



**Worth County  
Achievement Center  
Student Handbook  
2020-2021**

**A Non-Traditional Program for  
Grades  
6 – 12**

The Achievement Center, in partnership with Worth County High School, and Worth County Middle School, is committed to helping our young people achieve at high levels by providing a community of support to students.

103 Eldridge Street  
Sylvester, GA 31791  
229-463-3056

**Purpose: To ensure a quality education for all students  
leading to graduation and productive citizenship**

Worth County Achievement Center (WCAC) Staff

Will Smith	Principal
Ira Thomas	Wrap- Around Services Coordinator
Alicia Hill	Lead Teacher
Marvin Cuffie	Teacher
Cynthia Thompson	Teacher
Jarvis Small	Paraprofessional
Amanda Saunders	Administrative Secretary

**WCAC Program Goals**

- To provide a safe, structured learning environment
- To connect students with staff members who have a personal commitment to their academic success and general well being.
- To utilize a variety of instructional strategies to promote academic success for all students.
- To help students develop the skills necessary for self-sufficiency, interpersonal responsibility and community contribution
- To expand positive communication among students, staff, families, and community To assist students in transitioning to regular classroom setting
- To promote completion of high school and realization of students’ personal academic goals

Worth County Schools  
2020-2021 Calendar of Events

### Placement within WCAC

- Students may be placed through parent/administrator request by signing a waiver or through the tribunal hearing process.
- Parent/Guardian AND student MUST attend an orientation session to review WCAC policies and procedures prior to the first day of enrollment.

### Transition from WCAC

- Students must show satisfactory behavior, attendance, and academic progress before being considered eligible to return to their regular school setting.
- The transition to regular school must be approved by the Site Coordinators and student's teachers. All students must complete a transition plan as they transition back.
- The final decision for return is made with the agreement of the home school principal and the alternative school principal.

### EXPECTATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENT CENTER STUDENTS

Students are expected to comply with school regulations and to exhibit courtesy and respect for authority at all times (students will respect any school district employee).

Rules for student conduct apply while students are on school grounds at any time; off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event; en route to and from school on a school transportation vehicle; at a bus stop or on school transportation, or in a private vehicle used to transport students to a school-sponsored function.

- Parents and guardians are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct with their children and to support its enforcement throughout the community.

- Parents and guardians are to sign and confirm receipt of the Code of Conduct.
- Failure to acknowledge receipt does not absolve the parent/guardian or student of any responsibility for information contained in the Code.
- Codes will be available in each school for review.

Students promise to:

1. Exhibit good behavior at all times.
2. Report matters beyond their control to the school administrators at WCAC.
3. Avoid missing excessive days of school.
4. Students will complete all class assignments and obey all class rules.
5. Students will be punctual and respectful at all times.
6. Students will read the Student Code of Conduct/Progressive Discipline Plan and conduct themselves accordingly.
7. Dress appropriately (refer to dress code).

Parents promise to:

1. Attend conferences when needed.
2. Respond to phone messages from WCAC.
3. Monitor student's progress.
4. Assure that the student attends school daily.
5. Read any documents sent home with student and, if required, sign and return to the school.

In addition, all students must follow the Student Code of Conduct outlined in the Student Handbook for the remainder of the school year. Violating any of the preceding criteria may result in:

1. Teacher/student conference
2. Referral to administrator/counseling
3. Parent contact
4. Parent /teacher/student conference
5. Home suspension
6. Restitution
7. Recommendation for disciplinary hearing

## 8. Expulsion

Students shall also be disciplined for engaging in off-campus misconduct that could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony, which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school, or which disrupts the educational process.

Policies related to discipline are in the Worth County Board of Education policy manuals. The Policy Manual is available for public review at the Board of Education office and on the school system website ([www.worthschools.net](http://www.worthschools.net)). Student handbooks are written to be consistent with Board of Education Policies and this Code of Conduct.

### **High School Graduation Requirements**

Students must pass all of the required courses and earn a minimum of 24 credits to graduate from high school. The specific requirements that students must meet in order to advance to the next grade level:

- 5 credits - 10th grade
- 11 credits - 11th grade
- 17 credits - 12th grade
- 24 credits - to graduate

### **Middle School Promotion and Retention Policy**

In order to be PROMOTED: Students must pass 4 out of 5 classes in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The classes will include the 4 core content areas (ELA, mathematics, science, social studies) and physical education. If a student does not meet the promotion criteria listed above, the student will be considered RETAINED PENDING ACADEMIC REVIEW TEAM EVALUATION.

GEORGIA MILESTONES Grades 6-8: For 6th and 7th grade students must pass the reading or math portion of the GA Milestones. No eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the Georgia Milestones in reading and mathematics and meet promotion criteria.

### **Tardies to school:**

All students are expected to report to school on time each day. WCAC will implement a 5-4-3-2-1 tardy policy. Upon a student's third tardy, parental contact will be made. Further tardies will result in the student being issued a written discipline referral. The consequences will occur as follows:

5th tardy - 1 day OSS

4th tardy - after 1st Tardy Referral will result in an additional day of OSS

3rd tardy - 1 day OSS

2nd tardy - 1 day OSS

Each subsequent day of tardiness will result in 1 day of OSS.

Students with repeated tardiness who accumulate 10 days of OSS may be removed from the program. Showing up to School (work) on time is one of the most important responsibilities of an employee. At WCAC we are going to prepare our students for the workforce.

### **Safety Procedures**

Fire, tornado, and safety drills will be conducted throughout the school year. During fire drills students are expected to leave the building in an orderly manner. All students should report and stay in the designated safety area until instructed to return to the building. An evacuation plan is posted in each room.

### **Dress Code**

Students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness, neatness, and conservative standards of dress and appearance. All students must also have his/her I.D. badge visibly displayed during the school day. **The administration, faculty and staff reserve the right to decide the suitability of any and all garments and accessories.** The following guidelines will be employed though they are not all-inclusive:

1. Students may not wear any outer garments, accessories or clothes that have any printed words that might be considered suggestive, vulgar, degrading, violent or profane; or advertise and/or promote the use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco products; and/or show affiliation with any gang (including, but not limited to, bandanas and bandana print clothing), group or social club not approved by the school

- administration. No gothic or “emo”- like appearance is allowed.
2. No dresses or skirts are to be worn which are more than three inches above the knee. Shorts may not be more than four inches above the knee.
  3. Dresses, blouses, sweaters and shirts must not be strapless, low-cut front and/or back, halter top or see-through fishnet or crotch net type material. Nor bare midriffs or tank tops are allowed. Shoulders must be covered. No clothes with slits or holes are to be worn to school. Also, no ragged or frayed edges on shorts or pants are allowed. Pants and jeans should fit around the waist and should be the proper length. No sleeveless shirts are to be worn. All clothes must be worn as intended; not backwards, inside out, etc. No oversized shirts may be worn.
  4. No wallet chains, vendor chains, biker chains, combs with exaggerated points or medallions are allowed.
  5. Shoes (except for medical reasons) must be worn at all times. No bedroom shoes, slides or flip flops are allowed. Shoes must be tied, fastened and/or buckled. Appropriate footwear may be required for specific courses and/or specific areas.
  6. No skin tight clothing such as spandex shorts, leggings, jeggings and tights unless outer clothing worn over it is no more than 3 inches above the knee. Items considered appropriate to wear over such clothing: shorts, skirts, dresses. This does not include coats/jackets.
  7. Pants made of soft material such as: sweat pants, jogging pants, “joggers”, harem-style pants, yoga pants, wind suits, sleepwear, or swim suits are not acceptable as school apparel (any exception to this rule requires the explicit approval of the principal). See-through material allowing undergarments or skin to be visible is not permitted. No pajama pants, lounge pants or pajama-like clothing is allowed.
  8. Hats, caps, head coverings of any type are not allowed. Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building. This includes sunglasses



worn on top of the head.

9. For student safety, jewelry must not be worn during physical education. Students cannot wear P.E. clothes in the classroom or on buses. For example, basketball shorts (and other clothing intended for athletic or physical activities) are not acceptable school attire.
10. Belts, suspenders and overalls will be buckled and/or buttoned. All clothing will be worn at the appropriate level and not below the waistline. **If necessary, a belt will be worn to keep clothing at the appropriate waist level. No “sagging” is allowed.**
11. Shirttails will be tucked in pants. Any deviation from this rule requires the explicit approval of the principal.
12. Permitted body piercings are earrings and nose studs. No other piercings are allowed.
13. Neatly trimmed mustaches and/or beards and sideburns are allowed. Hairstyles must not be unruly or unkempt. Exaggerated hairstyles, hair coloring or makeup are not allowed.
14. Students will not be allowed to leave school to correct dress code violations. Administrator’s discretion will be used to correct a violation.

**\*Regardless of personal taste in clothing, all clothing must meet the above requirements.**

## **Book Bag Policy**

Book bags ARE NOT ALLOWED on the campus of Worth County Achievement Center.

## **Cell Phone Policy**

The use of cellphones IS NOT ALLOWED on the campus of Worth County Achievement Center. Upon arrival to WCAC all students are requested to turn in their cell phone to their teacher for safe keeping. Cell phones will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communication through personal contacts are extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as ongoing opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

Parents and students should contact the WCAC if specific questions arise related to the Code of Conduct.

## **Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals**

In compliance with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act the Worth County Schools would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested: 1) Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status

through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived; 3) The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher; 4) Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications. If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher or paraprofessionals' qualifications, please contact the principal at your child's school.

### **Campus Visitation**

All visitors to the school's campus must report to Worth County Achievement Center's Main office before visiting other parts of the school, as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-27. A visitor's badge will be issued that will provide identification for the person having a reason to be on campus. Persons not wearing such a badge will not be allowed on campus. Unauthorized visitors will be requested to leave; failure to do so will result in official misdemeanor charges of a high and aggravated nature. Visitors are allowed to visit only the areas requested. Please check with the front office at the school site for further clarification of their visitation procedures. These measures are necessary to protect children from unauthorized persons.

### **Disciplinary Hearings**

The student and parents/guardians have a right to this due process hearing before a long-term suspension (more than ten days) or expulsion can be administered. The maximum penalty that can be imposed by a disciplinary hearing is permanent expulsion. Regardless of the student's status at the time of the disciplinary hearing (e.g. student transfers, student withdraws), the district will proceed with the hearing on the date scheduled and provided to the parent/guardian in the charge letter.

### **Transfer Students**

A student attempting to enroll in the Worth County School District during the time in which the student is subject to a disciplinary order from another school district may be denied enrollment or be subject to the completion of the disciplinary actions handed down from the other school district.

## **Withdrawal of Students**

Any student who withdraws from Worth County School District prior to the completion of a disciplinary hearing must submit to completion of the previous disciplinary hearing before consideration of readmission.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are not subject to the same disciplinary procedures as other students. First, it must be determined if the misconduct is caused by or has a direct and substantial relationship to the disabling condition. If so, that determination must be made by persons having expertise with respect to students who have disabilities. If it is determined that the misconduct does not arise out of the disabling condition, the student then is subject to discipline. However, under no circumstances can educational services be discontinued altogether for the disabled student. A student with disabilities can be temporarily removed from the classroom prior to a hearing when necessary to protect the student, other students, or the teacher, but the hearing shall be held as soon as possible.

## **Searching Students**

School officials may search a student if there is a reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Students vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, purses, lockers or storage areas, desks, and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents.

Cell phones/multimedia/electronic devices taken from students due to possession and/or use in violation of school rules are subject to having their contents searched. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities that occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

## **Bully Reporting Procedure**

The Worth County School District expressly prohibits the bullying of any person, by any means or method, at school, on school property, or at school-related functions. Should a student feel that they are, or have been bullied (see definition), they should first report to the closest teacher or person of authority. If the problem is not resolved, the student should report to a guidance counselor for intervention in the situation. If interventions are not successful, the assistant principal/SRO officer should be notified verbally or by written form.

## **School Attendance**

Regular school attendance is required for students to be academically successful in school. Students who have excessive absences each year find themselves behind in their classes and in danger of grade retention or loss of credits. With this in mind, the Worth County School District (WCSD) is placing more emphasis on regular school attendance. We are asking for your support by making every effort to have your child in school every day, except when the child's illness or a family emergency requires his/her absence. Students served within the credit recovery program with excessive absences will be withdrawn from the program.

## **Compulsory Attendance Law**

Georgia law requires that all children ages 6 - 16 years are required to attend school in accordance with local/state attendance guidelines. Parents, guardians, etc. who fail to abide by the law are subject to penalty. Students will be subject to loss of driving privileges and may fail necessary courses and state tests required to graduate from high school.

**Georgia Law Code: 322104:32-2106. "Except for certain exceptions the law of Georgia requires all pupils from the age six (6) to sixteen (16) to attend school daily."**

**Penalty: "A fine of \$100.00 dollars per day or thirty (30) days in jail for each day absent, or both \$100.00 dollars and thirty (30) days can be imposed"**

**upon the parent(s) or guardian for each absence from school.”**

### **Early Dismissal (Signing Out)**

ALL visitors must report to Worth County Achievement Center’s main office. A valid driver's license is required to check out a student. A note from a parent/guardian must be presented for early dismissal from school if the student drives on campus. **The note must be presented to the office between 8:00 and 8:30 am.** The note should contain the student’s name, time for dismissal, reason for dismissal, parent’s/guardian’s signature and home telephone number or a number where the parent/guardian can be reached. For student safety, please limit phone check-outs for emergency situations only. Students may **only** be dismissed to the person(s) listed on the student information system. **STUDENTS MAY NOT BE CHECKED OUT AFTER 2:00 P.M.** An excuse must be turned in for any early dismissal from school.

### **RULES FOR SUBMITTING STUDENT EXCUSES**

1. Parents of all students will provide a written excuse from a physician/certified medical practitioner, parent or guardian, stating days missed and reason for absence to the school within the **first three (3) days** the student returns to school after an absence.
2. Parents of students in grades 6 – 8 will provide an excuse from a physician/certified medical practitioner after the **fifth (5<sup>th</sup>)** written parental excuse.
3. Parents of students from ages 10 – 16, who have **five (5) unexcused absences**, will receive notification from the WCSD CAT team for a parent meeting. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student, the school system shall send notice via certified mail with return receipt requested, or first class mail. **Upon the 6<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, a juvenile complaint will be filed against the student and a warrant will be taken against the parent (s).** Prior to any action to begin court proceedings against a parent for violation of the compulsory attendance law, the school will notify the parent by certified mail, return receipt requested. Failure to receive written notices in no manner absolves the parents/guardians responsibility in complying with all system/school attendance policies and rules.

4. If a student ages 14-18 has *more than ten (10) school days of unexcused absences* in any semester, notice will be given, by the school system, to the juvenile court. The student may also be unenrolled from the WCAC.
5. In grades 6-8, WCAC will mail attendance letters on the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>), and seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) absence. These letters will be for unexcused absences per attendance policy listed above and will outline the WCSD attendance policy as it relates to course credit(s).
6. Student tardiness will be addressed through the school's progressive discipline plan.
7. Local law enforcement officials will take an active role in questioning school-age students whom they see on the streets or in other public places during the school day and who are not accompanied by a parent/guardian. Police officers are to return truant students to their appropriate school where school administrators will provide appropriate discipline.
8. The WCSD shall report student attendance rates to the Attendance Protocol Committee and the State Board of Education at the end of each school year, according to a schedule established by the State Board of Education.

### **Homeless Education Rights**

Identified homeless students are able to:

1. enroll without delay in school without proof of residency, immunization, school records, other documents or while documentation is being obtained;
2. choose between the local school where they are living or the school last attended before becoming homeless, when requested by the parent and determined by the district to be feasible and in the student's best interest;
3. attend school and participate in school programs with children who are not

homeless

4. receive all the school services available to other students including transportation services, special educational services where applicable, and meals through the school meals programs

If you suspect that a student is homeless, please complete a SSW Referral and/or contact Tracie C. Turner, Homeless Liaison @  
tturner@worthschools.net or 229-776-8600.

### **Parent's Right to Request a Teacher's and a Paraprofessional's Qualifications:**

By law, LEA's are required to notify parents that they may request information regarding the teacher's or the paraprofessional's professional qualifications, including the following:

- 1) Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- 3) The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- 4) Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

### **Safe School Bus Riding Practices**

The school bus driver has authority over, and responsibility for, students while on the bus. It is the student's responsibility to follow the rules and follow the direction of their school bus driver. Proper student behavior is important because any driver distraction is potentially hazardous to student safety, the safety of the driver and the safety of other road users.



Students should be aware that they are responsible for their actions and behavior and that school bus transportation can be denied if they do not conduct themselves properly.

### **WCAC Computer Network Guidelines**

#### Network Users Will:

- Use the Internet and computer network only for educational purposes.
- Maintain and respect the privacy of others (name, password, other personal information).
- Report any incident of harassment, inappropriate materials, inappropriate use of the network, and/or violations of policy to teachers or administrators.
- Comply with copyright laws.

#### Network Users Will Not:

- Use Internet accounts, ID, and passwords of others.
- Use the Internet to locate answers or cheat on course exams and/or quizzes
- Attempt to gain unauthorized access (i.e. hacking) into any network, system, program, account, etc.
- Damage or alter any technological device (CPU, iPad, Chromebook, etc.), systems, or networks.
- Access or distribute inappropriate or illegal material.

### **Code of Conduct Behavior Support Process**

In the Worth County School District, the students are expected to conduct themselves in compliance with school regulations and to exhibit courtesy and respect for authority at all times. Rules for student conduct apply while students are on school grounds at any time, off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event, en route to and from school on a school transportation vehicle, at a bus stop or on school transportation or private vehicle used to transport students to a school-sponsored function.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct with their children and to support its enforcement throughout the community.

Codes will be available in each school and classroom.

Questions about the Code of Conduct should be addressed to the appropriate principal.

Students shall also be disciplined for engaging in off campus misconduct that could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the education process.

Disposition or violation of any rule as outlined in WCAC's student handbook may range from administrator/parent conference to out of school suspension or expulsion.

Policies related to discipline are in the Worth County Board of Education policy manuals. The Policy Manual is available for public review at the Board of Education office and on the school system website ( [www.worthschools.net](http://www.worthschools.net)).

## **Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Worth County Achievement Center(WCAC) Student Handbook and Code of Conduct**

By signing this form, and initialing in the requested spaces, I acknowledge that I and my child have:

\_\_\_\_\_ Received a copy of the WCAC Student Handbook and Code of Conduct. I have read and discussed the contents with my child.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the WCAC Dress Code in the Student Handbook with my child. My child understands that he/she will be responsible for following the school dress code at all times.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Worth County Achievement Center Learning Contract**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that, as a student and community member of the Worth County Achievement Center, there will be rules and guidelines that I must abide by in order to achieve the greatest level of success.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I will show up for school on time; The school is required by law to report excessive absences to Social Services. High school students with excessive absences will not receive academic credit and may be withdrawn. Students with repeated tardiness will be disciplined as outlined in the student code of conduct.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I will not use my cell phone on the school grounds. This includes any electronic device, including: cell phones, iPods or handheld game devices. Electronic devices will be confiscated. Parents please call 229-463-3056 and speak to a staff member to convey messages.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I will be respectful of everyone associated with the Worth County Achievement Center, including: other students, security staff, assistants, teachers, school counselors, administrators and any and all visitors.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I will not leave school grounds while school is in session.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I will come to school dressed according to the school's policy. I will not argue about the dress code, and I understand that violating the policy will result in suspension.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ If I am not feeling well and/or in need of medical attention, I will inform a staff member/teacher who will arrange for me to see our administrator or classroom teacher, who will determine the appropriate course of action. (Chronic calls home cannot be allowed unless a doctor's excuse is provided)

7. \_\_\_\_\_ I will **actively participate** in my own education by participating in class, maintaining a positive and cooperative attitude towards staff members, as well as, complying with requests made by any staff member. Failure to comply with this policy will result in being sent home, you will then be counted as absent for that day. Using Facebook, YouTube or any other non-educational websites will not be tolerated.
  
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I am aware that **all school property should be respected** and I understand that I will be held financially accountable for the destruction or malicious damage of any school property.
  
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that while I am on school property, which includes riding the school bus, **I will not use vulgar or profane language** .
  
10. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that excessive trips to the restroom will be limited unless a medical diagnosis makes more trips necessary. A note or prescription from a doctor’s office will be required for exceptions.
  
11. \_\_\_\_\_ **I understand that being involved in a fight, arguing with other students and/or adults, or continuous disruptions will result in long-term suspension or permanent expulsion. Being in possession of illegal substances or weapons will result in long-term suspension or permanent expulsion.**
  
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand and acknowledge that if I am enrolled as an alternative school student at Worth County Achievement Center, I cannot: be present on any other Worth County Public School Campus, attend games/ events, attend dances nor participate in graduation.

Student’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_