



**Asheville City Schools**

PO Box 7347 • 85 Mountain Street  
Asheville, North Carolina 28802

Learn. Discover. Thrive

August 21, 2018

Dear Families of ACS Students,

Welcome to the new school year! We are excited to have the opportunity to serve your family by partnering to educate and enrich your child during the coming year. To achieve this goal, the district realizes the importance of creating a safe and caring learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. The *Asheville City Schools Student Code of Conduct - 2018-19*, which accompanies this letter, serves as the framework for creating those safe and caring environments. Please read through this material with your child as it is vitally important that school and home are on the same page with the expectations of our learners and teachers.

The district does wish to highlight one particular new policy which the ACS Board of Education passed over the summer, ACS School Board Policy #4328 - Gang Activity. In general, the policy defines “gang activity” as:

“any conduct that is prohibited by another Board policy and is engaged in by a student on behalf of an identified gang or as a result of the student’s gang membership; or (2) any conduct engaged in by a student to perpetuate, proliferate, or display the existence of any identified gang.”

Specifically, the policy goes on to prohibit any of the following activities:

- wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or other items with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang;
- communicating either verbally or nonverbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.) with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang;
- tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey membership or affiliation in a gang (see policy 4330, Theft, Trespass, and Damage to Property);
- requiring payment of protection or insurance or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity (see policy 4331, Assaults, Threats, and Harassment);
- inciting others to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity (see policy 4331);

- soliciting others for gang membership; and
- committing any other illegal act or other violation of school district policies in connection with gang-related activity.

The policy also gives the school leaders guidance in how to appropriately handle students who are discovered participating in gang activities on campus or at a school-sponsored event. At the first instance of such behavior, students will receive a **verbal warning** during an office conference to immediately stop all gang-related activities. After that initial warning, students will be assigned consequences, up to and including **suspension**, based on the guidance assigned to gang-related activities within the *ACS Student Code of Conduct*. In addition to the assigned consequences, the school will also develop an intervention plan with the student, family, school resource officer, and other school support staff to prevent further gang-related behavior from occurring.

To assist families in learning more about gang activity in Western North Carolina and resources to help families proactively stop participation in gangs, Asheville City Schools will maintain a webpage on the District Website ([www.ashevillecityschools.net](http://www.ashevillecityschools.net)) dedicated to housing current information on gang activity. This will include the latest statistics from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety as well as early-warning signs for parents to be aware. ACS is dedicated to partner with the Asheville Police Department as well to educate our students and staff on the dangers associated with gang-activity throughout the coming school year. Thank you for your support in this effort, and please feel free to contact your child's school or the Student Support Services Department at the Central Office (828-350-6133) for further information.

Sincerely,

Shane Cassida  
Asheville City Schools, Executive Director of Curriculum and Student Resources