written, technological, or symbolic representation or communication. The student Code of Conduct still applies to student behavior and expression outside of school when:

- 1.) It incites violence, advocates, threatens or makes likely the use of force or otherwise threatens serious harm directed at students, staff or the school environment;
- 2.) It materially and substantially disrupts or interferes with the school environment;
- 3.) It interferes with or threatens to interfere with the rights of students or school staff or the safe and orderly operation of the schools and their programs;
- 4.) It involves the theft or vandalism of school property; or
- 5.) The proximity, timing or motive for the conduct in question or other factors to the conduct otherwise establish a direct connection to attendance at school, to the school community, or to a school-sponsored activity.

**On Campus Parking: Bicycles and Motor Vehicles:**

The Avonworth School District regards the student use of bicycles and motor vehicles for travel to and from school as a privilege for which full responsibility must be assumed by both the parents and the student. The use of such must follow the guidelines set by each building principal and in accordance with the rules of the district.

At the High School level, if students drive themselves anywhere while on school time, the following must be secured by the principal and available on file in the principal's office:

- Administrative permission.
- Parental permission form.
- Forms indicating that the vehicles being driven are covered by automobile liability insurance currently in effect.

All rules of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code will be enforced while vehicles are on school property. No student is to park in the spaces designated for the handicapped, for visitors or for the staff. Students are expected to be on time to school and park in the large lot across from the main entrance of the high school. Students who park without a permit may be subject to disciplinary action.

Student drivers are responsible for all items in the vehicles they drive to and park on school property. School

officials may search a student vehicle on school property if they have a reason related to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students or staff, and to enforce school board policies and procedures (School Board Policy 226). A student has the option to be present if his or her vehicle is searched. Vehicles are subject to search by police canine units under the authority/supervision of school administration.

The parking privilege of any students may be withdrawn by the administration for violation of the rules or regulations established at the respective buildings. Additional disciplinary measures may be imposed upon the student who refuses to comply with building policies concerning driving to school. This may include the assistance of the local police department.

### **Sexual Harassment:**

Avonworth School District is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. Please refer to guidelines in Board Policy 248.

### **Student Injuries:**

If a student is injured during the school day, the school nurse will be notified to provide treatment and make decisions about the medical care of a student. If the school nurse is out of the building, another building nurse will be notified and/or an Emergency Medical Team will be called for assistance.

### **Student Privileges:**

If appropriate, the administration may revoke some or all of the following student privileges: parking in school lots, hall passes, use of student restrooms, participation in activities (includes, but is not limited to dances, athletic events, field trips, performances, co-curricular clubs and sports, homecoming and prom).

### **Student Speech & Expression (School Board Policy 220)**

The district recognizes the right of public school students to freedom of speech as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It also recognizes that this right is not unlimited and must be balanced with maintaining a safe and orderly school environment.

Students wishing to distribute and/or post non-school materials must receive approval by the building principal one (1) school day in advance of distributing or posting the material. Materials will be dated upon approval, and the district may remove them within 10 days. Students violating this policy are subject to disciplinary action. Nonschool materials include any printed, technological or written materials, regardless of form, source or authorship, that are not prepared as part of a curricular or approved extracurricular district program.

Students have the right to express themselves unless such expression is likely to or does materially and substantially disrupt or interfere with educational processes. Student expression is prohibited where it

- 1.) Violates federal, state or local laws, School Board policy or district rules & procedures;
- 2.) Is defamatory, obscene, lewd, vulgar or profane;
- 3.) Advocates the use or advertises substances that pose a health threat such as tobacco/vaping products, alcohol or illegal drugs;

- 4.) Incites violence or advocates use of force or threatens serious harm to the school or community;
- 5.) Materially or substantially disrupts or interferes with the educational process;
- 6.) Interferes with, or advocates interference with, the rights of any individual or the safe and orderly operation of school & their programs;
- 7.) Violates district procedures on time, place and manner for dissemination of otherwise protected expression.

**Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

The Board has the authority and responsibility to establish reasonable rules and regulations for the conduct and deportment of district students. At the same time, no student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence, and free expression and association, in accordance with Board policy and school rules.

**Tardy to School or Class:**

A student is considered tardy to class if he or she arrives to class after the start of class. Refer to attendance policy.

**Unassigned Class Time - "Personalized Learning Time":**

The expanded schedule of classes provides mods per week, which are free of any assignment for some students. These are independent study mods. They present a challenge, as it is the student's responsibility to use them to personal advantage. Those who wish to get the most from the school day will develop a self-tailored study plan. Students may be assigned to a resource center or classroom in lieu of unscheduled mods in a student's schedule.

During these times, students are only permitted to be in the Collaboration Center, Lopes Lounge, Cafeteria or working with a teacher in a classroom. Students should not be roaming hallways, moving locations excessively or disrupting the instruction of teachers in any part of the building, including middle school and gymnasiums. In the case of an emergency, students must report to the closest office personnel or Librarian upon evacuation of the building. Teachers are responsible for reporting extra students during these situations.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### **Complaints:**

The Avonworth teachers are always the first line of contact for parents concerned about their student or programs. Parents and guardians are encouraged to call or email their student's teacher first if there are issues to be discussed concerning the classroom. If satisfaction is not reached, then parents are to contact the building principal. If still not satisfied, the parent is encouraged to contact either the Director of Student Services or the Superintendent. As a last resort, the Board of School Directors will hear complaints, upon prior permission from the Board President, to address the Board at large in executive session.

### **Financial Obligations:**

The District believes that students must respect property and develop feelings of pride in community institutions. The school issues books needed for particular courses of study, a locker for books, and extra articles of clothing (sports). It is the student's duty to take care of all these loaned items. Any destruction, accidental or intentional, must be paid for at the respective school main offices.

The secretary will give the student a receipt for all paid debts and fines. Quarterly report cards may be withheld for any student who fails to pay their fines or debts incurred for damaged or lost items. Subsequently, charges could be filed with the local magistrate for unpaid debts or fines.

### **Legal Notification (PA Act 30):**

Act 30, passed by the Pennsylvania legislature, requires the court judicial system, through the juvenile probation department, to provide school administrators information concerning the adjudication of an enrolled child. Such reports include a description of delinquent acts committed by the student, disposition of the case, probation or treatment reports, prior delinquent history, the established supervision plan and any other information deemed necessary. The building principal is required to share the information with the child's teacher or teachers or the principal of another school to which the child may transfer.

### **Medication:**

The Avonworth School District recognizes the need for medications to be provided to students when prescribed by a practicing physician. To avoid any possible misinterpretation of this need, the following provisions shall be followed:

- All medications should be given by the parent whenever possible.
- It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any medication that must be brought to or taken in school.
- School personnel in school may give prescription medication only when instructions for administration and possible side effects are on file with the school nurse. The parent shall be responsible for supplying the labeled medication in its original container. When the nurse is not available, the responsibility for such will be delegated by the building principal.

For details see School Board Policy 210.

**Personal Search:**

The Avonworth School District recognizes that all people want and expect the security and privacy of their persons, that there should be clear and good reasons to violate this expectation, and that the violation should be as unobtrusive as possible to protect the safety and order of the schools.

Procedures to be followed are outlined in Pennsylvania Code Title 2, Chapter 12.14: Searches will be conducted when it can be determined through reliable information that a student had illegal material on school property or his or her person. Personal bags, lockers, cars, equipment, etc. belonging to a student and on school property are also subject to searches given reasonable suspicion (School Board Policy 226).

**Snow Days, Emergencies, Cancellations, or Delays:**

The Avonworth School District utilizes a notification system, which allows us to reach parents, students, and staff members instantly via an automated telephone system. The District also urges parents to listen to or watch the following stations, rather than to call the school office: KDKA (1020AM), WTAE (1250AM), WPXI TV, WTAE TV for announcements of school closings or delays due to snow or inclement weather. Additionally, information will be posted on the school website, *avonworth.k12.pa.us* and social media.

Any parent who feels that local road conditions are not safe for travel should feel free to keep a child at home. Students may be excused from missing school in this circumstance, if approved by the building principal.

**School Security:**

Avonworth School District maintains a safe environment for students, staff, and community. Security cameras are installed in public areas to alert administration of any potential misconduct. A School Resource Officer is on site frequently to address law enforcement and the D.A.R.E. program.

Outside doors, other than the main entrances, should remain closed/locked during the school day. Visitors should enter only through the main entrance.

For more details see the “Safety Measures” section of this handbook.

**Student Assistance Program:**

Student Assistance Program (SAP) assists district employees in identifying issues and providing help to students experiencing difficulties in learning and academic achievement.

**Valuables:**

Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or other personal valuables, including cell phones to school. Students, not the school, are held responsible for the loss of their personal property. Do not leave any valuables in your locker.



**Visitors:**

Students are not permitted to bring visitors without special permission from the building principal.



## APPENDICES & FORMS

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### *VIRTUAL LEARNING GUIDELINES*

The use of video conferencing can help connect teachers to their students while learning from home. Avonworth teachers will be using this resource to meet with classes, small groups, and individual students. The District is using two video conferencing platforms: Google Hangouts/Meet. The District has taken several precautions to ensure the privacy of these video conferences, but we rely on our partnership with parents to ensure these tools are used appropriately by students while they learn from home. Students and parents are expected to follow these video conferencing guidelines:

- Students' ability to use video conferencing with or without parents' direct supervision is a decision parents need to make based on the age and independence of the child. For example, while K-2 students may require an adult's direct assistance while using video conferencing tools, older students may be able to use these learning resources independently.
- Parents/guardians should be mindful of the family activities and images that are or heard/seen during a student's use of video conferencing. Please have your children use these tools in a space that you can monitor, yet private enough for them to minimize distractions.
- Students need to ensure that video conferencing devices are fully charged in advance of the video conference session, and they should know how to turn off the camera or microphone as needed.
- Please remind students to dress and behave appropriately when video conferencing. The same rules of conduct and behavior that apply to the classroom apply to video conferencing. Please refer to the District's Code of Conduct to review behavior expectations.
- Students/parents/guardians are not permitted to take photos, screenshots, or recordings of any video or audio from these video conference sessions. Participants do not have permission to do so and should be aware that this is a violation of the Student Acceptable Use of Technology policy.
- Teachers may choose to record instructional video conferencing sessions and share them with students who cannot attend the live session. Recordings of sessions will not be publicly available, and will only be shared within a secure resource such as Google Classroom or Seesaw, or as a link in an email to the class or individual students. Students and parents are not permitted to share links provided by teachers with anyone. Faculty will announce their intention to record the session giving students/parents/guardians the opportunity to turn off their camera and/or microphone if privacy is of concern.

## ***STUDENT DEVICE USER AGREEMENT***

The purpose of this document is to delineate the terms and responsibilities for families taking possession of an AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT issued device. Although families will take temporary possession of the device, the device remains the property of the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT. All equipment must be returned or made available to AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT upon the student's separation from AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT, either by graduation, withdrawal, or at the request of AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT Administration. The option to purchase insurance for the device will be made available annually, at the beginning of the school year, through the District.

Students in the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT are being provided access to technology for educational purposes. Students must follow the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT *Code of Conduct* and *Acceptable Use Policy* for responsible use of technology in order to maintain the privilege of accessing such technology. The student and parent/guardian(s) will be responsible for taking the necessary precautions to safeguard the device. If the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT determines that loss and/or damage is the result of negligence, the parent/guardian(s) may be held financially responsible for the repair or replacement of the device. AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT reserves the right to review, monitor, and restrict information stored on or transmitted via the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT owned device and to investigate inappropriate use of resources. The District will provide filtered Internet access to its students in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. Students will be educated in the proper use of the device and options for data storage.

This information is provided to make all users aware of the responsibilities associated with efficient, ethical, and lawful use of the District's technological resources. If a student violates the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT *Code of Conduct* or *Responsible Use Policy*, privileges may be denied and appropriate disciplinary action shall be applied. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension/expulsion for students. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

### **The Student and Parent/Guardian signature signifies that the student will:**

- Use the device in a responsible and ethical manner that upholds the standards of AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT.
- Understand that the device is at all times the property of the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT.
- Not uninstall, disable and/or modify any hardware or software installed on the device or install new or additional programs on the device.
- Not permit individuals, other than AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT administrators or authorized AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT IT Department personnel, to access, repair or service the device.
- Adhere to the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT Acceptable Use Policy found in the *Code of Conduct*. Devices used off school property are subject to all applicable AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT Board Policies, rules, and regulations.

- Understand the device will not be used for personal and/or private purposes and is to be used for the student's educational use and school responsibilities.
- Report loss and/or damage of the device to the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT IT Department. If the loss and/or damage is a result of negligence, the student/parent(s) or guardian(s) may be held financially responsible.
- Adhere to this Student Device User Agreement in the event the student is issued a "loaner" device during service.
- Notify the administration immediately if a student should receive an electronic communication containing materials that may be unlawful, inappropriate, affected by a virus, and/or a potential violation of the *Code of Conduct*.
- Not share login credentials and log off and secure their device to protect their work and information.
- Have a fully charged device prior to the start of the school day.

**\* Agreement to abide by this service agreement will be done electronically through ALMA**

**AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Request for Excused Absence from School**  
**for a Pre-planned Educational Tour or Trip**

Student's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Directing and/or Supervising Student during Above Absence:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**Itinerary of the trip:**

Include activities which could be educational in nature and will, therefore, provide the child with some valuable experiences outside the classroom.

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- Classroom assignments are the responsibility of the student to obtain, preferably prior to departure.
- All assignments must be completed. Upon their return, students shall be given the number of days to complete their assignments equal to the number of days absent.

I certify that all of the above information to be true and agree to comply with the above conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian                      Date                      Best Contact Phone #

\*Please return this form to the Main Office 1 week prior to the pre-planned educational tour or trip.

**AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PHOTOGRAPH OPT OUT FORM**

During the course of the school year, photographs or videos of Avonworth students may be taken by students and staff of Avonworth School District for educational learning outcomes, celebratory purposes, District publications, newspapers, yearbook, television and or the District website. Personally identifiable information such as students' names are **NOT** used.

In addition, the school district partners with a multitude of outside companies and organizations to enhance the learning opportunities we provide our students. Examples include but are not limited to: Pittsburgh Children's Museum, Heinz History Center, Warhol Museum, Inventionland, Parrot, etc. Through these partnerships, pictures and or videos may be shared. Any pictures or video shared with partner companies will **NOT** contain personally identifiable information such as a student's name.

If for any reason you do **NOT** want photographs or videotapes of your child used in this manner, please check the box below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I **DO NOT** want photographs or videotapes of my child/children used in this manner.

**\* Confirmation will be completed electronically through ALMA**

**AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE HANDBOOK**

The Student Handbook is available on the Avonworth School website, or by hard copy upon request to the main office of your school building.

Student Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

My child and I have reviewed the contents of the **2022-2023** Avonworth Student Handbook. We acknowledge the expectations, procedures, and consequences explained throughout the handbook including the attendance procedures and policies.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Student Name/ Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Grade)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

***\*Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the Student Handbook will be completed electronically through ALMA***



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## Avonworth Board of School Directors

Vicki Carlson, President  
Yu-Ling Cheng, Vice President  
Danielle White, Treasurer  
Beau Blaser  
Kristin Thompson  
John Brandt  
Patrick Stewart  
Amy Tokar  
Kate Monti

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## Avonworth School District Administration

Jeff Hadley, Ed.D	Superintendent
Cindy Donovan	Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent
Bradley Waters	Director of Fiscal Management and Support Services
Jillian Bichsel, Ed.D.	Assistant Superintendent
Ashlea Rineer-Hershey, Ed.D.	Director of Student Services
Brandon Gary	Director of Technology and Information Systems
Brant Colamarino	Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Andrea Patton	Director of Athletics
Melissa Schad	Director of Food Services
Keera Dwulit, Ed.D.	High School Principal
Michael Hall, Ed.D.	Middle School Principal
Kaitlin Remensky, Ed.D	Middle/High Assistant Principal
William Battistone, Ph.D.	Elementary School Principal
Scott Miller, Ph.D.	Primary Center Principal
Mr. Robert Eastwood	Elementary Assistant Principal

The Avonworth School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry, complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for disabled persons, should contact:

Dr. [Ashlea Rineer-Hershey](#)  
Director of Student Services  
258 Josephs Lane Pittsburgh, PA 15237-1064  
(412) 369 8738 ext. 1901