



**2025 - 2026**

## **Student Handbook**

**Be Safe - Be Respectful - Be Responsible!**

**The FUTURES Program**

**[www.thefuturesprogram.com](http://www.thefuturesprogram.com)**

**(706) 865-2141**

**Pioneer RESA**

**1342 Highway 254**

**Cleveland, GA 30528**



# LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pioneer RESA	Centers	Program Wide
<p><b>Pioneer RESA</b> 706-865-2141</p> <p><b>Dr. Meg McDuffie</b> Director <a href="mailto:mmcduffie@pioneerresa.org">mmcduffie@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Dr. Stacey Benson</b> Human Resources Program Specialist <a href="mailto:sbenson@pioneerresa.org">sbenson@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Melanie Williams</b> Student Support Manager <a href="mailto:mmwilliams@pioneerresa.org">mmwilliams@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Anna Arthur</b> Human Resource Administrative Assistant <a href="mailto:mmwilliams@pioneerresa.org">mmwilliams@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Pam Gilbert</b> Title IX Coordinator <a href="mailto:sbenson@pioneerresa.org">sbenson@pioneerresa.org</a></p>	<p><b>Cornelia Center</b> (706) 776-8630</p> <p><b>Ms. Jeanie Huddleston</b> Site-Coordinator <a href="mailto:jhuddleston@pioneerresa.org">jhuddleston@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Deandra Hill</b> Counselor <a href="mailto:dhill@pioneerresa.org">dhill@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Stacy Milazzo</b> Behavior Specialist <a href="mailto:stacy.milazzo@pioneerresa.org">stacy.milazzo@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>Gainesville Center</b> (706) 865-2141</p> <p><b>Mr. Ron Hirst</b> Site-Coordinator <a href="mailto:rhirst@pioneerresa.org">rhirst@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Christie Bombelyn</b> Counselor <a href="mailto:cbombelyn@pioneerresa.org">cbombelyn@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Stacy Milazzo</b> Behavior Specialist <a href="mailto:stacy.milazzo@pioneerresa.org">stacy.milazzo@pioneerresa.org</a></p>	<p><b>Ms. Jessica Burger</b> Site-Coordinator: Hart Behavior Specialist <a href="mailto:jburger@pioneerresa.org">jburger@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Craig Poore</b> Site-Coordinator: Dawson, Union, White, Stephens <a href="mailto:cpoore@pioneerresa.org">cpoore@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Leigh Anne Myers</b> Behavior Specialist Program Therapeutic Lead <a href="mailto:lmyers@pioneerresa.org">lmyers@pioneerresa.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Brittany Myers</b> Behavior Specialist <a href="mailto:bmyers@pioneerresa.org">bmyers@pioneerresa.org</a></p>

# LOCATIONS

**Pioneer RESA / FUTURES Main Office**

1342 Highway 254  
Cleveland, GA 30528  
(706) 865-2141

**Cornelia Center**

595 Elrod Street, Cornelia, GA 30531  
(706) 776-8630

**Gainesville Center**

715 Woods Mill Rd, Gainesville, GA 30501

**School-Based Locations**

Dawson County  
Hart County  
Stephens County  
Union County  
White County

**Serving**

Banks County, Dawson County, Forsyth County, Franklin County, Gainesville City,  
Habersham County, Hall County, Hart County, Lumpkin County, Rabun County,  
Stephens County, Union County, Towns County, White County

**“Together we build FUTURES!”**

# VISION & MISSION

## **Vision Statement**

Our vision is to create educational learning environments that empower students to reach a meaningful future!

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide a continuum of therapeutic and academic services and supports, expert staff, and collaborative partnerships which foster social and academic growth in all students.

## **Philosophy**

The philosophy of the FUTURES program is to offer each student the opportunity to develop intellectually, psychologically, and emotionally. This will be accomplished through a program that addresses the unique needs of the learner set in a secure and nurturing atmosphere. All classes use a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports model that is student-based; using praise and positive reinforcement. In addition, the program utilizes a tiered approach to academic and behavior interventions and strategies for all learners.



# **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)**

Children possess special characteristics and unique needs that determine the nature of the instructional program. Factors, such as degree of maturity, intellectual ability, length of attention span, motor skills, physical size, emotional development, and cognitive processes all work together to make each child an individual. We at the FUTURES Program recognize and value these differences. The FUTURES Program utilizes an evidence-based, data-driven framework to support each student's individual needs both behaviorally and academically.

The FUTURES Program provides and supports a nurturing learning environment which will enable learners to meet high expectations for safe, responsible, cooperative behaviors. We believe that positive behaviors create a positive school climate. We also believe that learners at the FUTURES Program have the right to be afforded a safe and comfortable learning environment; therefore, are expected to respect one another and all adults.

Children learn from the words and actions of those around them. Our staff recognizes that we are models and mirrors for children, and we accept the responsibility. We strive to demonstrate appropriate social behavior through building positive relationships with our students.

## **Social Instruction**

The PBIS model is the foundation used for teaching direct instruction social skills and social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum to students. The social skills curriculum is a well-defined set of basic social behaviors, self-control strategies, and active learning skills encompassing adult relations, peer relations, school bus and classroom behavior. As basic skills are mastered, more complex and advanced skills are taught and practiced. PBIS expectations should be posted in each classroom, in a visible location, as part of skill instruction.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

### **Safe Learning Environment**

The students in the FUTURES Program are expected to maintain good order and discipline in the school environment. Good order and discipline may be described as the absence of distractions, frictions, and disturbances which interfere with the optimum functioning of the student, the class, and the school. It is also the presence of a friendly, yet business-like, rapport in which students work cooperatively toward mutually recognized and accepted goals. Students in the FUTURES Program are provided direct instruction, modeling, and coaching on behavioral expectations that promote good order and discipline in the school environment.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

PBIS incorporates a classroom management system that encourages student involvement and cooperation in classroom activities. Students have the opportunity to earn points for positive behaviors that they may use to purchase supplies, treats, and preferred activities. This type of token economy motivates students to acquire and apply the skills learned through social instruction. Students retain motivation as they move through the system levels by demonstrating social skills proficiency.

PBIS utilizes a positive approach in assisting students to gain confidence in their social skill growth. Praise and encouragement are important tools used to reinforce appropriate behaviors and support student efforts to improve. Our staff strives to focus on desired behaviors and celebrate even the smallest of victories as we work with students through social instruction.



### **Parent Communication**

Parents will receive daily communication from the FUTURES Program through a Point Sheet that is sent home with each student. The point sheet is a summary of each student's earned points that reflects their day at school and progress towards their individual behavior goals. If a parent does not receive this form daily, he/she should contact their child's teacher and/or Site-Coordinator.



# THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

The Mission of the FUTURES Program is steered by our professional commitment to provide a safe, compassionate, and therapeutic-centered environment where all students' unique therapeutic and social-emotional needs are met. Each student in our program is screened using the BASC-3 to inform IEP teams as they create each student's Individualized Education Plan. A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is conducted for each student in order to create a Behavior Intervention Plan that appropriately addresses target skills, desired behaviors, and reinforcers. In addition to this, each student has access to a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

For the 2024-2025 school year, students in the FUTURES Program will participate in Second Step. Second Step is a program rooted in social-emotional learning (SEL) that helps transform schools into supportive, successful learning environments uniquely equipped to encourage children to thrive. More than just a classroom curriculum, Second Step is a holistic approach in the social-emotional growth and safety of today's children.

The FUTURES Program prides ourselves on providing expert staff to serve our students, parents, and school communities. At a minimum, each staff member has been trained in:

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Nuts and Bolts
- Trauma Informed Care (TIC)
- Discrete Trial Training (DTT)
- Restorative Practices
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)
- Therapeutic Toolbox
- Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Functional Behavioral Assessments
- Behavior Intervention Plans
- Mindset Crisis Communication and Therapeutic Restraint

The FUTURES Counseling Program is under the direction of our Therapeutic Lead, located at our Cornelia Center. The Therapeutic Lead, oversees the counseling intern program, provides support and training for our professional school counselors, oversees our program-wide behavioral screeners, coordinates training and provides collaboration and support for our schools in the Pioneer RESA School District.

## Therapeutic Interventions & Services

Available therapeutic interventions and services include, but are not limited to:

- Small class size and student to teacher ratio. Each classroom is staffed with a teacher and a paraprofessional who are specially trained to meet the needs of students with behavioral needs.
- Therapeutic staff (Psychologist, Counselor, Interventionist, Behavior Specialists, Counseling and Psychology Interns) who provide case management services as well as group and individual crisis counseling.
- Full-time, Professional School Counselor which offers services such as classroom guidance lessons, data-driven small group counseling sessions, individual counseling sessions, crisis counseling interventions and supports, and school-wide therapeutic programs.
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) small group counseling sessions. DBT focuses on skills to help students become more aware of their thoughts, communicate with others, identify feelings, and regulate their emotions.
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy Steps-A Curriculum (DBT Steps-A) instructional lessons. DBT-STEPS-A is a social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum developed by Dr. Mazza, et.al. Implemented in middle and high schools in order to teach all teens effective emotion regulation, decision making, and problem-solving skills.
- Equine therapy sessions. These sessions aim to provide physical, emotional, and behavioral healing for students. They address areas such as confidence building, problem solving, anger management and social skills.
- Therapy dogs: Our “furry friends” have passed all required certification tests and are registered as therapy dogs. Therapy dogs help students reach goals related to self-esteem, emotional regulation, friendship, or attention issues among many others.
- Sensory Integration and Sensory Rooms
- Counseling Intern Program
- Social Stories, Character Education, Behavior Skills Training, and Transition Planning
- Mindset De-escalation
- Student Self-Determination training through student-led IEPs (ASPIRE)
- Mindfulness
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Student Reintegration Support
- And more!

# CODE OF CONDUCT

Students will be expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct as set forth by the students' home school/system in addition to this handbook. The Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures shall be posted on each location's page on the FUTURES Program website at [www.thefuturesprogram.com](http://www.thefuturesprogram.com) and are available via the school system's website. Parents and students are required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt of the Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures and return the acknowledgement to the school. Students will receive instruction based on the contents of the Student Handbook within the first two weeks of school. Questions about the Student Handbook, the Code of Conduct or Disciplinary Procedures should be addressed to the principal/site coordinator.

While at the FUTURES Program, all students shall:

1. **Participate fully in the learning process.** Students are to report to school and class on time, attend all regularly scheduled classes, remain in class until excused or dismissed, pay attention to instruction, complete assignments to the best of their ability, and ask for help when needed.
2. **Avoid behavior that impedes the student from learning or impedes the learning of other students.** Students should know and avoid the behaviors prohibited by this code, take care of books and other instructional materials, and cooperate with others.
3. **Show respect for the knowledge and authority of teachers, administrators, and other school employees.** Students must follow reasonable directions, use acceptable and courteous language, and follow school rules and procedures.
4. **Recognize and respect the rights of other students and adults.** All students are to show concern for and encouragement of the educational achievements and activity participation of others.

The Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures along with the Individualized Education Plan and Behavior Intervention Plan govern all activity on school property, such places where a school sponsored or school sanctioned event is held, and on vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system. In addition, students who attend or participate in any activity conducted for the benefit of students, including those supported by private organizations such as booster clubs, sports organizations, or similar groups and without regard to activity or while traveling to and from the activity.

Any behavior that adversely affects the maintenance, good order, and discipline of the school environment may result in discipline procedures being initiated.

# ATTENDANCE

Daily work hours for the FUTURES Program are site-specific and are as follows:

<b>Cornelia Site:</b>	Staff Hours	8:00 am - 4:00 pm
	Student Hours	8:05 am – 2:45 pm (Elementary/Skills Based)
	Student Hours	8:05 am – 2:45 pm (MS/HS)

**School-based Classrooms** will follow the daily instructional schedule of the hosting school system.

## Absence:

In order to receive maximum benefit from the instructional activities, students are expected to be in school each day unless excused for legitimate reasons. Good attendance habits positively impact the learning process and carry over into the world of work. It is the position of the FUTURES Program that every day at school is important and no student should be absent except for extraordinary reasons. A student is considered absent any time he or she is missing from any assigned class or school activity, with or without parent permission, and for early departure prior to 11:30 a.m.

## Excused Absences

As permitted under the Georgia compulsory education law, students may be temporarily excused from school who are:

1. Personally ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others;
2. In whose immediate family there is a serious illness or death that would reasonably necessitate absence from school;
3. On special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith;
4. When attending a scheduled medical, dental, or eye examination of the student;
5. Foster care students attending court proceedings related to the student's foster care;
6. Registering to vote or voting for a period not to exceed one day;
7. When conditions render school attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety;
8. When visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is in the military service in the armed forces and has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support post; or
9. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for the service in the armed forces, mandating an absence from school.

All documentation for excused absences must be submitted to the school within two days of the student returning to school.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Non-school related activities and vacations are considered unexcused.

### **Consequences**

Any child subject to compulsory attendance (ages 6 through 16) who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences is considered truant and will be referred to the Attendance Support Team. The Parent will receive written notice of the time and date of the meeting. Other consequences for excessive absences may be as follow:

- Legal charges may be filed against the parents/guardian if the child is under 16 and has excessive absences. If this happens, the parents/guardian may be placed under protective order and must abide by the rules set forth by the Juvenile Court Judge.
- The Juvenile Court Judge may invoke the following consequences for each separate offense: a \$25.00 - \$100.00 fine per unexcused absence, imprisonment of parent/guardian not to exceed 30 days, community service, probation, and/or any combination of the above.
- Students may earn poor grades and test scores resulting in retention. High School students face possible loss of course credit as a result of 5 absences in a class during a semester.
- Charges may be filed in Juvenile Court if a student is under the age of 16 and has five or more unexcused absences. The Juvenile Court Judge may invoke the following consequences: informal probation for up to 24 months, detention or placement outside of the home, community service, and/or referral to a counseling or support program for students and/or parents.

# SCHOOL PROCEDURES

## **Breakfast/Lunch Program**

All FUTURES program students are offered a state-and-federal-approved breakfast and lunch program. School-based sites will utilize the nutrition services of the host school.

The Cornelia Center utilizes nutrition services through Habersham County Schools. Information can be found at [www.habershamschools.com](http://www.habershamschools.com) along with the Department of Education Free and Reduced Meal Price Application and online meal prepayment accounts.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips relating to classroom and educational experiences may be taken throughout the year. In order for your child to take part, a permission slip for each field trip will be sent home to be signed and returned. These trips give our students the opportunity to use the social skills they have been working on in their community.

## **Checking In/Out of School**

You must have a written note indicating the reason for being tardy. Students intending on arriving late to school should have parents/guardians call the school office to order breakfast/lunch.

Parents are encouraged to make appointments after school hours when possible. If it becomes necessary for students to be checked out during the day, parents are asked to call the office to sign the student out. Students will not be allowed to check him/herself out, walk home, or leave the school campus with a friend or a relative without confirmed parental permission.

## **Withdrawing from School**

Parents must officially withdraw their child from the home school/district. Please consult the student's home school regarding withdrawal procedures. It is very important that parents notify the home school so that records may be sent to the next school.

## **Medications**

All prescription medications should be hand delivered to the FUTURES Program staff member by the student's legal guardian and all appropriate forms must be signed. Forms specify the date of delivery, the name of the medication, time the medication is to be given, the dosage, and the amount of medication in the bottle upon receipt.

Medications should be delivered in the original prescription bottle with the name of the student, name of the medication, and dosage level printed on the label with the name of the prescribing physician.

The FUTURES staff will inform the parent/legal guardian when a refill of the student's medication at school is needed.

The FUTURES staff will not administer over-the-counter medications under any circumstances unless it is provided by the parent and/or legal guardian and in the original container, or they have parental permission to administer.

The FUTURES Program staff will not administer Alternative Medications (herbs, herbal supplements, oils, homeopathic medicines, vitamins, traditional or cultural treatments, salves, nutritional supplements, and other products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine) at school. The actions and potential side effects of these products are not readily available to healthcare providers and cannot be safely administered by school staff.

## **Illness and Injury**

A student should not be in attendance and will be sent home with any of the following:

- Temperature 100.4 degrees or greater or vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Symptoms related to possible communicable diseases:
  - o Suspicious skin rashes
  - o Suspicious open wounds
  - o Redness of eyes with intense itching/burning and thick drainage

- o Painful, reddened sore throat accompanied by enlarged lymph nodes
  - o Constant cough accompanied by other symptoms
- Excessive drainage from ears, persistent earache, or ears that show symptoms when assessed with an otoscope
- Symptoms of an acute illness/injury making it difficult for student to fully participate in learning:
  - o Exhaustion (can't stay awake in class),
  - o Pain that is difficult to control in the school environment,
  - o Limited mobility related to an injury that has not been evaluated by a physician.

Nurses assess students' symptoms and make the decision whether a student needs to be sent home based on current symptoms and the history of the student's situation.

Students excluded from school for health reasons may return when symptoms have subsided for an appropriate amount of time. Any questions regarding when to return to school should be discussed with the school nurse. A physician's note may be required for return in some cases of illness or injury.

Students returning to school after injury or surgery, and who are thereby temporarily incapacitated (e.g. crutches, casts or slings), should present a physician release to return to school along with a statement of any modifications or accommodations that need to be made.

Students becoming ill or injured at school should ask the staff in charge to send them to the school health room. Parents/guardians or emergency contact individuals of students who become seriously ill or injured during the school day will be notified. Emergency telephone numbers must be available and kept current. In the event of a serious accident or illness where the parent/guardian or other emergency contact individuals cannot be reached, an ambulance will be called, and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital emergency room. When advisable, the student will be accompanied by a staff member. Additional staff will continue to attempt to reach the student's parent/guardian. Students will



only be released to individuals listed on the emergency treatment form on file or with written permission from the parent on file. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are held responsible for any costs involved for medical transport and care.

### **Contact During School Day**

Contacting Students: Due to the fact that our instructional time is important, we ask that all messages to students during the school day be of an emergency nature only. Students are expected to know where he or she is to go after school.

Contacting Teachers: Communication between teachers and parents is encouraged. Telephone messages for teachers will be placed in their mailboxes so that they may return calls after students are dismissed. Staff members can also be contacted by email.

### **Transportation Changes**

Parents should send a signed note if a child is to go home a different way than usual. Only students bringing in signed notes, confirmed by The FUTURES Program staff, will be allowed to deviate from normal transportation routines.

### **Conferences**

Conferences are an effective way of communicating between parents and the school. Teachers and administrators can be available for conferences between specified staff hours. Parents are asked to arrange for the conference by phone or note to assure that all school personnel needed for the conference can be in attendance. Please note that conferences will be held electronically in most cases.

### **Emergency Procedures**

State mandated fire, severe weather, and lockdown drills are conducted on a monthly basis. Each site has written emergency plans that will be followed in each scenario. In the event of a real emergency, all precautions will be taken to give your child the best protection possible.

## **Emergency School Closings**

A variety of circumstances may require school officials to close school, delay opening, or call for an early dismissal. Families should prepare for the possibility of unexpected closings by keeping all contact information up to date and having a plan in place for your student(s). If it becomes necessary to close school early, delay opening, or close school altogether, parents will be notified via email and a phone call using a messaging system.

## **Grading Procedure**

In accordance with the state requirement for a grading scale that sets 70 as its minimum passing grade, The FUTURES Program has adopted the following grading scale (school-based locations will follow the local school system's procedures):

A = 90-100

S = Satisfactory

B = 80-89

N = Needs Improvement

C = 70-79

I = Improving

F = below 69

U = Unsatisfactory

The FUTURES Program follows each student's home school reporting period, or each nine weeks (progress reports and report cards) depending on the service location.

## **Homework Procedure**

Please contact the student's teacher and/or the building Principal/Site Coordinator for the homework procedure.

## **Make-Up Work**

Students are expected to complete make-up work in a timely manner. Please contact your child's teacher or the building Principal/Site Coordinator for additional information.

### **Authority of the Principal/Site Coordinator**

The Principal/Site Coordinator is the leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. Principals/Site Coordinators are granted authority to enforce the Code of Conduct; and in cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the Principal/Site Coordinator is authorized to undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the students and school, provided such action does not violate law.

### **Visitors and Volunteers**

Parents/guardians are welcome to request a visit to the FUTURES Program. When planning to visit, parents/guardians are asked to contact the office at least one day in advance so the building Principal/Site Coordinator can set a schedule. The Principal/Site Coordinator has the discretion to set reasonable parameters on school visits (length of stay, number of visitors, etc.). Visitors should limit their visit to the area(s) of the building they have indicated upon check-in with the office. Unauthorized persons found on school property may be subject to arrest or other legal action.

Please note that all doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must enter the building using the front doors, report to the office, and present a valid photo id. Friends of students may not be brought to school or arrive at school as visitors. Unruly or disruptive conduct by visitors that interferes with the educational environment or with extracurricular activities may result in limited access or revocation of visitor privileges to school property or functions. In most cases, parents/guardians are allowed to visit school and eat lunch with their child.

The school, however, reserves the right to limit lunch visits in appropriate circumstances. Parents/guardians planning to eat lunch with their child should notify the school office one day in advance. Bringing outside restaurant food is strongly discouraged. In order to assure health and safety, animals are not allowed on school property, except in the case of a service animal accompanying a student or other individual with a disability.

Staff members may use live animals as part of the curriculum only after permission is obtained from a building administrator. Parents/guardians are not able to stay in the classroom with their child due to confidentiality of the other students in the classroom. All visitors and volunteers should follow the FUTURES Visitor/Volunteer procedures located on the FUTURES Program Share Site. See your Principal/Site Coordinator for further information.

### **Dress Code**

The purpose of a dress code is not to inhibit any person's taste in clothing, but rather facilitate the process of education through reasonable guidelines, which instill dignity and pride. Safety, modesty and cleanliness are our goals. Since some types of clothing do not encourage students to be aware of these goals, the following types of clothing are not permitted at the FUTURES Program:

1. No clothing with logos, graphics, or words relating to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, violence, or profanity.
2. No clothing with logos, graphics, or words relating to sexual acts or with sexual connotations.
3. No clothing that relates to or depicts gang symbols.
4. Undergarments must not be exposed.
5. No see-through clothing shall be permitted unless used as an outer garment.
6. No hats, bandannas, or other head coverings are to be worn inside the school building.
7. Chains or studded accessories are prohibited.
8. Shoes must be worn at all times to protect the feet unless directed otherwise by the FUTURES Program faculty/staff. Shoes must be tied, buckled or worn as the manufacturer intended.
9. Pants, skirts, or shorts must extend to midway between the knee and top of the leg.
10. Leggings may be worn with a top of adequate coverage.
11. Bike shorts and skintight or spandex pants may not be worn as outer garments.
12. Shirts for men: Sleeveless tops for men are acceptable if they are not see-through and if they cover the entire shoulder. If designed to be worn outside the pants or

shorts, the shirt must extend three inches below the waist so that normal movement does not expose the abdomen or back.

13. Shirts for women may not expose any part of the breast. Sleeveless tops for women are acceptable if they cover the entire shoulder. If designed to be worn outside the pants, skirt, or shorts, the top must extend three inches below the waist so that normal movement does not expose the abdomen/ back.

The administration of the school building has the final word on dress code. When the administration decides the dress requirements have not been met, students will not be permitted in classes or halls until the situation is corrected. Parents may be called to bring in appropriate clothing if necessary.

### **Search and Seizure**

School officials are charged with protecting the health and safety of all students and promoting the effective operation of the schools. Fulfillment of these duties may conflict with a student's right to and need of privacy. The interest of individual students in securing personal privacy must be balanced against the interest of society in protecting students against disruptive or illegal conduct by other students. A search shall be conducted or directed by a school official who has the responsibility for maintaining school discipline, or by a designee of the official.

A school official may conduct a search of a student or a student's effects when;

- The official has reasonable grounds to believe that the search will turn up evidence of a violation of the law or of school rules and;
- The measures taken to conduct the search are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the circumstances.

The police may be contacted or called at the discretion of the school official. The results of a search conducted under this procedure may be:

1. Turned over to the police for inspection.
2. Used in a judicial proceeding,
3. Retained by a school official for use in a school disciplinary action.

## **Weapons**

Possessing, carrying, or having under control any weapon within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or on school property, including a vehicle, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school is prohibited. The term weapon, as provided for in O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1, includes any pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind; or a dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches; razor blade or straight-edge razor; spring stick, metal knuckles, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chakra, nun chuck, munchkin, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disk; or whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind; and any stun gun or taser as defined in O.C.G.A. 16-11-106; any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas such as bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or any similar device; any type of weapon which will or may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and any combination of parts whether designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as previously described and from which a destructive devices may be readily assembled. A weapon may also include any object that is used in a threatening or harmful manner.

## **Assault and/or Battery**

Assault and/or battery includes but is not limited to, verbal assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teacher, administrators, other students, and/or other school personnel. This includes physical violence and assault against a teacher, school bus driver, other students, or other school personnel. It also includes touching, pushing, bumping, intentionally making physical contact with another student in a provocative manner, fighting, striking, bullying, or threatening harm or violence to another student including extortion and/or hazing.

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

Possession, sale, use in any amount, distribution, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, medical cannabis, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant is strictly forbidden. This includes the sale of or distribution of drugs, including prescription drugs, or alcohol on school property, or at a school function. The term “drug” refers to all over-the-counter medications, herbal medications, oils, inhalants, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and look-alike drugs.

## **Bullying Policy**

The FUTURES Program, in accordance with the Georgia Department of Education, defines bullying as threats, harassment or intimidation which may include unwanted teasing, threats, physical violence or attacks, destruction of property, spreading rumors and use of electronic communication to cause emotional distress to a victim. The complete list of prohibited bullying behaviors can be found at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org) in the Policy for Bullying Prevention.

The policy requires that in the case of any notification by a student or employee that a bullying incident has occurred at school and/or on the bus The FUTURES Program will:

1. Investigate to determine what has happened.
2. If the investigation shows that bullying has happened the parents of the victim and the bully will be notified by phone as to the report.
3. Consequences for bullying will be determined based on the IEP, the PBIS model and the type of bullying that has occurred.
4. If a pattern of bullying is determined (3 reported and verified incidents) then the IEP team may be called to determine if additional consequences or interventions will be necessary.

## **Tobacco, Vapors, and Related Paraphernalia**

Possession or distribution of tobacco products and vapors on school property, or at school functions, is prohibited. This includes the possession of paraphernalia (i.e. lighters, matches, vape equipment, etc.).

## **Bus Behavior**

Students, parents/guardians, bus drivers and school officials must work together to provide for the safe transportation of students. The school buses, and all other forms of transportation provided by the district or provided incidental to a school activity, are considered school property. Students are subject to district authority and discipline while entering, departing and riding district transportation. The bus driver is responsible for students and has a delegated responsibility for maintaining discipline on the bus. Any problems that arise on the bus should be reported to the bus driver, FUTURES personnel, the student's home school/district transportation director, or the student's home school/district special education director. Students may receive a "bus write-up" from the bus driver which will be turned over to FUTURES personnel for disciplinary action. A copy of the bus referral will be sent home to parents.

## **Inappropriate Actions/Materials**

Students are not to exhibit inappropriate public displays of affection, indecent exposure, possession of obscene, profane, or vulgar materials and any other such actions that disrupt the school program. Students are also prohibited from accessing inappropriate websites to include, but not limited to, sexually oriented material, websites pertaining to violence or any website that promotes hatred or the use of alcohol/drugs.

## **Property**

Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, devices, accessories or equipment furnished to them by the FUTURES Program and/or their home school/district. Students who deface, damage or lose school property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss. All textbooks and instructional resources are furnished by the school and are the student's responsibility. The school is not responsible for textbooks or resources that are either lost or stolen from a student. If a student does not return a textbook or resource, the student who was issued the resource is responsible for its replacement cost. If a book is damaged, the student will be assessed the cost of repair or replacement of the text. Students with outstanding fines may incur consequences in the form of loss of privileges as determined by the school on a case-by-case basis.



- We issue one Chromebook for the year for the students to use.
- If the student breaks the provided Chromebook, they will not be issued another one unless the parent pays to replace/fix the Chromebook.
- If the parent/guardian is unable to replace/fix the broken Chromebook, the student must use a desktop in the classroom.
- If the student breaks another student's Chromebook, their FUTURES provided Chromebook will be reassigned to the student whose Chromebook was broken and follow the steps above.
- If the student breaks another student's Chromebook and has already lost the privilege to have a Chromebook, they will be billed for the cost of the student's Chromebook.
- If a student has to utilize a desktop, the parent will be responsible for providing technology on virtual learning days and/or packets will be sent home.

### **Theft**

The taking of property that belongs to the FUTURES Program, faculty and staff, or other students is prohibited.

### **Activating a Fire Alarm**

The activation of a fire alarm, unless an actual emergency exists, is prohibited and may be cause for referral to law enforcement.

### **False Statements**

Making false statements about misconduct by a faculty or staff member toward a student is cause for disciplinary action. False statements include, but are not limited to, falsifying a police report, falsifying a department of family and child services report, and making statements to parents/legal guardians that result in an official report and/or investigation.

## **Directives/Information**

Not following directives from the administration, or giving false personal information, is a violation of the code of conduct. Not following directions from faculty/staff may result in consequences based on the PBIS model.

## **Cheating**

Students caught cheating on an assignment or test is a violation of the code of conduct and may receive a failing grade or substitute assignment.

## **Change of Address/Telephone Number/Email Address**

Please notify the FUTURES Program immediately if you have a change of mailing address, email address or telephone number (home, work, mobile).

## **Electronic Devices**

The FUTURES program will not be responsible for lost or stolen items. Each location has their own cell phone procedures. The Site Coordinator will send home information at the beginning of the school year.

## **Parent Notice of Teacher Qualifications**

The FUTURES program informs parents/guardians that they may request information about the professional qualifications of their student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

1. *Whether the student's teacher -*
  - *Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;*
  - *Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and*
  - *Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.*
2. *Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.*

If parents/guardians wish to request information concerning their child's teacher's qualification, contact the Human Resources Department at 706-865-2141 [Section 1111(h)(6)].

# DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

## **Student Discipline**

Students are expected to abide by his/her home school/district code of conduct and disciplinary procedures in addition to the procedures outlined in this handbook. A copy of the student's home school/district code of conduct and disciplinary procedures will be distributed and reviewed annually along with this handbook.

All rules relating to discipline are based on Board policies and regulations as well as authority granted to the FUTURES Program under Georgia statutes and other applicable laws. Violations of these discipline rules may also constitute violations of the law and create legal liability for students, parents or guardians.

## **Application**

These procedures will apply to all students in attendance in the FUTURES Program. Off-campus misconduct that adversely affects the educational climate will also be subject to these policies, regulations and procedures. Students who have been charged, convicted or pled guilty in a court of general jurisdiction for commission of a felony may be suspended in accordance with law. The FUTURES Program authorizes the immediate removal of a student upon a finding by a Site Coordinator/Principal that the student poses a threat of harm to self or others, as evidenced by the prior conduct of such student. Any such removal will be subject to the appropriate due process procedures and in accordance with law.

## **Enforcement**

Teachers have the authority and responsibility to make and enforce necessary rules for internal governance in the classroom, subject to review by the site coordinator/building principal. The FUTURES Program expects each teacher to maintain a satisfactory standard of conduct in the classroom. All staff are required to enforce program policies, regulations and procedures in a manner that is fair and developmentally appropriate and that considers the student and the individual circumstances involved. All employees of the FUTURES Program shall annually receive instruction related to the specific contents of the program's discipline policy and any interpretations necessary to implement the provisions of the policy in the course of their duties, including, but not limited to, approved methods of dealing with acts of school violence, disciplining students with disabilities and instruction in the necessity and requirements for confidentiality.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

The following are disciplinary actions that may be assigned by appropriate program personnel who are authorized to impose these actions:

- May not earn all daily points
- Teacher-student conference
- Failing grade on an assignment
- Removal from class
- Parent phone call or conference
- After school detention (pre-arranged with parent/guardian)
- Confiscation
- Restitution
- Loss of privileges
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Referral to law enforcement
- Referral to Juvenile Justice

# ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The FUTURES Program Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful activities by users online, prevent unauthorized disclosure of or access to sensitive information, and to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). As used in this policy, "user" includes anyone using the computers, Internet, email, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications/devices or equipment provided by the FUTURES Program. Only current students or employees are authorized to use the network.

Pioneer RESA will use technology protection measures to block or filter, to the extent practicable, access of visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, and harmful to minors over the network. Pioneer RESA reserves the right to monitor users' online activities and to access, review, copy, and store or delete any electronic communication or files and disclose them to others as it deems necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy regarding their use of Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program property, network and/or Internet access or files, including email.

## **Acceptable Uses of the FUTURES Program Computer Network or the Internet**

Internet access is provided for education-related activities and FUTURES Program business. By using the network, users have agreed to this policy. If a student is uncertain about whether a particular use is acceptable or appropriate, he or she should consult his or her teacher. If an employee is uncertain about whether a particular use is acceptable or appropriate, he or she should consult his or her site technology coordinator or Site Coordinator/Principal.

## **Unacceptable Uses of the Computer Network or Internet**

**The following are examples of inappropriate activity on the Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program network:**

- o Violating any state or federal law or municipal ordinance such as: accessing or transmitting pornography of any kind, obscene depictions, harmful materials, materials that encourage others to violate the law, confidential information, or copyrighted materials;
- o Cyberbullying;
- o Criminal activities that can be punished under law;
- o Selling or purchasing illegal items or substances;
- o Obtaining and/or using anonymous email sites; spamming; spreading viruses;
- o Causing harm to others or damage to their property, such as:
  - o Using profane, abusive, or impolite language; threatening, harassing, or making damaging or false statements about others; or accessing, transmitting, or downloading offensive, harassing, or disparaging materials;
  - o Deleting, copying, modifying, or forging other users' names, emails, files, or data; disguising one's identity, impersonating other users, or sending anonymous email;
  - o Damaging computer equipment/devices, files, data, or the network in any way; including intentionally accessing, transmitting, or downloading computer viruses or other harmful files or programs, or disrupting any computer system performance;
- o Using any FUTURES Program computer devices to pursue "hacking," internal or external, or attempting to access information protected by privacy laws; or
- o Accessing, transmitting, or downloading large files, including "chain letters" or any type of "pyramid schemes";
- o Engaging in uses that jeopardize access or lead to unauthorized access into others' accounts or other computer networks, such as:
  - o Using another's account password(s) or identifier(s);
  - o Interfering with other users' ability to access their account(s); or
  - o Disclosing anyone's password to others or allowing them to use another's account(s)
- o Using the network or Internet for Commercial purposes:
  - o Using the Internet for personal financial gain;
  - o Using the Internet for personal advertising, promotion, or financial gain; or
  - o Conducting for-profit business activities and/or engaging in non-government related fundraising or public relations activities such as solicitation for religious purposes or lobbying for personal political purposes.

## **Penalties for Improper Use**

Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program reserves the right to take immediate action regarding activities (1) that create security and/or safety issues for FUTURES Program students, employees, network or computer resources, or (2) that expend FUTURES Program resources on content the program, in its sole discretion, determines lacks legitimate educational content/purpose, or (3) other activities as determined by Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program as inappropriate.

The use of a Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program account is a privilege, not a right, and misuse will result in the restriction or cancellation of the account. Misuse may also lead to disciplinary and/or legal action for both students and employees including suspension, expulsion, dismissal from Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program employment, or criminal prosecution. Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program will attempt to tailor any disciplinary action to the specific issues related to each violation.

## **Acceptable Use Agreement**

All FUTURES staff and students must agree to this policy, annually, by signing the Acceptable Use Agreement. Once signed that permission/acknowledgement will remain in effect until revoked by the parent or the student loses the privilege of using the Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program network due to violation of this policy or is no longer a FUTURES Program student. Employees and other users are required to follow this policy. Even without signature, all users must follow this policy and report any misuse of the network or Internet to a teacher, supervisor or other appropriate Pioneer RESA or FUTURES Program personnel.

## **Disclaimer**

Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program makes no guarantees about the quality of the services provided and is not responsible for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from use of the network or accounts. Any additional charges a user accrues due to the use of Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program network are to be borne by the user. Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program also denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through user access. Any statement, accessible on the system network or the Internet, is understood to be the author's individual point of view and not that of Pioneer RESA/FUTURES Program, its affiliates, or employees.

# ACCESS TO AND RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Student information regarding placement at the FUTURES Program is maintained at the FUTURES Program and your child's home school/district. All permanent record files are maintained at your child's home school. Parents, designated persons, institutions, or agencies seeking to obtain copies of records will be referred to the student's home school/district.

All parents may inspect and review their student's education records, seek amendments, consent to disclosures and file complaints regarding the records as allowed by law. The parents' rights relating to the education records transfer from the parent to the student once the student becomes an eligible student; however, parents maintain some rights to inspect student records even after a student turns 18. The student's home school/district will extend the same access to records to either parent, regardless of divorce, custody or visitation rights, unless the district is provided with evidence that the parent's rights to inspect records have been legally modified. If a parent or eligible student believes an education record related to the student contains information that is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's privacy, the parent or eligible student may use the appeals procedures created by the superintendent or designee to request that the district amend the record. The student's home school/district will annually notify parents and eligible students of their rights in accordance with law.

Schools and school districts are mandated by Federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to protect educational records. "Educational records" refers to those data elements that are (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting on behalf of the agency or institution.



FERPA permits school districts to disclose information designated as “Directory Information” without consent of parent or student. Directory information is considered information which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The FUTURES Program has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address and telephone number
- Student’s date and place of birth
- Student’s participation in official school activities and sports
- Dates of attendance at schools within the district
- Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the program
- Photograph
- Grade level

## **THERAPEUTIC PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

The FUTURES Program observes the following procedures for the use of therapeutic physical restraint:

- o Faculty and staff are certified in Mindset, a research-based model of therapeutic physical restraint. Annual re-certification training is required for all faculty and staff.
- o Restraint will only be used as a last resort, and only when the student presents as an immediate threat of danger to himself/herself or others.
- o De-escalation techniques will be attempted prior to the use of restraint.
- o Restraint will be terminated when staff members judge the student is no longer presenting as a threat of danger to himself/herself or others.
- o Parents will be notified, in writing, each time their child is restrained. The notification will be provided within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed one school day from the use of restraint.
- o Parents and school staff may mutually agree that notification via e-mail may substitute for a hard copy of the restraint notification.
- o Parents will receive a copy of the report generated when the restraint was necessitated.

# **Non-Discrimination**

Pioneer RESA and the FUTURES Program affirms that no person shall, on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, age, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, veteran's status or genetic information be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity. In addition, no person shall, on any of these bases, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in employment, or recruitment, or consideration, or selection, therefore, whether full-time or part-time, under any educational program or activity operated by the district. The District shall make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

## **Anti-Harassment/Anti-Retaliation Statement**

Pioneer RESA and the FUTURES Program does not tolerate sexual harassment. Any individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment is strongly encouraged to make a report which will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Retaliation against individuals who file complaints about sexual harassment, or participate in the investigation of such complaints, is strictly prohibited.

Students or staff found to have engaged in sexual harassment or retaliation will be promptly disciplined, and such discipline may include, if circumstances warrant, suspension, expulsion and/or termination. Students, parents and staff are encouraged to work together to prevent sexual harassment.

## **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Pioneer RESA and the FUTURES Program does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities that it operates. This requirement not to discriminate in the education programs and activities extends to employment with and admission to Pioneer RESA and the FUTURES Program.

## **Designated Title IX Coordinator**

In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Pioneer RESA and The FUTURES Program has a designated Title IX Coordinator for Employees, Students, and Athletics. Pioneer RESA and The FUTURES Program Title IX Coordinators should be contacted regarding any inquiries as to the application of Title IX or filing a harassment complaint.

### **Contact Information:**

Pam Gilbert  
Title IX Coordinator  
Pioneer RESA  
1342 Highway 254  
Cleveland, GA, 30528  
[pgilbert@pioneerresa.org](mailto:pgilbert@pioneerresa.org)  
706-865-2141

In addition to contacting Pioneer RESA and the FUTURES Program's Title IX Coordinators to file a report of harassment, all students and parents may report allegations of harassment to the applicable building supervisor. Please also refer to Board Policy GAAA (Equal Opportunity Employment), Board Policy GAEB (Harassment), Board Policy GAE (Complaints and Grievances) and Board Policy GBC (Professional Personnel Recruitment).

For in-depth information regarding Title IX, please visit the Office of Civil Rights.