

# Parent and Student Handbook



## **Pine Ridge Elementary**

**School #1563**

**4613 S. Pine Ridge Road**

**Birdseye, IN 47513**

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<http://www.sedubois.k12.in.us/schools/pine-ridge-elementary>

**July 1, 2015**

Dear Parents:

This handbook has been developed and updated yearly to provide you with the policies and practices at Pine Ridge Elementary. It is our hope that you will take time to read it, discuss it with your child, and periodically review it during the school year. If changes occur during the school year to any part of this handbook you will be informed.

It is the belief of all staff members at Pine Ridge Elementary that every child has the ability to learn. It is our job to take the child from where he/she is to the next level. A cooperative attitude of both teachers and parents is vital to accomplish this goal. We believe that by working together we can accomplish this awesome task hand in hand.

One last thing, communication between home and school is very important. If you have concerns about your child's schooling, academics and/or social experiences please don't hesitate to contact the school.

Sincerely,

The Pine Ridge Faculty and Staff

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### **Mission Statement**

**The Staff of Pine Ridge Elementary School believes that every child can learn when provided an educational atmosphere conducive to learning. Moreover, the staff believes that the education of the child must include parents, students, and the whole community.**

**The Mission of the Pine Ridge Elementary Staff is to provide a safe, secure, and challenging environment, which will guide students to become life long learners as well as productive members of society.**

## **Pine Ridge Elementary Pledge of Respect**

**I am a smart, special, valuable person.**

**I respect myself and I respect others.**

**My words and actions are kind and honest.**

**I accept only my best in all I do.**

**I am PROUD TO BE ME!**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

1. Application forms for financial assistance for textbooks and the school lunch program are available in the office. All families will be asked to complete this form at registration.
2. Students may not bring electronic toys, hand-held game systems, CD players, MP3 players, or expensive toys/equipment to school without permission from their teacher.
3. Early Dismissal --Parents are urged to leave their children in school all day. Doctor or other appointments should be scheduled outside school hours and on school holidays whenever possible. If a child needs to be dismissed early, he/she should bring a note to his/her teacher stating time and reason. Parents or parent's designee must sign the child out in the school office.
4. Calling in an Absence --In the interest of your child's safety and welfare, it is necessary that parents inform the school of any absence. When calling in an absence leave your name, your child's name, homeroom teacher, and the reason for the absence.
5. All notes from home should include the child's name, the date, and the parent's signature.
6. A written request is needed for a student to stay in at recess. A doctor's note may be required if the time indoors becomes excessive.
7. When a concern arises, the parent should first discuss the concern with the teacher. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, it may be taken to the principal

## **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

All teachers and parents of children enrolled at Pine Ridge Elementary School are members of the P.T.O. The projects of the P.T.O. benefit all children of Pine Ridge Elementary School. PTO meetings and upcoming projects will be placed in the school newsletter. Everyone is invited to participate in PTO meetings and events. More information can be found on Facebook.

## **SECURITY**

The safety and security of each child is of great importance at Pine Ridge Elementary. To ensure the safety of all students, the following procedures have been implemented:

1. Doors to the building are locked. Entry to the building will be permitted only at the main entrance (East Side).
2. Visitors, including parents, must report to the office upon entering the building.
3. Visitors and volunteers must wear identification badges while in the building or on school grounds. These can be obtained once registered in the office.
4. Volunteers must complete a limited criminal history check.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Each student is required to have on file in the school office the following information: parent(s) or guardian(s) name, complete and up-to-date address, home phone and parents(s) work phone numbers, physician's name and phone number, and any important medical alert information.

Parents must review the current information at registration and inform the school of changes throughout the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of changes during the school year.

## **STUDENT PICKUP/EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

Every student must have emergency contacts listed in Harmony in the event of an emergency or if we are unable to reach parents/guardians. **As an emergency contact, the parent designates this person as someone they trust to pick up a child from school.** A parent must provide a note if someone other the parent is to pick them up, or a parent must call if the person to pick up their child is not on the contact list.

## **CUSTODIAL/NON CUSTODIAL INFORMATION**

Any child custody information, which school officials need to know, should be presented to the building principal. This presentation must be in the form of a court document or divorce decree. Any court order, restraining order, or other court document pertinent to the child and normal functioning of the school, should also be presented in written form to the principal. It is the responsibility of the custodial parents to inform the principal in writing of all pertinent information, special concerns, and restrictions in respect to child custody matters. It is also the responsibility of the parents to notify the principal of updates, changes, and modifications concerning court documents and child custody information important for normal operation of the school and welfare of the child. Federal and State law automatically provides that non-custodial parents have unlimited access to all records and information concerning the education of their child.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The school day for students begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. Car riders should arrive at school between 7:30 and 7:50 since adequate supervision is not provided prior to 7:30 a.m. Bus riders arrive according to bus schedules and will be supervised from the time of their arrival.

Early buses (7/8 and 6/14) are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. Students who walk or who are picked up by car will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. Students who ride other busses are released no later than 3:20.

**Students are late if they arrive to their classroom after 8:00 a.m. Students are tardy if they leave before 3:00 p.m.**

## **ATTENDANCE/STUDENT ABSENCES**

There is a close relationship between academic success and school attendance. Pupils should strive to be present and on time every day. **The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has set the expectation that no student be absent more than 10 days for the school year.** The parent or guardian of a child shall be held responsible for not meeting this expectation.

When a student is unable to attend school, parents should call the school office and verify the student's absence. Parents should give the student's name, teacher's name and reason for the absence. Pine Ridge Elementary does have an answering machine for those parents who leave for work early. All efforts should be made to contact the school office by 8:30 a.m.

Students and parents are urged to schedule medical and dental appointments at times when school is not in session. In cases in which conflict with school hours cannot be avoided, the principal may grant an excused absence. Excused medical and dental absences **must be verified in writing**, by the doctor or dentist's office.

The principal, at his discretion, may excuse students for other reasons including, but not limited to the following: Funerals, Court appointments, School sponsored activities, Religious holidays, Special awards, and Weddings.

A special excused absence may be granted for a student going on a trip. This type of absence must be approved by the principal prior to the absence. If it is not pre-approved, it is considered to be un-excused. Students going on a trip may be excused only upon meeting the following conditions:

- The student will be absent no more than five (5) school days; and the student will be accompanied on the trip by a parent or legal guardian in such cases, the principal shall require a phone call or written excused signed by the parent or legal guardian prior to the time of absence.
- Make-up work will be required for an excused absence. A student will be given one (1) day for each excused day missed to complete the make-up work and receive credit for it. If the make-up work is not completed in the allowed time, the student shall not receive credit for such work.

**We ask that all students be fever, diahrea, and vomit free for 24 hours prior to returning to school.**

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students who have absences, which are not excused, will receive no credit for any work missed.

### **TARDIES**

Punctuality as well as attendance plays an important part in each student's education. Students arriving late or leaving early disrupt class and lose instructional time. Students should be in their classroom by 7:55 a.m. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. or leaving before 3:00 p.m. will be considered tardy. A student who has an excessive number of tardies during a grading period will be reported to the corporation attendance officer.

### **CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL**

At times, school may be canceled or delayed because of weather conditions, equipment failure, or public crisis. Every practical means will be used to notify parents of an impending cancellation. If for any reason school is cancelled, parents will be notified by the **School Messenger** Phone Network, local radio and television stations.

**Should school would be dismissed earlier than scheduled, the radio stations will be notified and School Reach phone calls will be placed as soon as the decision is made.** Students should be informed by their parents prior to the event where they are to go when there is a need for an early dismissal. **It is important for parents to discuss this with their children to avoid any confusion when an early dismissal is announced.**

### **TELEPHONE USE BY STUDENTS**

Students may use the school phones when they receive permission from their classroom teacher and/or office personnel. Phone calls are limited to emergency situations. Calls for forgotten homework or to attend after school functions may not be permitted. These matters should be taken care of at home before the student comes to school.

Cell phones are not permitted at school. If a student is required by a parent to have a cell phone, a note from the parent must be sent in and approval must be given by Mr. Haas. The cell phone must be off and in possession of the office during school hours. If a cell phone is found in the possession of the child during school hours, Mr.

Haas will hold it until communication is made with the parent. Parents may be required to pick up the phone during school hours.

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and other electronic devices should be kept at home. If a child needs to bring them to school, they must be kept in their backpack and turned off from the time they leave their house and until they return. If a phone or device causes a disruption to the school day, it will be brought to the office and parents will be called to pick it up during normal office hours.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

The expectation for every child is that they follow the rules on the bus as they follow the rules at our school. Please talk with your child about proper behavior on the bus. Topics should include: stay seated in your assigned seat, keep conversations to a neighbor, keep your body to yourself, and do not be a distraction to the driver.

Discipline for poor bus behavior will include removal from the bus if unacceptable behaviors continue.

If a student is to go to another destination other than their regular bus stop, a note from the parent or guardian must be sent to school and approved by the office. All notes are required to be turned in to the office first thing in the morning. This allows us to contact parents if there is a question about the change and notify the teacher and the bus driver.

The information in the note should include **what bus he/she is to ride, where the student is going, and the duration of the change.** A bus pass will be issued by the Principal allowing the student to ride to their new destination.

**Students attending parties or sleepovers need to make alternative arrangements for transportation. It is highly suggested that the host family arrange pickup at school for all attendees.**

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS** **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

If you are interested in becoming a school volunteer, please contact your child's teacher. The faculty and staff will work with you in placing you in an area, which will assist the teachers and students. Placement of volunteers will be left up to the discretion of the principal after conferring with the teacher(s) involved.

**If you plan to volunteer, we must perform a Limited Criminal History Check. This would include classroom participation, clerical opportunities, and field trips.** There is no cost and it is done through the Southeast Dubois County Central Office. We will need your full name, date of birth, and social security number to complete the Limited Criminal History Check. This process takes at least 24 hours.

As a volunteer, it is appreciated that you be present and on time the day or days he/she is expected. Volunteers should contact the school office as early as possible if they cannot be there. In addition, a volunteer should:

- a) know and observe school safety rules,
- b) dress appropriately,
- c) treat all students equally,
- d) refrain from any discussions that reflect negatively on Pine Ridge Elementary, its students and staff,
- e) work directly and under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher, and
- f) be a positive influence on the children you are working with.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher conferences contribute greatly to the educational process and are encouraged at Pine Ridge Elementary School. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall of the year, usually after the first grading period. Letters are sent home regarding these conferences with the dates and times of the conferences. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with their child's teacher regardless of the progress of the child.

Conferences can also be scheduled on an as needed basis throughout the year by either the parent or classroom teacher. Parent's wishing to arrange an appointment for a conference during the year should contact the classroom teacher.

## **ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE**

Appropriate dress and personal grooming will be required of each student as a vital part of maintaining a positive educational environment. Modes of grooming to styles of attire that detract from an appropriate educational environment are not acceptable. Students' dress and grooming must recognize the necessity for health, safety, cleanliness, and modesty at all times.

The building administration shall determine what is appropriate and may request a parent to deliver clothes or send a student home to correct inappropriate dress or grooming. Students will be disciplined for repeated offenses. Students should always heed on the side of caution if questioning what is right or wrong.

### **General Guidelines**

- 1) Students shall wear items of clothing in the manner for which it was intended or designed.
  - No mutilated clothing.
  - Pants and shorts must be worn at waist level (no sagging) and shall have proper belting to hold them at the waist position.
  - Pants shall not drag on floor.
- 2) The wearing of any apparel that has writing, printing, symbols, or graphics that is judged to be offensive, immoral, vulgar, lewd or suggestive and or implies sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, or other subjects disruptive to the normal school environment are prohibited.
- 3) All shirts and blouses should be full length, and show no midriff skin. Tank tops with spaghetti straps are not allowed. Sleeves that are considered capped are a minimum.
- 4) All students must wear shoes. On P.E. days, athletic shoes are required. Flip flops, sandals, or boots are not appropriate shoes for these activities.
- 5) Shorts are permitted in warmer weather. The length of the shorts must extend below mid thigh. Cycle shorts or exercise tights are not permitted.
- 6) Costumes, hats, headbands, wristbands, or any other attire or practice that detracts from the educational process will not be permitted unless school officials have declared a special day allowing for such things. (Ex. Dress up days, hat days.)
- 7) The display of any object, symbol, or clothing that could be considered gang related is prohibited at all times.
- 8) Piercing rings or studs are permitted in ears only. If placed on any other portion of the body, it must not be visible during school hours.
- 9) Mr. Haas strongly suggests flip-flops and sandals not be worn at school. Students are active at recess and these types of shoes consistently cause injuries. Please consider wearing only closed-toe shoes to school to provide adequate protection.
- 10) Hair must be groomed or pinned away from the face and may not cause a distraction to the student or other students. Hair color and style may not take away from the educational process.

## **WINTER RECESS GUIDELINES**

The National Nurses' Association has established the following guidelines for outdoor recess during the winter months.

- 1) Feels like 25 degrees and above (considers wind chill factor) - Outdoor recess
- 2) Feels like 16 - 25 degrees (considers wind chill factor) - Abbreviated Outdoor Recess to 5 or 10 minutes
- 3) Feels like 15 degrees or below (considers wind chill factor) - Inside recess

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Pine Ridge Elementary School will not be responsible for lost or broken items of a personal nature. Items, which may prove to be disruptive to the general school setting, are not permitted. At times teachers may give their permission to bring items for class projects or show and tell. Student names should be placed on these items and turned into the classroom teacher when the student enters the classroom. MP3 Players and other expensive items should remain at home.

If a student brings in items which are disruptive to the general school setting, these items will be turned into the office and returned either to the student at the end of the school year or the parent may pick the items up at the school office.

## **ILLNESS GUIDELINES**

### **(Medication Policy/Accidents/Ill Children) (Immunizations and Vaccinations)**

If under any circumstances a child is required to be administered medication during school hours, and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the nurse, teacher or school employee designated by the principal will administer the medication in compliance with the regulations that follow:

1. Written consent signed by the parent and written instructions by a physician (if medication is a prescription drug). Consent must include the following:
  - a) Date
  - b) Child's Name
  - c) Name of Medication
  - d) Time to be administered
  - e) Dosage
  - f) Termination date for administering the medication
2. The medication **MUST** be in the original container. If the medication is a liquid, a spoon should also be included. The term medication is not limited to prescription medicines but would include nonprescription drugs such as aspirin, Tylenol, cough syrup, lotions, ointments, etc.
3. The parents of the child must assume responsibility for informing the school of any changes in the child's health or change in medication. The school retains the discretion to reject requests for administration of medicine. (The above policy and guidelines are pursuant to I.C. 34-4-16.5-3.5)

If your child is injured or becomes ill at school, we will make him/her comfortable. If a serious injury has occurred or your child is sick and need to leave school, we will contact you immediately. If you cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the emergency number listed on the child's enrollment form.

It is important that all information on the emergency information form be kept up to date. **PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OFFICE OF ANY CHANGES.** If you have an unlisted or unpublished phone number, it is extremely important that the school has your number in the event of an emergency.



Indiana State Law PL 105, Acts of 1980 requires every child who is admitted to public school must be immunized. Students in Grade One and below must follow the schedule listed:

- a) four (4) doses of DDT/TD (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis/tetanus-diphtheria)
- b) four (4) doses of TOPV (trivalent oral polio vaccine)
- c) one (1) dose of measles (rubeola) vaccine
- d) one (1) dose of rubella (German Measles) vaccine
- e) mumps vaccine is recommended, but not required
- f) Tuberculin Tine Skin test (TB)

Students entering Grade six must also have an additional dose of measles (rubeola) vaccine.

The law provides for exclusion from school for failure to comply within thirty (30) days after the beginning of school.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are the property of the school. Teachers issue textbooks on the first day of school, and the student, as well as the parent, is responsible for the books issued. Payments (checks) should be made payable to the Southeast Dubois County School Corporation. Place "Textbook Rental" in the memo portion of the check.

In the case a pupil withdraws during the first semester, ½ of the rental fee will be refunded. A student enrolling during the second semester will be charged ½ the rental fee.

Rental books, which are damaged beyond normal wear, shall be paid for by the student. The price will be determined by the building principal.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an out of school assignment that contributes to the educational process of the student. Because parents and teachers should be partners in the educational process, parents will be made aware of what their child is learning in school by monitoring the homework assignments. In addition, each teacher will provide information concerning his or her homework policy.

### **MIDTERMS/REPORT CARDS**

Midway through each grading period your child will receive a midterm report. The purpose of the midterm report is to allow ample time for improvement in any area of deficiency.

Report cards will be issued to students at the close of each nine-week grading period. Report cards will contain academic, conduct and effort grades. Attendance will be reported on the report card.

### **RETENTION POLICY**

The school has the right to retain any student when the following criteria are met:

- a) In the professional judgment of school personnel, the academic and/or social development of the student will benefit, or
- b) The parent(s) or guardian(s) have been consulted. Parental agreement and cooperation is highly desirable but not a prerequisite, or
- c) Retention is the most desirable alternative benefit for the child.

### **SCHOOL LUNCH/LUNCH MONEY**

The purpose of the school lunch program is to make available to each student a nourishing and well-balanced meal each day. The low cost per meal and half-pint of

milk is made possible by efficient management and the fact that the cafeteria is enrolled in the National School Food and Nutrition Program. In this way the school lunch program is reimbursed financially as well as receiving surplus food commodities.

The price of meals (student prices \$1.85 for lunch, \$1.25 for breakfast) will be determined each school year and parents will be notified at registration. Applications for Free or Reduced Price Lunches are sent to each family.

Parents are encouraged to pay for lunches by the month and with a check. If a child does not eat lunch for some reason, they will be credited the following month.

If a child brings their lunch, milk may be purchased in the cafeteria. Soft drinks or energy drinks are not allowed. It will be assumed that a child can drink milk unless the school is given a note, signed by the doctor stating the medical reasons why the child cannot drink the milk. An alternative drink can be served in this case.

Menu's for the week are published on Harmony, the Pine Ridge web page, the Herald and The Ferdinand News.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability." To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Right, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-6382 (TTY) or (800) 795-3272, USDA is an equal opportunity provided and employer."

### **SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER**

The School Media Center is opened Tuesday, Thursday and Friday all day and Wednesday mornings. Each classroom has an assigned period each week for using the Library Media Center. Students are permitted to come to the Center at any time, provided they have permission from a teacher and if the school media personnel are in the media center for supervision.

At all times a quiet atmosphere of industrious activity is sought. Accelerated Reader tests, use of the card catalog, and internet use are supervised by the school media personnel.

Students are responsible for all library materials issued to them during the school year. Library materials, which are lost or damaged, must be paid in full by the end of the year. Parents will be asked to pay the replacement cost of the lost or damaged materials. If lost library materials are found, a refund will be issued.

### **School Technology**

The use of technology is recognized as an important tool, which will strengthen the skills being taught at Pine Ridge Elementary. The instructional use of the Internet will be guided by the School Board's Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety policy. Students in Preschool through fourth grade use technologies such as computer software, teacher directed Internet activities, computer lab drill activities for remediation and enrichment, word processing and other programs to master the concepts presented in math, language arts, social studies and the sciences. Teachers also have access to digital cameras, scanners, high speed internet access and the Pine Ridge Web Site. All of the classrooms have LCD projectors mounted from the ceiling. Recently document cameras have been installed in some of the classrooms replacing old overhead projectors.

Ensuring that certain technology standards are followed, the Pine Ridge Technology Committee has developed a set of Expectations and Standards for classroom teachers to use when developing lessons involving technology. Teachers of grades three and four also follow the NCLB Student Technology Literacy Proficiency Checklist. These standards are:

- Basic Operations/Technology Use and Concepts,
- Social, Ethical, and Human Issues,

- Communication Tools,
- Keyboarding,
- Multimedia, and
- Research Tools.

### DISCIPLINE

It is necessary that children learn to develop self-discipline in order to further their learning. We ask that you discuss with your children the importance of and need for good behavior and a good attitude at school. Students who do not follow rules or practice acceptable behavior will be sent to the office. If problems continue, parents will be called to schedule a conference to help resolve the problem.

Each classroom teacher has defined a set of rules and procedures each child is expected to follow. These rules vary from teacher to teacher and according to the age and grade of the child. In addition, general school rules and procedures are established as guidelines for student behavior outside of the regular classroom setting.

Our classrooms practice the Clip Chart method of discipline. It is a very simple yet effective method of discipline. A student can either clip up (doing what is right) or clip down (not practicing a desired behavior) throughout the day. As a student clips down, the severity of the punishment increases. Examples of this may be as simple as reflecting on what is appropriate to being sent to visit Mr. Haas. As a student clips up, they not only get the praise that they deserve from the staff member who recognized their good deed, but it also reinforces doing what is expected.

### Severe Events

**If the student is involved in any of the following, he or she immediately skips all steps and goes straight to the principal.**

1. Fighting
2. Vandalism
3. Stealing
4. Abusive Language
5. Willful Disrespect
6. Threats to oneself
7. Threats to others
8. \*Bullying
9. Possession of illegal/harmful items

### Bullying

Pine Ridge Elementary School is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The corporation encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community. Bullying behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse as provided herein. The corporation will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy applies when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or, using property or equipment provided by the school. Additionally, this policy applies regardless of the physical location when:

- A. The individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within the Corporation; and

- B. The bullying behavior results in a substantial interference with school discipline or an unreasonable threat to the rights of others in safe and peaceful learning environment.

Southeast Dubois County School Corporation Bullying as defined in State law means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications transmitted, physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student and create for the target student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- A. Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
- B. Has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- C. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
- D. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school

This type of behavior is a form of harassment, although it need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as gender, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. It would include, but not be limited to, such behaviors as stalking, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing.

Any student who believes s/he has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building principal or assistant principal, or the Superintendent. The student also may report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or corporation official. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above.

All complaints about bullying behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. If the investigation finds an instance of bullying behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any officer position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Bullying acts may be reported to law enforcement officials.

The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation and, as appropriate, any remedial action that has been taken to the extent disclosure is permitted by law. Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Making intentionally false reports about bullying for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above. For a definition of and instances that could possibly be construed as hazing, consult Policy 5516.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Making intentionally false reports about bullying for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

## **Confidentiality**

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations.

## **Safe School Committee**

In accordance with state law, there shall be a safe school committee in each school within this corporation. (See policy 8400-School Safety). The superintendent is directed to develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed. The complaint procedure established by the superintendent shall be followed.

Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator. This includes appropriate interventions, restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation.

As in all matters of discipline, the principal shall determine the consequences for each instance of bullying behavior based on the particular situation. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, one or more of any of the following: Loss of privileges, being sent to the principal, parent notification, being sent home, suspension, signing of a behavior contract by the student and/or parent(s), dismissal from school. Continued violations will result in further disciplinary action. The following are suggested guidelines for each of the buildings within the corporation.

### **Pine Ridge Elementary**

- First incident: If a classroom teacher is made aware of bullying behavior or receives a report involving bullying behavior, the teacher will meet with the student exhibiting the inappropriate behavior. The student is given a warning and told that if the bullying happens again, their parents will be called. If the school is made aware of bullying that is occurring due to the use of electronic devices outside of school, parents will be called. \* If the bullying is severe in nature, the student is immediately referred to the principal. Severe bullying is anything that is threatening the physical or emotional safety of the students or if the offense is sexual in nature.
- Second incident: The second time that a child exhibits bullying behavior, the teacher will call the student's parents and the social worker/counselor will also meet with the victim and call parents as necessary. The student exhibiting the inappropriate behavior will miss at least one recess or have one lunch detention.
- Third incident: The student is sent to the principal. The principal will call the student's parents and the student will miss at least 3 recesses or have 3 lunch detentions.
- Fourth incident: The principal will convene a conference with the student, student's parents, teacher, principal, and social worker/counselor. The student will receive at least ½ day in school suspension.

Bullying fosters a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the physical and psychological health of its victims and create conditions that negatively affect learning.

Bullying includes unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. The imbalance of power involves the use of physical strength, or popularity to access embarrassing information to control or harm others. Bullying can occur anywhere (in-school or outside of school) and at any time – both during and after school hours. Bullying can include physical bullying, verbal bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication.

**Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. It includes hitting/kicking/punching, spitting, tripping or pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and making mean or rude hand gestures.

**Verbal bullying** involves saying mean things. It can include teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening to cause harm.

**Social/relational bullying** involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying involves telling other children not to be friends with someone, leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors about someone, or embarrassing someone in public.

**Electronic/written communication** involves cyber-bullying, collective or group note writing, any bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices (computer, cell phones).

Considerations in determining if the behavior meets the definition of bullying:

- The history between the individuals. Have there been past conflicts? Have these individuals had a dating relationship? (This may not be considered bullying)
- Power differential. Is there an imbalance of power? (Power imbalance is not limited to physical strength.)
- Repetition. Has this or a similar incident happened before? Is the individual worried that it may happen again?
- Are any of the individuals involved with a gang? (This may result in interventions different from bullying.)

To help students and parents feel more comfortable in reporting instances of bullying, we will again be utilizing a phone reporting system. Parents and students can call and leave a voice mail detailing incidents of bullying. For students and parents at Forest Park, call 367-1831 ext. 4205; Cedar Crest 634-2006 ext. 2006; Pine Ridge 326-2324 ext. 3109, Ferdinand Elem 367-2721 ext. 1009. Persons who report may remain anonymous.

### **STUDENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFENSES**

No student shall distribute, dispense, possess, use or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverages, malt beverage, or fortified wine or other intoxicating liquor or unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroid or any other controlled substance, as defined in Schedules I through IV of Section 202 of the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and as further defined by regulation at 21 C.F.R. 1300.11 through 1300.1 S before, during or after school hours at school or in any other school district location as defined below.

"School district location" means in any school building or on any school premises; on any school-owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; off school property at any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event, or function, such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school district.

A student who violates the terms of this policy may, at the discretion of the administration: be suspended or expelled from school; be required to satisfactorily participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program; or be subject to a combination of the above.

Sanctions against students shall be in accordance with prescribed school district administrative regulations and procedures.

### **Discipline Practices**

Each teacher and any of the other school personnel shall, when pupils are under their charge, have the right to take any action, which is then reasonably necessary to carry out, or to prevent an interference with, the educational function of which they are in charge. Teachers and other school personnel may not suspend students from school, and removal of a student from any educational function within the supervision of a teacher or any of the other school personnel may not extend for a period of more than (1) day unless the removal is treated as a suspension under Section 6 (IC 20-8.1 -5-6). (See below. \*)

Each principal may take any action concerning his school or any school activity within his jurisdiction, which is reasonably necessary to carry out or prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes. Such action may include established written rules and standards to govern student conduct. Similarly, the superintendent, or his administrative staff with his approval, may take any action with respect to all schools

within the superintendent's jurisdiction, which is reasonably necessary to carry out or prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes.

The types of disciplinary action, which may be taken, include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Loss of recess privileges
2. Counseling with students
3. Conferences with parents
4. Assigning students additional work
5. Isolation seating
6. Rearranging class schedules - in-school suspension
7. Detention - requiring attendance after school hours -Saturday school
8. Restriction of extracurricular activity
9. Corporal punishment
10. Suspension
11. Expulsion

The following information is taken from the Indiana Code:

**\*20-8.1-5-4. Ground for expulsion or suspension - (a) The grounds for expulsion or suspension in subsection (b) apply when a student is:**

- (1) On school grounds immediately before, during, and immediately after school hours and at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- (2) Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or
- (3) Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

The following types of student conduct constitute grounds for expulsion or suspension subject to the procedural provisions of this chapter:

(4) Using violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or other comparable conduct constituting an interference with school purposes, or urging other students to engage in such conduct. The following enumeration is illustrative of the type of conduct prohibited by this subdivision:

(A) Occupying any school building, school grounds, or part thereof with intent to deprive others of its use.

(B) Blocking the entrance or exits of any school building or corridor or room there in with intent to deprive others of lawful access to or from, or use of the building, corridor, or room.

(C) Setting fire to or substantially damaging any school building or property.

(D) Firing, displaying or threatening use of firearms, explosives, or other weapons on the school premises for any unlawful purpose.

(E) Prevention of or attempting to prevent by physical act the convening or continued functioning of any school or educational function, or of any lawful meeting or assembly on school property.

(F) Continuously and intentionally making noise or acting in any manner so as to interfere seriously with the ability of any teacher or any of the other school personnel to conduct the educational function under his supervision.

This subdivision shall not, however, be construed to make any particular student conduct a ground for expulsion where such conduct is constitutionally protected as an exercise of free speech or assembly or other right under the Constitution of Indiana or the United States.

(2) Causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to school property, stealing or attempting to steal school property of substantial value, or repeatedly damaging or stealing school property of small value.

(3) Intentionally causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to valuable private property, stealing or attempting to steal valuable private property, or repeatedly damaging or stealing private property.

(4) Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such away as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person. Self-defense or reasonable action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person does not, however, constitute a violation of this provision.

(5) Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of, or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from the student.

(6) Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting a knife or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon.

(7) Knowingly possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. Use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a physician is not a violation of this subdivision.

(8) Engaging in the unlawful selling of a controlled substance or engaging in a criminal law violation that constitutes a danger to other students or constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

(9) Failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with directions of teachers or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under their supervision, where the failure constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

(10) Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of Indiana that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

(11) Violating or repeatedly violating any rules that are reasonably necessary in carrying out school purposes or an educational function and validly adopted under sections 2 and 3 (20-8.1-5-2 and 20-8.1-5-3) of this chapter.

**(c) In addition to the grounds for expulsion or suspension under subsection (b), a student may be expelled or suspended for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function.**

(d) A student who must use a knife as part of an organized activity held by an organization that has been approved by the principal of the school is exempt from application of subsection (b)(6) so long as the knife is used as a part of or in accordance with the approved organized activity. (IC208.1-5-4, as added by Acts 1973, P.I. 218, & 1; Acts 1980, P.I. 146 & 10; P.I. 202-1985, & 2; P.I. 203-1985, & 1.)

**20-8.1-5-5. Grounds for exclusion** - Any student may be excluded from school in the following circumstances, subject to the procedural provisions of this chapter:

(1) If the student's immediate removal is necessary to restore order or to protect persons on school corporation property. This includes conduct off school property if the student's presence in school would constitute an interference with an educational function or school purposes.

(2) If the student's legal settlement is not in the attendance area of the excluding school corporation, if no transfer has been granted by the school corporation or has been ordered by the state board of education, if no agreement has been made to pay cash tuition or no tuition has been paid under an agreement, and if no other governmental entity is obligated to pay transfer tuition to the excluding school corporation. An exclusion under this subdivision is not, however, effective until the student's right to attend a public school of another school corporation has been



established in accord with this subdivision. Another school corporation which is asserted to be the student's legal settlement, if known, and any governmental entity which it is asserted is obligated to pay the transfer tuition for the student, shall be obligated to pay the transfer tuition for the student, shall be made a party to the hearing. Appeals involving exclusion under this subdivision may not be taken to court, but to the state board of education, which shall determine the question of exclusion, and the school corporation in which the student is entitled to attend school in accord with the procedures set out in IC 20-8.1-6.1-10. (IC 20-8.1-5-5, as added by Acts 1973, P.I. 218 & 1; Acts 1976, P.I. 101 , & 9; Acts 1980, P.I. 146, & 11; P.I. 20-1984, & 93; P.I. 196-1987,&2.)

**20-8.1-5-6. Suspension** - (a) Any principal may suspend a student for a period of no more than five (5) school days for conduct constituting grounds for expulsion or suspension as set out in section 4 (20-8.1-5-4) of this chapter.

Such suspension shall be made only after the principal has made an investigation thereof and has determined that such suspension is necessary to help any student or to prevent interference with an educational function or school purposes.

However, the student may be suspended by the hearing examiner until the date of the expulsion or exclusion hearing if the hearing examiner determines that this suspension is necessary under IC 20-8.1-5-12.

(b) No suspension may be made without affording the student an opportunity for an informal hearing. At the informal hearing the student is entitled to:

- (1) A written or oral statement of the charges against him; &
- (2) If he denies the charges a summary of the evidence against him; &
- (3) An opportunity to explain his conduct.

The procedures provided in sections 8 through 12 (20-8.1-5-8- 20-8.1-5-12) of this chapter do not apply to suspensions made under this section.

(c) Notice and the informal hearing shall precede suspension of the student except where the nature of the misconduct requires immediate removal. In such a situation, the notice and informal hearing shall follow as soon as reasonably possible after the suspension.

(d) Within twenty-four (24) hours, or such additional time as is reasonably necessary, following a suspension, the principal shall send a written statement to the student's parent describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation of any rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken. The principal shall make a reasonable effort to hold a conference with the parent before or at the time the student returns to school. Failure of the parent to participate in a conference with the principal does not justify extending the period of the student's suspension. (IC 20-8.1-5-6, as added by Acts 1973, P.I. 218 & 1; Acts 1976, P.I. 102, & 2; Acts 1980, P.I. 146, & 12; 1982, P.I. 129,&2.)

**20-8.1-5-7. Other disciplinary actions** - Participation by persons having care of dependent student.

(a) The superintendent, principal, any administrative personnel, or any teacher of the school corporation shall be authorized to take any action in connection with student behavior, in addition to the actions specifically provided in this chapter, reasonably desirable or necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference therewith, such action including such matters as:

- (1) Counseling with a student or group of students;
- (2) Conferences with a parent or group of parents;
- (3) Assigning students additional work;
- (4) Rearranging class schedules;

(5) Requiring a student to remain in school after regular school hours to do additional school work or for counseling; or (6) Restriction of extracurricular activity.  
(b) The governing body of a school corporation may adopt rules that require a person having care of a dependent student to participate in any action taken under this chapter in connection with a student's behavior. The rules must include:

(1) Procedures for giving actual notice to the person having care of the dependent student;

(2) Description of the steps that the person must take to participate in the school corporation's action: and

(3) A description of the additional actions in connection with the student's behavior that are justified in part or in full if the person does not participate. (IC 20-8.1-5-7, as added by Acts 1973, P.I. 218, & 1; P.I. 118-1984, & 1.)

### **CIVIL RIGHT NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENTS**

Southeast Dubois County School Corporation is committed to equal opportunity. It is an Equal Opportunity-Affirmative Action Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, handicapping conditions, or national origin, including limited English proficiency, in any employment opportunity. No person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination on such basis under any educational program or student activity.

If you have experienced discrimination in such educational programs or activities, written inquiries about procedures that are available and for consideration of complaints alleging such discrimination should be directed to The Administrative Assistant, Southeast Dubois County School Corporation, R. R. 3, Box 115, 244 West 15th Street, Ferdinand, IN 47532, (367-1653).

A copy of student and employee grievance procedure for handling of complaints alleging violations of Title IX is available for inspection at the school corporation office.

### **NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS REGARDING STUDENT RECORDS**

Each building principal is the Custodian of Records and is responsible for the supervision of student records at the school.

Each student's records will be kept in a confidential file located at the student's school office. The information in a student's record file will be available for review only by the parents or legal guardian of a student, and eligible student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, and those authorized by Federal law and Corporation regulations.

A parent or eligible student has the right to:

- A. inspect and review the student's education records within forty-five (45) days after receipt of the request. The school has a form which can be used to submit a request. The Custodian of Records will notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records can be inspected.
- B. request amendments if the parent or eligible student believes the record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's rights. The school has a form which may be used to identify which information in the record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading and to specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
- C. consent to disclosures of personally-identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to those disclosures allowed

by the law. The school's administrative guideline 8330 describes those exceptions and is available upon request.

- D. challenge Corporation noncompliance with a parent's request to amend the records through a hearing. If the Custodian of Records decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student will be so notified and provided the opportunity for a hearing. Additional information concerning the hearing will be provided when notified of the opportunity for a hearing.
- E. file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20202.
- F. obtain a copy of the Corporation's Policy 8330 and AG 8330 on student records.

In addition to school officials with a legitimate educational purpose, the Board may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student:

- A. to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of C.F.R. 99.34.
- B. to authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the Indiana Department of Education. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of personally identifiable information to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf.
- C. in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
- D. to organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (1) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (2) administer student aid programs; or (3) improve instruction.
- E. to accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
- F. to parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes.
- G. to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- H. to State and local officials or authorities in the juvenile justice system as it pertains to the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, upon certification that the information will not be unlawfully released to third parties.
- I. to appropriate officials in connection with health or safety emergencies
- J. information the school has designated as "directory information," as defined below, and subject to the restrictions explained below.

The Corporation has established the following information about each student as "directory information":

Each year the Corporation will provide public notice to students and their parents of its intent to make available, upon request, certain information known as "directory information". The Board designates as student "directory information": a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; photograph; major field of study; participation in officially-recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; honor rolls; scholarships; memberships.

The Corporation will make the above information available upon a legitimate request unless a parent, guardian, or eligible student notifies the School in writing within 10 days (**refer to Policy 8330**) from the date of this notification that s/he will not permit distribution of any or all such information.

**NOTICE OF RESTRICTION TO RELEASE DIRECTORY INFORMATION  
TO MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES**

Release of Student Directory Information by the high school to recruiting representatives of the various military services and academies are required by State law. (IC 20-10.1-29-3) A parent or a student has the right to restrict the release of such information to the military recruiting representatives if the parent or student signs a written request by the end of the student's sophomore year in high school.

**RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Any parent or student who believes that the School Corporation has failed to comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) with regard to student records, may file a complaint directly with the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education,  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

**HARRASSMENT**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (gender) in educational programs and activities. All public schools receiving any Federal funds must comply with Title IX. Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex can include sexual harassment or sexual violence, such as rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

The Southeast Dubois County School Corporation does not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual violence in any form. Contact a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, or principal if you believe you have been the victim of sexual harassment or sexual violence. You may also contact the superintendent's office at 432 E 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Ferdinand, IN 47532. The School Corporation has identified Elaine Kreilein as the School Corporation's Title IX coordinator who will be responsible for ensuring that the Corporation complies with and carries out its responsibilities under Title IX, including investigation of complaints alleging noncompliance with Title IX. The Title IX coordinator is located at Cedar Crest Intermediate School at 4770 S State Rd 162, Huntingburg, IN 47542 and may be reached at (812)634-2006.

The School will respond promptly and effectively to all complaints of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. Even if the complainant does not want the school to take any action, an investigation will take place to determine what occurred and then take appropriate steps to resolve the situation. The investigation will be initiated within one (1) business day of a report and will ordinarily be completed within thirty (30) calendar days. A criminal investigation into allegations of sexual harassment or sexual violence does not relieve the school of its duty under Title IX to resolve complaints promptly and equitably.

The School will follow normal disciplinary procedures which include listening to and documenting the complainant's cause, impartially investigating the incident, allowing for questions and additional information as necessary; taking disciplinary action where appropriate; notification of the outcome of the complaint, and notification that both parties may file an appeal (if applicable). Disciplinary action under the sexual harassment policy may include but not be limited to suspension and expulsion for students and termination for employees. Students or employees who retaliate against individuals who report sexual harassment will also be promptly disciplined. The School will determine the outcome by a preponderance of the evidence standard.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.