

All students who attend the Columbia County Board of Education Alternative School (Alternative School) are being afforded an opportunity to continue to participate in an educational program to meet basic educational needs and will be required to undergo an intake conference with the school administrator and/or counselor. As a condition to attend the Alternative School, students and parents or guardians must participate in this intake conference at which time they will be required to sign a contract outlining expectations of the Alternative School.

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Students who have been long-term suspended or expelled and who are referred to the Alternative School by the Columbia County School System Hearing Officer may be given the option to attend the Alternative School for a minimum of one complete semester. If they choose not to attend, they must petition the Columbia County School System Hearing Officer for readmission to the Columbia County School System. For high school students, the option of the Alternative School may be afforded them only one time during any school year and may not exceed two options during the course of their high school career. For high school students who commit a "Zero Tolerance" offense, the option to attend the Alternative School may NOT be afforded them by the hearing officer. Such students will be long-term suspended and must appeal before the Columbia County School System Hearing Officer for re-entry into the Columbia County School System. Such students shall transition back into the school system through the Alternative School.

"Zero tolerance" offenses include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel
  - b. Possession, use, or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property
  - c. Possession or use of a weapon on school property
  - d. Any sexual offense
  - e. Causing substantial physical or visible bodily harm to or seriously disfiguring another student or person
2. Students in grades six through twelve who are returning from a youth detention center, a juvenile justice system program, a boot camp, or an alternative educational setting in another school system will transition through the Alternative School via the hearing officer before returning to the Columbia County School System. Any student that has been charged, indicted, or convicted of a felony offense will have the status of his or her enrollment in the Columbia County School System reviewed by the superintendent and the associate and assistant superintendents of student support.

**LENGTH OF STAY AND TRANSITION BACK TO STUDENT'S ZONED SCHOOL**

Students assigned to the Alternative School will serve at least one complete semester at the discretion of the Alternative School Principal unless a designated minimum stay is imposed by the hearing officer. Students who successfully complete their assignment at the Alternative School will transition back into their zoned school.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Students enrolled at the Alternative School will be allowed no more than three absences each nine weeks grading period or six per semester. All absences must be documented with a note from the parent or guardian or medical professionals when required. Students who exceed these absences will be referred to the appropriate legal authority for possible intervention and may be withdrawn from the Alternative School.

**CLASS SIZE**

As the Alternative School serves students with exceptional needs, a low pupil/teacher ratio will be maintained. The ratio should not exceed 18/1 if at all possible.

**DRESS CODE**

The Alternative School will maintain a strict dress code, including a mandatory uniform which will be described in the Alternative School Student/Parent Handbook.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Students are encouraged to utilize the Columbia County School System school bus which serves the Alternative School, transporting students to and from designated bus stops. Students **who have not had their driving privileges revoked may drive themselves** to and from the Alternative School.

**MANDATORY DRUG AND ALCOHOL AWARENESS EDUCATION**

In order to provide for the health and safety of the individual students attending the Alternative School, as well as to provide legitimate reasons for students to say "No" to drug use, each student at the Alternative School will be required to participate in mandatory drug **and alcohol awareness education**. This initiative is designed to create a safe, drug free environment for students and to assist them in getting help when needed.

Finally, all students will abide by the guidelines outlined in the Columbia County School System Code of Conduct.

**REFERENCE: CCBOE POLICY JCD – STUDENT CONDUCT**

**ADOPTED: 08/13/96**

**REVISED: 12/16/96, 01/12/98, 7/10/01, 9/22/03, 7/6/04, 7/26/05, 7/10/07**  
**Columbia County Board of Education**