



# **Student & Parent Handbook**

**2023-2024**

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The Student Handbook provides students and their parents with an overview of the policies and procedures that govern a student's academic achievement, behavior, and attendance while attending COTA. It is the responsibility of each student and parent to become familiar with the handbook's content.

## **Academic Program**

All COTA students are required to complete an academic program of study designed to prepare students for the Ohio Graduation Test or End Of Course Exams, and to either continue their education beyond high school, to successfully enter the world of work or to enter the military.

## **Graduation Requirements**

- English 9, 10, 11, 12 (4 credits)
- Math: 4 credits (including 1 unit of Algebra II)
- Science: 3 credits (including 1 credit in Physical Science and 1 credit in Life Science and 1 unit of Advanced Science)
- Social Studies: 3 credits (including US History, US Government, and Economics/Financial Literacy)
- Elective: (4 credit) Health: (1/2 credit)
- Physical Education (1/2 credit)
- Capstone: 1 credits (capturing 4 years of study)

## **Total Graduation Requirements:**

Earn 20 credits in the listed areas and pass the required state test based upon the students original year of graduation.

Students who would traditionally graduate in the spring of 2018 and beyond are required to take and pass the **End of Course Exams (EOC)**. The EOC consists of 7 test over the 5 core subject areas.

For each of the 7 EOC's, a student earns 1 to 5 graduation points. In order to be eligible to graduate a student must earn a minimum of 18 graduation points. A student must earn a total of at least 4 points on English tests, 4 points on math tests, and 6 points on science and social studies tests.

## **Additional Pathways:**

Additional pathways for students to graduate vary by graduating year. For the most up-to-date information please see your school counselor.

**Every potential graduate needs one of the following:**

- **A letter of acceptance to a college**
- **A letter of acceptance to a vocational school**
- **A letter of acceptance from a branch of the military**
- **A letter of verification of full-time employment**

**Transfer Credit and Official School Records:** Credit earned at another high school will be accepted by COTA upon receipt of *an official school transcript with signature* issued by the former school. If an official high school transcript is not received from the students previous school listing credits and grades earned, the student must make up all credits needed to earn graduation status. Credit requirements for transfer students may be adjusted.

**Make-up Work:** Students who fall behind due to absences must be caught up in all work by the end of each quarter and semester.

The grades of students who do not complete all assigned work will be lowered. ***Incomplete grade will not be given if a student's absences are unexcused.***

**Credit Recovery Program:** Students who are deficient in credit can remediate those deficiencies in the school's credit recovery period, held during the school day. Students are required to attend summer school if credit is not made up during the school year.

**After-school Teacher Help Sessions:** Students who need extra help in any class may receive individual help in the afternoon every school day except Friday. Students who want this help should contact their teacher or counselor.

**Controversial Materials:** Parents who object to the use of specific educational material should notify the principal. The principal will attempt to resolve the issue with the parent. If the matter remains unresolved, a committee made up of teachers and parents will be appointed to review the material and submit their findings and recommendations to the superintendent. The superintendent's decision may be appealed to the Board of Trustees.

**Promotion Requirements:** Students will be placed in the correct grade level based on their age and not on credit earned. However, all credit requirements and testing requirements must be met for the student to earn graduation status.

**School Books & Educational Material:** Students are not permitted to remove from the school building any school-owned textbook, manual, or other reading material. Most textbooks are on-line. Students who damage school-owned textbooks or other materials will be charged the replacement cost of the book or manual.

**Participation in the Commencement Program:** The Commencement exercise will include only those students who have successfully completed the requirements for graduation listed on pages 4 and 5, as certified by the Superintendent, or those students who have been deemed eligible to participate in such exercises in accordance with the terms of their IEP. Students who owe fees will not receive their diplomas until all fees are paid.

**Transcripts:** Official transcripts will be processed upon request.

Official transcripts will not be released if there are fees owed.

**Academic Calendar:** COTA operates on a four-quarter, two-semester schedule. While grades are issued at the end of each quarter and are used to determine the semester grades, only the semester grade is recorded on the student's transcript. Semester grades determine the credit earned, class rank, and grade point average. See the school calendar on the back page.

Parents can access their students grades via Progressbook at any time.

**Class Work:** Regular attendance in all classes is important if students are to earn passing grades. Students are expected to participate fully in all classroom and school activities. All assigned work must be completed to the best of the student's ability and meet deadlines as established by the teacher and the school.

### **Student Discipline**

COTA is a school of choice that students have elected to attend. All students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct when at school, while attending school activities, or traveling to or from school. Behavior that disrupts learning, or is disrespectful of others will not be tolerated. ***No student has the right to prevent another student from learning. Students whose behavior is disruptive will be disciplined and, in extreme cases, removed from the school. The student Code of Conduct is posted on the bulletin board by the main lobby, and is reprinted in this handbook on pages 24-30.***

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones may not be used by students during the school day. All student cell phones will be collected by security upon entering the building and returned at the end of the school day. If a cell phone is visible, it will be confiscated and given to the Dean of Students. The cell phone will be returned to the student by the Dean of Students after school. This policy may vary by building. Please see the building coordinator for the rules in your building. In an emergency situation, parents should call the school to get a message to the student.

**Smoke-Free Environment:** COTA is a smoke-free school. Smoking is prohibited in the school building and on school grounds at all times. Students who violate this policy will be suspended. Repeated violations will result in additional suspension or expulsion.

**Student Searches:** The school has a legal right to search students, their school lockers, and their personal property to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment.

A search will be conducted whenever there is a reasonable cause to believe that a student is in possession of items prohibited by the school's Code of Conduct. Refusal by a student to submit to a search may result in the police being called and additional disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion.

**Disciplinary Consequences:** Discipline is viewed as an instructional process to help students develop self-discipline, appropriate school work habits and social skills. It is recognized that violations of the student code of conduct require consistent consequences to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment. ***Students must assume responsibility for their actions and respect the rights of others.*** All students have a right to learn, but no student has the right to disrupt the learning of others.

The school uses a broad range of disciplinary options designed to ensure appropriate student conduct. A student's failure to follow the Student Code of Conduct will result in teacher or administrator intervention that may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Reminder or warning
- Teacher and/or administrator/student conference
- Parent contact
- Teacher and/or administrator/parent conference
- Teacher and/or administrator assigned detention
- Removal from class
- Parent shadowing
- Removal from school pending parent conference
- In School Suspension
- Expulsion
- Withdrawal from school

**Removal from Class:** A teacher may recommend the temporary removal of a student from class by notifying the principal of the inappropriate behavior. Possible consequences include any of the interventions listed above.

**Parent Shadowing:** The administration may provide a parent with the option of shadowing his/her child to school for one to ten school days in place of a suspension. The decision to offer this option rests with the school.

**Emergency Removal Pending Parent Conference:** The administration may temporarily remove a student from school for inappropriate school or class behavior that is so chronic or severe that it threatens to disrupt the education of other students, or threatens the health, safety, or well-being of the student, other students, or staff.

The student may be removed for up to 72 hours or until a meeting with the student's parent/guardian is held.

During the removal, a parent conference will be scheduled to determine what disciplinary action, if any, may be taken and whether the student may return to school and if so, under what conditions.

**School Suspensions:** The administration may suspend a student from school for up to ten school days for inappropriate school or class behavior, for any serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct or for repeated violations of the Code of Conduct. Suspended students will be assigned to the In-school suspension, where students will do their school work and not be behind when they return to their regular classes. Students who fail to participate in this program will be given an out-of-school suspension. Students will not be allowed to do school work in an out-of-school suspension.

**Expulsion:** The administration may suspend a student for ten school days and recommend expulsion to the superintendent. Ex- pulsion will be considered for major and/or repeated violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

A recommendation for expulsion is required for the following offenses:

- False bomb threats or false fire, tornado, or disaster alarm; or tampering with the fire alarm system.
- Arson or starting a fire
- Gang activity, including, but not limited to graffiti, signs or signals, tattoos, and clothing or accessories
- Possession or use of dangerous weapons or objects, including replicas or facsimiles
- Hazing and/or harassment
- Possession, use, sale, purchase, transmission, and/or trafficking in alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or any banned, controlled, or illegal sub- stance, including look-alikes, placebos, or substitutes.
- Sexual assault
- Defacement, damage or destruction of school property

Certain violations of the student code of conduct may result in a student being expelled for one year. These include:

- bringing a firearm or knife to school or school events
- possessing a firearm or knife on school property or school events
- committing an act that is a criminal offense when committed by an adult that results in serious physical harm to a person or damage to property
- making a bomb threat to a school building or any building at which a school activity is occurring.

With permission from the school, students may earn credit for school work while suspended.

**Due Process Rights:** Whenever disciplinary action is required, students will be given their due process rights in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code 3313.66, 3313.661, and 3313.662.

**Appeal Rights:** Parents and/or students may appeal a teacher's disciplinary decisions to the principal. Parents may appeal the principal's disciplinary decisions to the superintendent.

For disciplinary decisions up to and including suspensions, the superintendent's decision is final. Expulsion decisions may be appealed to the Expulsion Appeals Committee of the Board of Trustees of COTA.

Parents who wish to appeal the superintendent's expulsion decision must submit a written request to the superintendent indicating the basis for the appeal. This request must be submitted within five working days of the superintendent's decision. An appeal hearing with the Expulsion Appeals Committee will be scheduled within 10 days of receipt of the written appeal. The committee's decision will be given by certified mail within 3 working days.

The initial disciplinary action remains in effect during the appeal process and the student, if suspended or expelled, may not attend school or any school function, nor may they be in the school building or on school grounds.

### **Dress Code Policy**

COTA students are expected to comply with the school's dress code policy, to be neat and clean, and to take pride in their appearance. Students must wear the school uniform every day they are in school. Students who violate this rule will be disciplined.

The school's dress code policy is as follows:

**Student ID:** All students will be issued a student id at the start of the school year. Students are expected to wear their ID at all times while on school property. If a student loses their ID there will be a \$5 replacement cost.

#### **9th & 10th Grade Male:**

- Students are required to wear black or purple t-shirts, crew neck sweatshirts, or hoodies. All shirts or sweatshirts worn must be purchased from COTA.
- Students are required to wear black athletic pants or shorts. (i.e. joggers, sweatpants, basketball shorts) Athletic shoes must be worn at all times. No boots.

#### **Girls Academy and all 11th and 12th grade:**

- Students are required to wear black or purple Oxford-style button-up shirts. All shirts worn must be purchased from COTA.
- Students are required to wear black or tan khaki pants. Pants cannot have designs on them.
- A belt is to be worn at all times.

#### **Additional Requirements:**

- Shoes with heels in excess of two inches, sandals, and flip-flops are not permitted
- Tights, leggings, pajama pants, jeans, shorts, and other colors are not permitted. Pants/slacks must be worn at waist level, and worn with a buckled belt (maximum width two inches). **Boys must wear a belt and wear their slacks waist high.** Drooping is not permitted. Skirts and shorts must be at least mid-thigh in length. Slacks/skirts must be of appropriate size.
- Jackets, coats, sweaters, and sweatshirts may not be worn over the uniform shirt in the building
- Hats, scarves, or other headwear may not be worn inside the building
- Sunglasses may not be worn indoors
- Gold teeth caps are prohibited

**Field Trips:** Students must follow the school dress code on all school-sponsored field trips. (School uniform shirt and slacks or skirt; jeans are not permitted.) Students not dressed appropriately will not be allowed to go on the field trip.

**Off-Site Learning Activity dress code:** Students participating in an off-site learning activity sponsored by the school must dress in a manner consistent with professional dress expectations for employees at the site. Students must follow all school rules when participating in off-site learning activities.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend school and classes daily and to arrive on time. At a minimum, a 93% attendance rate and a 93% punctuality rate must be maintained by all students in all classes. Students whose absence or tardy rate exceeds the above minimum will be subject to disciplinary action, including detentions, court referrals, or participation in the school's attendance recovery program. Both excused and unexcused absences count in determining a student's absent percentage.

**Excused Absences:** The following reasons are valid reasons for being absent from school with proper documentation:

- Student illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious observance
- Court appointment
- Needed at home; specific reason must be provided

Handwritten notes will only be accepted 2 times per semester as an excuse note. For absences lasting longer than 2 consecutive days a handwritten note will not be accepted. Student absences for any reason other than those listed above are considered unexcused unless prior approval by the principal has been secured by the parent.

It is the student's responsibility to make up all missed school work due to the absence within the time limits established by the school.

**Excessive Absences:** Students who are absent five days in a row, seven days during a month, or 12 days during a school year will be referred to court. Students who are absent 72 consecutive hours or 13 days of instruction will be withdrawn from school as required by Ohio law.

**Early Dismissal:** Students who need to be dismissed early from school must present a parent note to the school secretary prior to 7:45 a.m. The note must state the reason for the early dismissal and the time the student needs to leave school. The request must also include a phone number where the parent can be reached to confirm the request. If the request is approved, the student will be given an Early Dismissal Form. All students must sign out at the front office before leaving school and sign in if they return to school before school is dismissed. Bus tokens are not provided for early dismissals.

### **The School Day - from A to Z**

**After-school activities:** Students remaining in the school building for an after-school activity must report to the activity immediately and must remain under the direct supervision of a staff member while in the building. When the activity is over, the student must leave the building immediately

**Arrival:** All classes start promptly at 8:30. All students must be in their classes, seated, quiet, and ready to learn before 8:30 in order to avoid being marked tardy. (*Students who are excessively tardy will be required to make up lost time after school in detention.*)

Students may enter the building as early as 8:00. When entering the building before school, all students must report to the cafeteria unless they have written permission to do otherwise from the principal. The cafeteria is located on the second floor and may be reached by the stairs located in the southeast corner of the building.

**Breakfast and Lunch:** All students eat free at COTA. Because of Ohio's participation in a federal nutrition program, breakfast, and lunch will be available to all students at no charge. The free and reduced lunch form is still required and must be filled out by all parents/guardians. Students living independently and over 18 must complete the form. Parents who have questions concerning this program should contact Javoria Bryant.

Students are responsible for keeping the cafeteria clean and neat. All waste products should be placed in the containers found in the cafeteria.

**Closed Campus:** COTA operates as a closed campus. Students are not permitted to leave the building without permission from the time they enter the building in the morning until dismissal time, or if participating in an after-school activity, until the activity is completed. Students should never trespass on private property while coming to school in the morning or leaving school in the afternoon.

**Dismissal:** Students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. Students are expected to leave the building and school grounds immediately unless they are participating in a teacher-help session or some other activity sponsored by the school. Loitering on school grounds or in the vicinity of the school is prohibited.

**Fire/Tornado Drills:** The school will conduct a variety of drills throughout the school year designed to help students evacuate the building in a quick, quiet, and orderly manner or seek shelter in the event of a tornado. Classroom teachers will give students instructions prior to the drill. While some drills will be announced, many will be unannounced.

**Food in the building:** Consumption of food and drink is limited to the school's cafeteria. ***Students may not chew gum, or consume candy, food, drink, or snacks in the classroom at any time.***

Commercially prepared food (commonly called junk food) may not be brought into and/or consumed in the building. Fast food is not allowed in the building and must be consumed before entering.

**Grade Scale:** COTA follows a 7-point grading scale. The scale is as follows:

100-90%- A

89-80 %- B

79-70%- C

69-60%-D

59 and below-F

**Hall Passes:** Students are expected to remain in their classrooms while class is in session. If the student has a legitimate reason to be out of class, the student must possess a hall pass. Only one student may be out of a class at any one time. ***Students who wish to see a counselor, intervention specialist, or another teacher or administrator must secure a pass from that person prior to the period the student wishes to be excused from class.***

**Inclement Weather/School Closing:** School closing due to inclement weather will be broadcast over local TV outlets and COTA Facebook. COTA will close when *Cincinnati Public Schools are closed due to dangerous driving conditions*. The school will not close if CPS is closed due to a heat emergency or for days they are closed due to teacher in-service programs.

**Searches:** The school has the right to search persons, property, student lockers, and packages whenever there is reasonable cause to conduct the search in order to ensure the safety of the staff or students or the security of the building.

**Student Parking:** Due to limited parking students who drive are not permitted to park on school property unless permission is given by the school director. ***Students must show their driver's license and proof of insurance to receive permission to park on school grounds. Students failing to do so will be subject to disciplinary action which may include towing.***

**Supplies:** Students are required to have their own school supplies. This includes paper, pens, pencils, and other supplies as needed.

**Telephones:** School telephones are restricted to school personnel for official school business only. Students are not permitted to use school telephones. If students need to contact a parent, they should notify the school staff member who will contact the parent on the student's behalf if it is determined the contact is necessary.

**Transportation:**

Transportation is provided by the school for all of our students. Bus routes can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/fxcks3ys>

Please note that students are expected to follow all transportation rules and regulations to ensure their safety and the safety of others. This includes but is not limited to wearing seat belts when available, staying seated while the bus is in motion, and refraining from distracting the driver. Questions, please contact Transit Dispatch at 513-999-8842 or Transit Landline at 513-281-6100 ext 1057.

**Use of medication during the school day:** The school is not responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of student illness. The administration of prescribed medicine during school hours will be permitted only when failure to do so will jeopardize the health of the student, or the student will not be able to attend school. The responsibility for administering any medicine shall rest with the parents and their child. Certain board-approved policies must be followed before any medicine can be administered to students.

***Parents of students who may need to take medicine must contact the principal and secure a copy of (a) the school policy dealing with taking medicine during the school day; and (b) secure copies of forms that must be completed by the student's physician. Medicine cannot be given to students during the school day without the above forms completed and on file in the school. This policy covers taking medicine and the use of an inhaler or any other medically approved device.***

**Visitors:** All visitors must report and sign in with the secretary in the front lobby. Visitors who wish to speak with a staff member should call in advance to make an appointment to make sure the staff member is available. Staff members are not available when they are teaching a class. Staff members may be contacted directly by telephone or e-mail.



## **Technology and Internet Acceptable Use**

The use of technology and computer resources at the School is a revocable privilege. Failure to abide by this policy may render you ineligible to use the School's computer facilities and may bring additional disciplinary action. All users are expected to use the technology available at the School in a manner appropriate to the School's academic and moral goals. Technology includes, but is not limited to, cellular telephones, beepers, pagers, radios, CD/MP3/DVD players, video recorders, video games, personal data devices, computers, other hardware, electronic devices, software, Internet, e-mail and all other similar networks and devices. Users are expected to be responsible and use Technology to which they have access appropriately. Obscene, pornographic, threatening, or other inappropriate use of Technology, including but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, web pages, and the use of hardware and/or software which disrupts or interferes with the safety and welfare of the School community, is prohibited, even if such uses takes place after or off School property (i.e. home, business, private property, etc.) Failure to adhere to this policy and the guidelines below will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Unacceptable uses of Technology/Internet include but are not limited to:**

1. Violating the conditions of federal and Ohio law dealing with students' and employees' rights to privacy. Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files, copying other people's work, or attempting to intrude onto other people's files; using other users' e-mail addresses and passwords.
2. Using profanity, obscenity, or another language that may be offensive to another user; sending messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin or physical attributes via the Internet or Technology; bullying, insulting, intimidating, or attacking others; transmitting any material in violation of federal or state law.
3. Accessing profanity, obscenity, abusive, pornographic, and/ or impolite language or materials, accessing materials in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Do not view, send or access materials that you would not want your instructors and parents to see. Should a student encounter any inappropriate materials by accident, he/she should report it to their instructors immediately.
4. Violating copyright laws by illegally downloading or installing music, any commercial software, shareware, or freeware. You are required to strictly comply with all licensing agreements relating to any software. All copyright laws must be respected.
5. Plagiarizing works through the Internet or other Technology. Plagiarism is taking the ideas of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user.
6. Damaging Technology devices, computers, computer systems, or computer networks (for example, by the creation, introduction, or spreading of computer viruses, physically abusing hardware, altering source codes or software settings, etc.).
7. Using the Technology or the Internet for commercial purposes or activities, which is defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services for personal use, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. any activity that requires an exchange of money and/or credit card numbers;
  - b. any activity that requires entry into an area of service for which the School will be charged a fee;
  - c. any purchase or sale of any kind; and
  - d. any use for product advertisement or political lobbying.
8. Neither the Internet nor any other Technology may be used for any purpose which is illegal or against the School's policies or contrary to the School's mission or best interests.

All users are expected to be responsible, courteous, and thoughtful when using Technology and the Internet. Common sense should prevail. The use of the School computer network system should be in support of education and research, consistent with the educational mission or objectives of the School, and in accordance with federal law, Ohio law, and the Student Code of Conduct.

Students and Staff have no expectation of privacy with respect to the use of Technology, the Internet, intranet or e-mail. The School monitors the online activities of students. Maintenance and monitoring of the School network system may lead to the discovery that a user has or is violating School policy or the law. Violations of School policy, the Student Code of Conduct or the law may result in severe penalties, up to and including expulsion.

The School makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the School technology system will be error-free or without defects. The School will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data, interruptions of service, or computer viruses. The School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or for financial obligations arising through the authorized use of the system.

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA"), the School has placed a filter on its Internet access as one step to help protect its users from intentionally or unintentionally viewing inappropriate material. The School blocks the categories that are determined to be potentially inappropriate. However, families must be aware that some material accessible via the Internet contains illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive language and/or images. While the goal of the School is to use internet resources to achieve educational goals, there is always a risk of students accessing other materials. Parents should be aware of these risks.

The School will educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms. The School will also educate students on cyberbullying awareness and response.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

The student Code of Conduct is based on the idea that learning takes place in a disciplined environment and that students have a responsibility to use the services and facilities of the COTA for the purpose of education. Rules that regulate student behavior have been adopted by the COTA Board of Trustees in order to operate the school in an efficient and orderly manner. Other acts not listed may exist in disciplinary action if the behavior is disruptive, hinders other students' learning, violates the rights of others or is considered to be inappropriate.

Any student who engages in the following types of conduct is subject to disciplinary measures ranging from verbal reprimand, and removal from school. Students found in violation of the weapons policy of the school are subject to a one-year expulsion from the school.

School personnel will consider a variety of factors in deciding the discipline that should be administered to a student. Students who help other students violate the code of conduct will also be disciplined.

The Code of Conduct applies to any COTA student in the custody or control of the school, in the school building or on school grounds, in the general proximity of the school building or school grounds, at a school-sponsored function or activity, or on school-sponsored buses. The Code also governs student conduct at any time, both on and off school grounds, when such conduct reasonably relates to the health, safety, or welfare of COTA students, interrupts the educational process of COTA or another school, or in the judgment of the school officials, is considered school related.

Listed are the steps to be followed by the administration when student misbehavior occurs:

**Level 1:** Under level 1 punishment, the misconduct will be addressed by the teacher, and the teacher may either: (a) verbally reprimand the student; (b) provide an oral or written notification to parents; (c) issue classroom detention; (d) conduct a teacher conference with parents; (e) separate the student from peers; (f) issue detention; and/or (g) deny the student classroom privileges. Repeated offenses may result in Saturday School, up to a 10-day suspension, or possible expulsion, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or his designee.

**Level 2:** All the steps listed in Level 1, plus the following: Under level 2 punishment, if the same acts of misconduct continue or if serious acts of misconduct occur, a conference with the parent/guardian, teacher and/or principal is held in order to discuss the incident and develop an appropriate corrective action plan and/or disciplinary action. Appropriate action may include suspension.

**Level 3:** All the steps in Levels 1 and 2, plus the following: The pupil may be suspended for up to 10 school days.

**Level 4:** All the steps in Levels 1, 2, and/or 3, plus the following: The pupil may be expelled for up to 80 days, unless one year is allowed or mandated by law.

Not all acts of misconduct can be itemized.

The following section is a list of some of the main areas of conduct that will lead to disciplinary action

**Lockers:** Lockers are available to students to put their belongings in during school days. ***Students will not be allowed to wear coats or jackets during the school day.*** All lockers being used by students must have a school combination lock. Students are urged not to tell anyone their locker combination. Students are responsible for the locks on their

lockers. They will be charged \$10 for locks removed from the locker. Since lockers are school property, the school reserves the right to search student lockers. The school assumes no liability for loss of property stored in the student locker.

The school reserves the right to inspect a student’s locker at any time.

Students can go to their locker before school, during breakfast or lunch, and after school.

**Messages/Deliveries:** Unless an emergency situation exists, the school will not deliver messages or packages to students during the school day.

**Panther Fridays:** Panther Fridays requires students to work independently on Fridays: Students may work on one of the following:

- Community Service
- Work Experience
- Packet of school work

Students are required to turn in either a completed Flex Friday Packet or a signed work or volunteer sheet when returning to school on Monday. Students who do not turn in the appropriate documents will be marked absent for Friday and this absence will count towards truancy.

**Restrooms:** Students may use the restrooms before school, during class changes, during breakfast or lunch and after school. Students should do their part in keeping the restrooms clean.

Misconduct	Punishment		
General Provisions	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
1. Any conduct which causes or which creates a likelihood that it will cause disruption or interference with any school function activity or purpose, or creates a likelihood that it will interfere with the health, safety, or well being, or rights of other students, is prohibited.	1	2,3	4
2. Willfully aiding another person to violate school regulations.	1	2,3	4
3. Violation of computer and/or online student privileges policy. See also Policy No. 232 Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.	1	2,3	4
<b>Damage to or Theft of Public or Private Property</b>			
4. Theft or possession of stolen goods.	2,3	3,4	4
5. Damage or destruction of private property or school property or in areas controlled by the school.	2,3	3	4
6. Damage or destruction of school property, property of school employees, or property of other students on or off of school premises.	2,3	3	4
<b>Disruption or Potential Disruption of the Educational Program for Self or Others</b>			
7. Truancy. See also Policy No 251 Attendance, Truancy, and Withdrawal.	2	3	4
8. Tardiness.	1	2	3
9. Improper or suggestive dress. See also Policy No. 263 Dress and Grooming	1	2	3
10. Cheating or plagiarizing	2,3	3	4

11. Continuously and/ or intentionally creating a noise or acting in any manner that interferes with a teacher's ability to conduct class or a student's ability to learn.	1	2	3
12. Demonstration of individuals or groups causing disruption to the school program.	1	2,3	3,4
13. Upon initial arrival, leaving school property without permission.	2	3	4
14. Leaving school premises during school hours without the permission of the proper school authority.	2	3	4
15. Presence in areas during school hours or outside school hours where a student has no legitimate business without permission of the proper school authority.	2	3	4
16. Disobedience of driving regulations while on school property.	2	3	4
17. Cursing	1	2	3
18. Cellular telephones (including, but not limited to, camera phones), beepers, pagers, or any related electronic communication devices are not to be brought to school. If a teacher or administrator observes any electronic communication device during a school day, it may be confiscated. No pictures are to be taken anywhere in the school building or on school property with- out prior administrative/teacher approval. Students who must bring such a device to school may leave it with the school secretary for safekeeping during the day. The school, however, does not assume any responsibility for such devices. See also policy No. 234 Electronic Communication Devices.	1	2	3
19. Possession of an electronic laser pointing device or electronic light emitting device without expressed written permission of a school administrator.	1	2	3

20. Failure to abide by reasonable dress and appearance codes set forth in student handbooks or established by the Board of Directors. Jewelry, signs, etc. which at the discretion of the administration, is reasonably related to or represents gang or gang-like activity is prohibited. See also Policy No. 263 Dress and Grooming and Policy 264.3 Gang Activity Policy.	1	2	3,4
21. Possession of matches or lighters or similar devices. See also Policy No. 369 Use of Tobacco on School Premises.	2,3	3,4	4
22. Buying, selling, transferring, using or possessing any substance containing tobacco including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, a pipe, a clove cigarette, chewing tobacco, snuff, and dip, or using tobacco in any other form. See also Policy No. 369 Use of Tobacco on School Premises.	2,3	3,4	4
23. Use of indecent or obscene language in oral or written form.	2	3	4
24. Publication of obscene, pornographic, or libelous material.	2	3	4
25. Fighting	2,3	3,4	4
26. Abuse of Another. No student shall use or direct to, or about a school employee, or student, words, phrases or actions which are considered to be slanderous or degrading in nature, words or phrases which could be considered threatening, menacing or indicate an intent to cause harm to person or property and/or words or phrases which are obscene or profane as defined by the majority of our society, Name calling and negative, uncomplimentary, and offensive re- marks related to physical handicaps or defects, mental handicaps, race, religion, nationality, appearance, or other reasons is prohibited.	2,3	3,4	4

27. Acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying) on any student. See also Policy No 264.1 Anti- Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy.	2,3	3,4	4
28. Acts of sexual harassment, which is defined as unwelcome advances of a sexual nature, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment that includes unwelcome physical contact shall be assumed to have the effect of substantially interfering with the victim's employment or educational environment. See also Policy No. 264 Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment.	2,3	3,4	4
29. Assault on a school employee, student, or other person.	3	4	4
30. Extortion of a student or school personnel.	3	4	4
31. Arson or other improper use of fire.	3	4	4
32. Buying, selling, transferring, possessing, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind. See also Policy No. 266 Drug Prevention.	3	4	4
33. Buying, selling, transferring, using, or possessing any drug or alcoholic paraphernalia including instruments, objects, papers, pipes, containers, etc. See also Policy No. 266 Drug Prevention.	3	4	4
34. Buying, selling, transferring, using, possessing, or being under the influence of any drug medication, inhalant, or other controlled substance which can be taken internally where the students involved cannot show a legitimate health or other reason for the use of such substance. See also Policy NO. 266 Drug Prevention.	3	4	4

35. Buying, selling, transferring, using, possessing, or being under the influence of any controlled substance (drugs, narcotics, marijuana, etc. or inhalants, or buying, selling, using, possessing, or being under the influence of any counterfeit controlled substance (any substance that is made to look like a controlled substance, or is represented to be a controlled substance, or that is believed to be a controlled substance). See also Policy No. 266 Drug Prevention.	3,4	4	4
36. Sell, offer to sell or possess a controlled substance on school premises or at school-related functions (trafficking in drugs) See also Policy No. 266 Drug Prevention.	3,4	4	4
37. Bringing a firearm to the school or onto school property (any property owned, used or leased by the school for school, school extracurricular, or school-related events.) A firearm is defined as any weapon including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such reason, or any firearm muffler or silencer or any destructive device. A destructive device, includes but is not limited to, any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine or other similar device. See also Policy No. 273 Expulsion and Suspension Policies	<b>1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		
38. Bringing a firearm to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other school program or activity that is located at a school or on school property. See also Policy No. 273 Expulsion and Suspension Policies.	<b>Up to 1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		
39. Possessing a firearm at school, on school property, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event or any other school program or activity which a firearm was initially brought onto the school property by another person. See also Policy No.273. Expulsion and Suspension Policies.	<b>Up to 1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		

40. Bringing a knife to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other program or activity sponsored by the school in which the school is a participant. See also Policy No. 273 Expulsion and Suspension Policies.	<b>Up to 1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		
1. Possession of a knife at school, onto School Property, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other program or activity sponsored by the school or which the school is a participant. See also Policy No. 283 Expulsion and Suspension Policies	<b>Up to 1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		

42. Indecent exposures	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
43. Engaging in sexual acts, displaying excessive affection or other inappropriate behavior with a person of the same or opposite sex.	<b>1,2,3</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>3,4</b>
44. Turning in false fire, tornado, bomb, disaster, or other alarm.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
45. Making a bomb threat to a school building or any premises in which a school activity is occurring at the time of the threat. See also Policy No. 273 Expulsion and Suspension Policies.	<b>Up to 1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		
46. Failing to report the actions or plans of another person to a teacher or administrator where these actions or plans of another person, if carried out, could result in harm to another person or persons or damage to property when the student has information about such actions or plans.	<b>1,2</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>3,4</b>

47. Placing of signs and slogans on school property without the permission of the proper school authority.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
48. Disregard of reasonable directions or commands by school authorities including school administrators and teachers.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
49. Distribution on school premises of pamphlets, leaflets, petitions, buttons, insignia, etc without the permission of the proper school authority.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
50. Skipping detention.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
51. Disrespect to a teacher or other school authority.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
52. Refusing to take detention or other properly administered discipline.	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3,4</b>
53. Any disruption or interference with school activities.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
54. Any activity by a pupil that the pupil knows or should know, will disrupt the academic processes or a curricular or extracurricular activity.	<b>1,2</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>3,4</b>
55. Chronic misbehavior, which disrupts or interferes with any school activity.	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3,4</b>
56. Committing an act that is a criminal offense when committed by an adult that results in serious physical harm to persons or serious physical harm to property. See Policy No. 273 Expulsion and Suspension Policies.	<b>Up to 1 year mandatory expulsion</b>		
57. Failure to abide by rules and regulations set forth by the administration for student parking.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,4</b>
58. Falsifying of information given to school authorities in the legitimate pursuit of their jobs.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
59. Gambling	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
60. Forgery of school or school-related documents	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

## 2023 - 2024 School Calendar

8/1/2023-8/15/2023	Summer Enrichment Programs
8/21/2023-9/1/2023	Professional Development-No Students
9/5/2023	First Day for Students
10/12/2023	Remote Learning Day-Professional Development
10/27/2023	End of 1st Quarter (39)
11/10/2023	Veterans' Day Observed -School Closed
11/20/2023-11/24/2023	Fall Break/Thanksgiving Holiday-School Closed
12/18/2023-1/5/2024	Winter Break-School Closed
1/15/2024	Martin Luther King Day-School Closed
1/19/2024	End of Second Quarter (39)
2/12/2024	Remote Learning Day-Professional Development
2/19/2024	Presidents' Day-School Closed
3/11/2024	Remote Learning Day-Professional Development
3/15/2024	End of 3rd Quarter (39)
3/25/2024-4/5/2024	Spring Break
5/6/2024	Remote Learning Day-Professional Development
5/24/2024	Last Day for Students/End of 4th Quarter (40)
5/28/2024-5/31/2024	School Year Close Out-Staff Work Day

# COTA 2023 - 2024

## Parent/Student Handbook Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_(student), have read the parent/ student handbook and have taken it home to go over with my parent/guardian and agree with the rules and regulations mentioned in the said handbook.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(parent/guardian), have read over the parent/student handbook with the student and agree with the rules and regulations mentioned in said handbook.

*Student Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Parent/Guardian Signature* \_\_\_\_\_