

James S. Rickards High School



Student and Parent Handbook 2025-2026

JAMES S. RICKARDS HIGH SCHOOL
3013 JIM LEE ROAD
TALLAHASSEE FL 32301
(850) 414-5500
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ADMINISTRATION

Principal

Douglas Cook

Assistant Principals

Dr. Deborah Barnes – Assistant Principal of Curriculum
Christopher Cowart – Assistant Principal of Administration
Samuel Striplin – Assistant Principal of Student Affairs

Roosevelt Sea – **Dean of Students**

Dr. Joe Williams – **IB Coordinator**

Victoria Williams – **IB Dean**

Melissa Cooper – **AP Coordinator**

Earl Hankerson – **Athletic Director**

Chariya Davis – **Assistant Athletic Director**

Robert Speights & Josh Leven – **School Resource Officers**

Additional Contacts

Kenya Proctor – **Media Specialist**

Idris Smith – **Technology Coordinator**

Kerris Satchell – **Title I Coordinator**

Freda Thomas – **Principal Secretary**

Valarie Washington – **Attendance Secretary**

Tameshia Nathan – **Guidance Receptionist**

Brianna McCarthy – **Receptionist**

Melanie Allen – **Registrar**

Jamilah Loriston – **School Financial Accountant**

Shondakay Paramore – **Food Service Manager**

Garfield Murray – **School Maintenance Supervisor**

Table of Contents

Bell Schedules	4
School Mission Statement	4
School Vision	4
Rickards Alma Mater	4
School Calendar 25-26	5
Contacting the School	6
Visitors	6
Concerns	6
Curriculum and Guidance	6
Graduation Requirement	6
Interim Progress Reports and Report Cards	7
Classification of High School Students	7
Scheduling	7
2026 Advanced Placement Exam Days	8
2026 International Baccalaureate Exam Days	8
Scholarship Information	8
Honors For Academic Excellence	8
Student Code of Conduct	9
Rickards High School Honor Code	10
Cheating	11
Plagiarism	11
Citizenship	12
Textbook & Chromebook Policy	12
Attendance Policy	12
Absences	12
Documenting Absences	12
Pre-Approved Absence Policy	13
Unexcused Absences	13
Signing Out Procedures	14
Tardy	14
Make-Up Work	14
Senior Skip Days	14
Attendance Appeals	14
Hall Pass Policy	15
Clinical and Medical Assistance Policy	15
Student Affairs	16
Alcohol & Drugs	16
Drug Paraphernalia Policy	16
Tobacco & E-Cigarettes	17
Personal Communication Device (PCD's)/Smart Watches	18
Computers, Digital Devices, and Cell Phones Policies	18
Dress Code Policy	18
Dress Code Violations: Consequences	19
Off-Campus Lunch Privileges	19
Parking Privileges	20
Telephone Use and Deliveries	20
Lost and Found	20
Zero Tolerance-Weapons & Firearms	20
Disciplinary Actions	21
Athletics	22
Student Organizations & Activities	22
Internet Access	23
Non-Discrimination Notification & Contact	24

Bell Schedules

Regular Bell Schedule

First Period – Pledge/ Reflection	7:30-8:25
Second Period	8:30-9:20
Third Period	9:25-10:15
Fourth Period	10:20-11:15
Lunch	11:15-11:55
Fifth Period	12:00-12:50
Sixth Period	12:55-1:50
Seventh Period	1:55-2:45

Pep Rally Schedule

First Period – Pledge/ Reflection	7:30-8:15
Second Period	8:20-9:00
Third Period	9:05-9:45
Fourth Period	9:50-10:30
Fifth Period	10:35-11:15
Lunch	11:15-11:55
Sixth Period (Pep Rally-9 th /10 th)	12:00-12:45
Sixth Period (Pep Rally-11 th /12 th)	1:55-2:45

School Mission Statement

“The mission of James S. Rickards High School is to produce graduates with skills and competencies to succeed on local, state, national, and international levels and who are responsible, self-supporting, and productive members of our society.”

School Vision

The vision of Rickards High School is to provide students with a caring and supportive learning environment that allows them to reach their maximum potential through quality programs, instruction, and experiences.

Rickards Alma Mater

We raise our voice to sing the praise
Of James S. Rickards High.
The friends and happy memories
Will live as years go by.
To you who helped us build our dreams
And set our standards high,
May you be ever glorious-
JAMES S. RICKARDS HIGH!

LCS 2025-2026 REGULAR CALENDAR

2025

August	11	Students Report
September	1	Labor Day Holiday (District-wide)
September	11	Freshmen Parent Night (6 PM)
September	22	Title I Open House (5:30 PM)
September	25	Seniors Parent Night (6 PM)
October	2	Fall Holiday (District-wide)
October	9	Sophomores & Juniors Parent Night (6 PM)
October	10	End of First Nine Weeks
October	13	Teacher Planning/In-service Day (Students Out)
November	11	Veterans Day Holiday (District-wide)
November	24-28	Thanksgiving Holiday (Students & Teachers Out)
November	27-28	Thanksgiving Holidays (District-wide)
December	17-19	Exam Days
December	19	End of Second Nine Weeks
December	22-31	Winter Holidays (District-wide)

2026

January	1-2	Winter Holidays (District-wide)
January	5-6	Teacher Planning Days/In-service Day (Students Out)
January	7	Students Return
January	15	IB Open House (6 PM)
January	19	Martin Luther King Holiday (District-wide)
February	5	Testing Night (6 PM)
February	16	Presidents Day Holiday (District-wide)
March	13	End of Third Nine Weeks
March	16-20	Spring Break (Students & Teachers Out)
March	23	Teacher Planning/In-service Day (Students Out)
April	3	Spring Holiday
April	9	Curriculum Night (6 PM)
April	11	Prom (8 PM)
April	30	IB CAS Night (6 PM)
May	13-15	Senior Exam Days
May	15	Last Day for Seniors
May	18	Senior Convocation Rehearsal (10 AM)
May	19	Senior Convocation 6:30 p.m. Auditorium
May	20-22	Exam Days (Early Release)
May	20	Graduation Rehearsal (10 AM)
May	21	Graduation Ceremony 10:00 a.m. Civic Center
May	22	Last Day of School/End of Fourth Nine Weeks
May	25	Memorial Day Holiday (Districtwide)
May	26-27	Teacher Planning/In-service Day

Contacting the School

You may contact Rickards High School 24 hours per day at (850) 414-5500. The receptionist is available to answer your calls between 7 AM and 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday, during the **regular school year**. During the summer, Monday through Thursday, between 7:30 AM and 4:30 PM. For calls outside of these windows, you will be directed to our automated system. Please leave a detailed message, and someone will get back to you.

Visitors

We welcome parents and community volunteers to our campus. We do request that:

1. **All visitors must report to the Administration building** immediately upon arriving on campus and **present valid state identification**.
2. Appointments are required when meeting to discuss concerns with the appropriate administrator, teacher, or guidance counselor.

For the safety of all concerned, visitors on our campus who do not follow the proper procedures will be identified as trespassers and treated accordingly.

Concerns

If a student or parent has a concern regarding a school policy or a member of the school staff, the following steps should be taken to ensure a timely and effective resolution:

1. **Initial Contact:** Speak directly with the individual involved to address the concern.
2. **Administrative Review:** If the issue remains unresolved, reach out to the assistant principal responsible for the relevant area.
3. **Escalation:** Should the concern persist, contact the school principal for further assistance.

Curriculum And Guidance

School counselors are available to assist students in various areas, including academic planning, conflict resolution, personal support, and guidance related to career paths, college selections, and scholarship opportunities.

To ensure individualized attention and efficient service, the student population is divided alphabetically among the counseling staff.

- **Students** may request an appointment with their assigned counselor by visiting the guidance office before or after school, between class periods, or during lunch.
- **Parents** seeking to arrange a conference may do so by contacting the counselor via email or phone.

Graduation Requirement

Graduation requirements for Florida high school students vary depending on the year the student enters ninth grade. For comprehensive and up-to-date information regarding specific criteria, please refer to the [Florida Department of Education's official graduation requirements page](#).

Grading System

The grading system used at Rickards High School for all grades, including examinations, and the interpretations of these letter grades are as follows:

Grade	Percent	GPA Value	Honors Value	IB/AP/Dual Enrollment Value
A	90-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
B	80-89	3.0	3.5	4.0
C	70-79	2.0	2.5	3.0
D	60-69	1.0	1.0	1.0
F	0-59	0	0	0

*Methods for weighing the GPA for Bright Futures Scholarships, NCAA eligibility, and college admissions differ from the weighting procedures outlined above.

Semester grades for each course are determined by totaling the points which are listed below for each of the two nine-week grading periods and adding the points earned on the semester examination to this total. Use the semester grade totals below to determine the semester grade.

Grade	Grading Period	Semester Exam	Semester Grade
A	8 Points	4 Points	18 – 20 pts. = A
B	6 Points	3 Points	13 – 17 pts = B
C	4 Points	2 Points	8 – 12 pts = C
D	2 Points	1 Points	3 – 7 pts = D
E	0 Point	0 Points	0 – 2 pts. = F

A student earning three (3) or more points during the first marking period must earn at least one (1) additional point to earn credit for the semester. Should a student earn no additional points, the final grade average for the course for the semester will be “F”. In other words, an “F” in the second or fourth nine weeks and an “F” on the exam equals an “F” for the semester, and no credit will be earned.

Interim Progress Reports and Report Cards

Interim progress reports are posted in Focus four (4) times during the school year, at the midpoint of each nine-week grading period. Report cards are posted in Focus four (4) times during the year and sent by email to the primary contact. Parents may check a student’s grades by using Focus. The student ID and password will be provided at the beginning of the school year. The guidance department can provide passwords to students who have forgotten/lost theirs.

Classification of High School Students

Students advance through high school based on the number of academic credits earned and their cumulative grade point average (GPA), rather than the length of time spent in attendance.

- One-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) credit is awarded for each course successfully completed during a regular semester.
- Successful completion requires demonstrated mastery of at least 60% of the course performance standards.

Student Classification Criteria

Grade Level	Credit Requirement	Minimum GPA (Unweighted, 4.0 Scale)
Freshman	Assigned to 9th grade	N/A
Sophomore	5 credits	1.0
Junior	10 credits	1.5
Senior	17 credits	2.0

Scheduling

At Rickards High School, student schedules are developed through a collaborative and thoughtful process designed to reflect individual academic needs and interests.

Course Request Process

- Students select their courses in the spring semester via the course request form, with input from teachers and parents.
- Requested courses are verified in May through the Student Portal (Focus).
- Annual schedules are based on submitted course requests, and staffing decisions are aligned with the courses selected by students.

Creating these schedules for a large student body requires extensive planning and effort from the scheduling team. Faculty assignments and hiring decisions are influenced by student course demand.

Schedule Change Policy

Schedule changes will only be considered for the following reasons:

1. Remediation required by state mandates
2. The student has already earned credit for the course
3. Seniors needing credits to graduate
4. Teacher recommendation
5. Scheduling conflicts

Academic Placement and Level Changes

Rickards High School is committed to enrolling students in classes that best match their academic abilities. Level changes may be granted when the following conditions are met:

1. The student has completed all class assignments.
2. A teacher recommends the level change.
3. The student has actively sought help (e.g., from teachers, tutoring services, etc.).

2026 Advanced Placement Exam Days

April 4 - 15

2026 International Baccalaureate Exam Days

April 28 – 30 and May 2-20

Scholarship Information

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program offers three distinct scholarship levels to support students pursuing postsecondary education:

- Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)
- Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV)

Each scholarship has specific eligibility requirements related to GPA, standardized test scores, coursework, and service hours. Students are encouraged to begin planning for these scholarships as early as ninth grade to ensure they meet all necessary criteria.

For detailed information on eligibility, application procedures, and award amounts, please visit the <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/factsheets/BF.htm>

Many scholarship opportunities are available for both underclassmen and seniors. Students should check the guidance webpage, FOCUS, and the Guidance Office for application information.

Honors for Academic Excellence

Semester Honor Roll Recognition

The Administration recognizes Honor Roll recipients for the 1st Semester.

Senior Class Honor Recognition

Seniors qualify for academic awards based on their Unweighted cumulative average at the end of the first semester of their senior year. Class rank is determined by using the weighted GPA to three places past the decimal.

Recognition Weighted GPA Regalia

- Honors Scholar (3.000 – 3.499 GPA)
- High Honors Scholar (3.500-3.699 GPA)
- Cum Laude (3.700-3.799 GPA)
- Magna Cum Laude (3.800-3.899 GPA)
- Summa Cum Laude (3.900-4.00 GPA)

All academic data must be corrected by the last day of the second nine-week period to be considered for the above awards. Students graduating early (ahead of their cohort) are not eligible to be Valedictorian.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Conduct applies to all students in the district. It applies to activities at school, on school buses or other school property, on field trips, at athletic events, and other school-sponsored activities. State law and district policy also provide for discipline for certain serious offenses by students that occur off campus, at school bus stops, and after school hours.

RULES OF CONDUCT

Expectations

The School Board recognizes that student behavior is directly linked to the success of learning. A well-functioning educational program depends on a safe and structured school environment, and student conduct is a clear reflection of that effectiveness.

The Board—alongside the broader community—sets high expectations for every student’s behavior to ensure that schools remain safe, respectful, and nurturing spaces where all learners can thrive both academically and socially.

Zero Tolerance for Violence Violent or criminal actions committed by students—whether on campus, on school buses, at bus stops, or during any school-sponsored event—will result in the most serious disciplinary consequences as outlined in this policy. Such behavior will not be tolerated.

Self-Discipline and Accountability The Board believes that discipline begins with self-control. Students are expected to take ownership of their actions and understand the impact of their behavior on themselves and others.

Compliance with the Student Code of Conduct All students enrolled within the District are expected to uphold the following standards to promote a respectful, safe, and effective learning environment. These rules emphasize:

- Respect for others and school property
- Appropriate behavior on transportation and during school events
- Adherence to laws and district policies
- Positive contributions to the learning environment
- Maintain conduct that reflects socially acceptable behavior.
- Support the level of order necessary for a productive educational experience.
- Honor the rights and dignity of fellow students and staff.
- Acknowledge and comply with established authority.
- Attend school regularly and actively engage in learning.
- Demonstrate pride and excellence in academic work and school activities.
- Avoid behavior that disrupts the learning of others.
- Foster a safe, respectful, and orderly school atmosphere by observing all school rules and policies.

School Responsibilities

The faculty and staff of Rickards High School will provide a supportive environment through the fair and equitable application of rules and procedures, without discrimination or bias based on:

- Real or perceived race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation
- Ethnicity, ancestry, national origin
- Political beliefs, marital status, age
- Social and family background, linguistic preference, or disability

Parent/Guardian and Community Responsibilities

Parents/guardians and community members are expected to:

- Support student learning
- Encourage and maintain a safe, positive, and orderly environment
- Engage in the planning and development of programs either at the school-wide level or tailored to their child's individual learning experience

Student Expectations and Jurisdiction

Students are subject to school policies and disciplines:

- While waiting at a school bus stop
- During transport to or from school
- While attending school or participating in school-sponsored activities on or off campus
- Whenever they are presumed by law to be under school jurisdiction
- While they are present on school premises

Accountability and Consequences

Failure to meet expectations—including misconduct or behaviors that disrupt learning—will result in:

- Intervention strategies to guide behavioral improvement
- Informal consequences such as verbal warnings or parental engagement
- Formal consequences where necessary, aligned with the Student Code of Conduct

Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions

When a student fails to meet behavioral expectations or engages in misconduct during school hours, while being transported to or from school, at school-sponsored activities, or while on school premises, interventions and disciplinary actions may be implemented. These responses are intended to promote accountability and maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

The Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code designates sanctions for the infractions of rules, which shall:

- Be proportionate and appropriate to the nature and severity of the infraction
- Support the student's growth by teaching personal accountability and responsible decision-making
- Promote restoration by addressing and reducing the impact of any harm caused by the behavior.

Rickards High School prioritizes constructive consequences and restorative practices wherever feasible.

Rickards High School Honor Code

Rickards High School requires every student to uphold exemplary standards of honor and integrity. Developed collaboratively by students, faculty, and parents, the Honor Code establishes clear benchmarks for ethical conduct and serves as a foundational resource in classroom instruction. To ensure its effectiveness, students are encouraged to report any observed violations or illegal actions to a teacher, the dean, an assistant principal, or the principal. Likewise, any teacher who becomes aware of a breach of the Honor Code must promptly notify the Assistant Principal of Discipline.

Under the Rickards Honor Code, every member of our community is expected to:

1. Show respect for all individuals and for the school as an institution. This includes honoring the religious, ethnic, social, and economic diversity of everyone in our community. Any form of prejudice based on religion, race, gender, or ethnicity is strictly prohibited.
2. Uphold honesty in every endeavor. Lying, cheating, plagiarism, and stealing are serious violations. If you're unsure whether an action constitutes cheating, ask your teacher for guidance. Before each test, quiz, or as otherwise directed, you will affirm the following pledge: "On my Honor as a Rickards High Student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid of any kind on this work." Falsely signing this pledge is itself an act of dishonesty and cheating.
3. Protect and preserve the property of Rickards High School and its broader community. Students are responsible for maintaining our campus; littering, vandalism, and malicious mischief are forbidden.

Cheating

Rickards High School upholds rigorous standards of personal integrity for its students. Parents can reinforce these ideals by discussing ethical expectations at home. The following guidelines illustrate common forms of cheating; they are not all-inclusive. Faculty and administrators retain final authority to determine what constitutes academic dishonesty.

The following actions constitute cheating and will result in disciplinary action:

1. Reproducing another student's homework or permitting someone to copy your own work, in any format.
2. Copying conclusions from lab partners (independently recording and analyzing data remains acceptable).
3. Using unauthorized materials (notes, textbooks, electronic devices, etc.) during a test or quiz.
4. Soliciting or sharing detailed content about an exam already taken by someone else.
5. Exchanging information with peers during an assessment, including looking at another's answers or allowing them to view yours.
6. Talking during a test or quiz, even after submitting your paper.
7. Submitting work—whether written by another student, a parent, or a published source—as your own.
8. Listing sources in a bibliography that you have neither read nor used, and presenting that list as your own Works Cited.
9. Having someone else type or format your paper without acknowledging their assistance.
10. Copying and pasting text from internet sites without proper citation.
11. Distributing or sharing copies of tests or other proprietary course materials, electronically or by any other means.

Note: Requesting or providing answers on homework or tests is equally unacceptable. This rule applies to all sources—print or electronic (computers, radio, television, video, etc.). Any material copied directly from another source is considered cheating unless it is fully rewritten in your own words or placed in quotation marks. Violations may result in up to three days of out-of-school suspension.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves using someone else's words or ideas without proper acknowledgment. This can occur through incorrect citation, omitting citations entirely, or relying too heavily on external sources without paraphrasing in your own words.

By failing to credit the original creator, you mislead your reader and deny them the opportunity to consult the primary material.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity, breaches your responsibilities as a student writer, and betrays the trust of both your audience and the research community. Whether intentional or accidental, it converts another author's work into your own.

This violation also covers informal or unpublished materials, reusing a paper for multiple courses, or purchasing work from someone else. Because it constitutes intellectual theft, most colleges and universities treat plagiarism as a serious academic offense, with penalties ranging from an F on the assignment to course failure or expulsion.

Citizenship

Teachers record citizenship grades on report cards based on the following:

- Cooperative attitude toward classmates and staff
- Consideration and respect for others
- Punctual arrival to class
- Preparation and readiness to work
- Appropriate behavior in the classroom
- Care and respect for school property and equipment
- Consistent attendance

Detentions may be issued at the teacher's discretion.

Textbook and Chromebook Policy

Students are responsible for the full replacement cost of any lost or damaged textbooks or Chromebooks. All financial obligations are recorded and tracked by the school.

- Failure to resolve outstanding balances will result in the loss of certain privileges, including:
- Participation in the school-sponsored senior trip
- Attendance at the graduation ceremony
- Renewal of second-semester parking permits
- Eligibility for off-campus passes

To avoid disruptions, students should address all obligations promptly.

Attendance Policy

Leon County Schools outlines its attendance policy during the first week of school via Focus, the student information system. Students are expected to:

- Attend every class daily
- Arrive on time and prepared
- Maintain a positive and respectful attitude toward learning
- The school tracks all aspects of attendance—including absences, tardies, and early dismissals—through official online teacher records. These records serve as the final measure for determining a student's attendance status.

Students who are present at school-sanctioned events or activities are counted as present for attendance purposes.

Absences

Consistent attendance is essential to a student's academic growth and success. Missing school disrupts the learning process—students may lose valuable instruction, miss concept development, and struggle with sequential learning, leading to gaps in understanding and performance.

To promote reliable attendance, absences are excused for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Medical treatment or appointments
- Legal obligations
- Death in the family

Students participating in officially recognized school functions are marked present and are not penalized for being out of class.

Documenting Absences

To properly document a student's absence, parents or guardians should use the Excused Absence Form found on the Student Affairs webpage on the day the student returns to school. The documentation must clearly state:

- The specific date(s) the student was absent
- The legally recognized reason for the absence (e.g., illness, medical appointment, legal obligation, family emergency)

Submitting accurate and timely documentation ensures the absence is correctly recorded and helps maintain compliance with school attendance policies.

Pre-Arranged Absence Policy

To support meaningful learning opportunities beyond the classroom, Leon County Schools allows Students to be excused from school for certain pre-approved activities. These include religious observances, college visits, and other educational experiences. To receive an excused absence, students **must arrange approval in advance** and provide necessary documentation.

Approved Absence Type:

Religious Holidays

- A list of recognized holidays is provided by Leon County Schools.
- Forms requesting absence for religious observance should be submitted at the start of the school year.

College/Higher-Education Visits

- Visits must be coordinated with the institution of interest.
- Absences must be approved by administration at least one week in advance.
- Students must submit official documentation from the institution upon return.

Educational Experiences

- Includes activities such as participating in legislative sessions or extended family trips with educational value.
- Must be approved by administration one week in advance.
- Additional documentation may be required after returning.

All absence request forms can be picked up from the Student Affairs Office or the Student Affairs Webpage.

Unexcused Absences

An absence is considered unexcused if it lacks appropriate documentation or has not received administrative approval. To maintain accurate attendance records, the following apply:

- Extended Absences: Any absence exceeding five consecutive days or totaling ten days within a grading period may require formal documentation from a medical or legal authority.
- Vacations/Family Trips: These are generally not excused unless the trip offers clear educational value and has been pre-approved by school administration.

It's important for students and families to follow proper procedures when planning time away to avoid academic and disciplinary consequences. After three unexcused absences, teachers are required by law to complete a CSAP.

Signing Out Procedures

Students who need to leave campus before the end of the school day must be properly signed out through the attendance office by an approved adult. Signing out does not excuse the absence; it simply documents the departure.

Important Guidelines:

- Students who leave campus without signing out will be marked as “skipping” and their absence will be listed as unexcused.
- Failure to return after lunch is also considered skipping and recorded as an unexcused absence.
- Only a parent or legal guardian, or an adult listed in Focus as an authorized pickup contact, may sign a student out. This can be done in person or via a phone call from a verified number.

Following these procedures helps ensure both safety and accuracy in attendance reporting.

Tardy

Timeliness is essential for maintaining a productive learning environment. Students are marked **tardy** if they arrive **after the tardy bell but within 10 minutes** of the start of the period. Arrivals **more than 15 minutes after class begins** are considered **skipping** and will result in **Level 2 disciplinary action**.

After the 4th tardy, students will be assigned a full day of ISS (In-School Suspension). Each additional tardy will trigger another full day of ISS, assigned for the following day.

Tardy counts reset at the start of the grading period.

Make-Up Work

Students with excused absences have the right to complete missed assignments and activities. To support academic success, Rickards High School encourages clear communication between students and teachers following an absence.

Time to Complete Work

- The time allowed to complete make-up work is usually equal to the number of days absent.
- Teachers may extend the deadline at their discretion depending on the circumstances of the absence.

Student Responsibilities

- It is the student's responsibility to obtain and complete all make-up assignments.
- Students absent for three or more days should contact teachers to request specific assignments.
- Assignments can be checked anytime via the Canvas assignment page on student Chromebooks.
- Upon returning to school, students must confirm expectations for make-up work with each teacher on the first day back.
- Failure to complete make-up work within the allowed time may result in a failing grade.

Senior Skip Days

“Senior Skip Days” are **not officially recognized** by Rickards High School. Any student absence on a skip day will be classified as **skipping**. These absences are recorded as **unexcused** and may result in disciplinary action or loss of privileges.

Attendance Appeals

Students whose unexcused absences result in revoked privileges may submit an appeal.

- Appeals must be made through the Attendance Office.
- Students should request a meeting with Mr. Cowart to begin the appeal process.

Attendance Interventions:

- Attendance Contracts
- Student Conferences
- Parent Conferences
- Detention
- ISS (In-School Suspension)
- Saturday School(s)
- Loss of parking or off-campus privileges

Monitoring Attendance

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to keep track of attendance through:

- The **Leon Focus Portal**
- Automated calls from the **Leon County Schools auto-dialer**

Consequences of Unresolved Attendance Issues

Students with ongoing, unforgiven attendance violations will be ineligible to:

- Receive a parking pass for campus
- Obtain an off-campus lunch pass

Hall Passes Policy

Students must follow the guidelines below when outside the classroom during instructional time.

Hall Pass Requirement:

- All students must carry a hall pass issued by their current teacher.
- Passes must include the student's name, destination, time issued, and teacher's signature.

Restricted Activities

While in the hallways or outside of class, students are **not permitted** to:

- Use **electronic devices** (phones, earbuds, tablets, etc.)
- Visit **vending machines**
- Be in the **parking lots**

Violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action and loss of pass privileges.

Clinic and Medical Assistance Policy

Students who require first aid or health-related support during the school day must follow these procedures.

Reporting to the Clinic:

- Students must obtain a **pass from a teacher** before reporting to the **front office secretary**.
- If it becomes necessary for the student to leave campus due to illness or injury, a **parent or guardian will be contacted**.

Reporting Injuries

- Any injury occurring on campus must be reported immediately to a teacher or school official.

Administering Medication at School

While administering medication is **not preferred**, it may occur when necessary. All medications—including **over-the-counter** drugs—must be checked into the front office **with proper documentation**.

Required Documentation:

1. A **written order from a physician** including:

- Student's name
 - Name of the medication
 - Dosage
 - Specific time intervals for administration
2. A **written permission form** from the student's **parent or guardian** requesting compliance with the physician's order.

Emergency Contact Information

To ensure safety and proper communication:

- **Emergency contact information** must be **on file in the front office**.
- This includes **phone numbers and addresses**.
- Information should be **updated yearly** or **whenever changes occur**.
- It is the **parent/guardian's responsibility** to notify the **registrar of updates**.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Policies and Procedures supported by LCSB Policy 5500

Alcohol & Drugs

The possession, use, sale, distribution, or presence under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, "look-alike" drugs, steroids, or **drug paraphernalia** is strictly **prohibited** on all school property and at any school-sponsored event—**on or off campus**.

- Disciplinary action applies **even if the violation is based on suspicion**.
- Minimum penalty: **5-day out-of-school suspension**.
- Maximum penalty: **permanent expulsion from Leon County Schools and recommendation for prosecution**.

Student Processing and Consequences

First-Time Offense:

- Receives a **5-day out-of-school suspension**.
- May have **2 days rescinded** if enrolled in a **certified adolescent drug rehabilitation/education program**.
 - Must present **official documentation on company letterhead** to Student Affairs.
 - Suspension reduction is only available to **first-time offenders**.

Additional Consequences:

- Automatic revocation of on-campus parking privileges for the rest of the school year.
- Further violations may lead to expulsion and legal prosecution.

Drug Paraphernalia Policy

Supported by Leon County School Board Policy 5530 Reference: Florida Statute FS 893.145

Definition & Application

Vaporizers and other devices used for inhaling controlled substances are considered **drug paraphernalia** and are subject to disciplinary action. Possession or use on campus or at school events is subject to strict enforcement.

Student Processing & Consequences

First-Time Offense:

- Receives a **5-day out-of-school suspension**.
- May return after a **minimum of 3 days** if:
 - A **negative drug test** is submitted to Student Affairs **within 24 hours** of the incident.

If the drug test is positive or refused:

- Suspension reduction to **3 days** is only possible if the student is enrolled in a **certified adolescent drug rehabilitation/educational program**.
 - Proof of enrollment must be submitted on **company letterhead**.
 - Reduction applies **only to first-time offenders**.

Additional Penalties:

- **Revocation of on-campus parking** for the rest of the school year.
- Maximum consequence: **Expulsion** from Leon County Schools.
- The case may be referred to **Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO)** for prosecution

Students Selling Drug Paraphernalia

Supported by Leon County School Board Policy 5530 Reference: Florida Statute FS 893.145

Zero Tolerance Policy

Selling drug paraphernalia—including devices like **vaporizers**, which may be used to inhale controlled substances—is a serious offense and will result in strict disciplinary action.

Consequences for Selling

- **10-day out-of-school suspension** on first offense.
- **Suspension rescinding is not available** for students who sell drugs or drug-related items.
- May result in expulsion from Leon County Schools.
- Possible **recommendation for prosecution** through the **Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO)**.

Note: Vaporizers are considered **drug paraphernalia** if they are found in a student's possession and suspected of being used for controlled substance inhalation. These items fall under **Policy 5530**, and enforcement aligns with state law **FS 893.145**.

Tobacco & E-Cigarettes

Governed by Leon County School Board Policy 5512 Location: Rickards High School – Drug-Free School Zone

Restrictions on Use & Possession

- **Use or possession of tobacco** and e-cigarettes is strictly prohibited:
 - Within **1,000 feet** of school grounds
 - At **all school-sponsored events**
- **Applies to all individuals**—students, staff, and visitors
- **Visitors** found using tobacco will be asked to **extinguish or discard** the product immediately

Consequences for Students

- **3-day out-of-school suspension (OSS)** for violations
- Suspension may lead to **revocation of on-campus parking privileges** for the rest of the school year
- See Drug Policy section for related disciplinary guidance

Social Media: Racially Charged/Lewd/Harassing/Inappropriate Communication

Policy Scope: On- & Off-Campus Conduct applies to all students in connection with the school environment.

Impact of Social Media Behavior

All digital communication—including posts, messages, images, and videos shared on social media platforms—can affect the safety, welfare, and rights of students, staff, and the broader school community.

- Applies to both **on-campus and off-campus** behavior

- Any conduct deemed **dangerous, harmful, or infringing** will trigger disciplinary action
- Protecting the rights and safety of students and employees is the top priority

Consequences of Inappropriate Use of Social Media

- Minimum of **3-day out-of-school suspension (OSS)**
- Up to and including **recommendation for expulsion** from Leon County Schools
- Investigations and consequences will be determined based on the **nature and severity** of the use of social media

Personal Communication Devices (PCD's) / Smart Watches

Includes cell phones, smartwatches, and other wireless devices Governed by Leon County Schools Policy 5136 and Florida Statute 1006.07

Usage Rules

- PCDs must be **completely powered off ("hard power off") during class time.**
- Devices may be used **only** in approved areas:
 - Before school
 - Between classes (transition)
 - During lunch
 - After school
 - In hallways or outdoor areas during non-instructional time
- Use during class is **strictly prohibited** unless a teacher permits it for **educational purposes.**
- Use in **bathrooms or hallways during class time** is also not allowed.

Consequences for Unauthorized Use

Infraction	Consequences
1 st Offense	Verbal warning and asked to put device away
2 nd Offense	Teacher-issued detention and parent contact
3 rd Offense and Beyond	Administrative referral; possible penalties: admin detention, Saturday School, ISS, or OSS

Note: If a student refuses to put their device away when asked, they will receive a **referral and out-of-school suspension (OSS).**

Computers, Digital Devices, and Cell Phones Policies Rickards High School — School-Wide Technology Guidelines

Allowed Use

- Use computers/devices **for academic work only**
- Follow all posted rules and the teacher's instructions

Prohibited Behavior

- No food, gum, or chewing tobacco in computer labs (including IRC)
- No games unless assigned by a teacher
- No obscene or inappropriate images/texts
- No loud/disruptive behavior; wear headphones **only with teacher approval**
- No unauthorized earbud use (earbuds will be confiscated)
- No sharing of passwords/logins — both parties will be disciplined
- No hardware or software changes to computers (e.g., display settings, printer settings)
- No copying licensed software — violations = serious consequences

Student Responsibilities

- Check equipment at the start of class
- Report damage immediately
- Responsible for lost or vandalized equipment

Consequences

Violations may result in **disciplinary actions** up to and including:

- **Expulsion recommendations to Leon County Schools**

Dress Code Policy

Rickards High School — Per Leon County Schools Policy 5511 & Florida Law

General Expectations

- Dress appropriately for school at all times
- Attire must not disrupt the learning environment
- Accommodations allowed for **medical, cultural, or religious reasons**
- Administration has the right to determine inappropriate dress or grooming

Prohibited Clothing & Accessories

- Sexually suggestive or vulgar items: Includes **offensive images, crude language, or gang symbols**
- Pajamas & bedroom/house slippers: Not acceptable as daily school attire
- Sheer or see-through clothing: Clothing must cover the stomach, chest, and rear end at all times
- Visible undergarments: Prohibited under Florida's Sagging Pants Law
- Depictions of drugs, tobacco, alcohol: Including logos, images, or references
- Bandanas: Not allowed anywhere on campus

Dress Code Violations: Consequences

Students are expected to follow the Rickards High School dress code. Violations will result in escalating disciplinary measures. Appropriate clothing will be provided when necessary to ensure compliance throughout the school day.

- 1st Offense: Verbal warning + change of clothes provided
- 2nd Offense: Assigned Detention + parent notification + change of clothes provided
- 3rd offense: Assigned Detention + parent notification + change of clothes provided
- 4th Offense: Parent conference with Student Affairs + assigned ISS + change of clothes provided

Continued Violations Further infractions may result in **suspension from school**, with the length of suspension increasing for each repeat offense.

Off-Campus Lunch Privileges

Eligible **seniors and juniors** may leave campus for lunch under the following conditions:

- Must complete an **off-campus lunch application**
- Maintain a **2.0 GPA or higher** (from the previous semester)
- Have **no outstanding attendance issues**
- Clear all **prior-year obligations**
- Comply with **Rickards High parking policies** (if driving off campus)

Important: Off-campus lunch passes are a privilege, not a right. Passes may be **suspended or revoked** due to **discipline, academic, or attendance** concerns.

Parking Privileges

Parking on campus is a **privilege** provided by the Leon County School Board, available to **seniors and juniors** who meet eligibility requirements. Space is limited, and all parking assignments are subject to administrative approval.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must have an **approved parking permit**
- Maintain a **2.0 GPA each nine-week grading period**
- Resolve **prior-year obligations and attendance issues**

Student Expectations

- Park only in your **assigned space**
- **Do not loiter** in the parking lot during school hours
- **Do not return** to your vehicle during the day unless approved by Student Affairs or the Attendance Office
- **Do not park** in areas designated for **faculty, staff, or visitors**

Violations & Consequences

Reckless driving, disruptive behavior (e.g. loud music), or parking violations may result in:

- **Suspension of parking and/or off-campus privileges**
- **Detention**
- **Out-of-school suspension (OSS)**
- **Warning notice or vehicle towing**
- **Vehicle immobilization (\$40.00 fee)**

Vehicles may be searched at any time by school administration or their designees. Unauthorized vehicles may be **towed at the owner's expense**, with or without prior announcement, in accordance with School Board Policy 5771 and Florida Statutes 715.07. Any **flags, banners, or symbols** deemed offensive or disruptive to the school environment may be removed at the discretion of the administration. **Suspensions related to drugs/alcohol** may lead to immediate **revocation of parking privileges** for the remainder of the school year.

Telephone Use & Deliveries

Protecting Instructional Time at Rickards High School

Phone Use During Class

- Students must not request to use the phone during class time **unless it's an emergency**.
- All **emergency calls require staff permission**.
- Class time is considered sacred and will be protected from non-academic interruptions.

Deliveries & Messages

- Deliveries for students **will not be accepted** at school.
- Classrooms **will not be interrupted** for personal messages.
- All approved messages will be delivered **just before dismissal of the final period**.

Lost and Found

- All found items must be taken to the **Student Affairs/Front office**.

Zero Tolerance — Weapons & Firearms District Policy 5772 Compliance

The possession, use, or threat involving weapons or firearms is strictly prohibited at school, during school events, on school transportation, and at bus stops. This includes—but is not limited to—the following as defined by Florida Statute 790.001:

- Firearms or guns of any kind
- Knives, razors, clubs, and electric weapons
- Martial arts weapons, ammunition, explosives
- Metallic knuckles and other dangerous objects

Note: Any item used, intended to be used, or represented as capable of causing serious bodily harm or property damage may be considered a weapon.

Mandatory Reporting

- Students must report knowledge of weapons, threats, or violent behavior to the site administrator.
- Failure to report may result in disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Consequences

Students who bring a weapon/firearm, make threats, or submit false reports involving school personnel, property, or activities:

- Will be **expelled for no less than one full calendar year**, with or without continuing education services
- Will be **referred for criminal prosecution**
- May be assigned to the **Ghazvini Learning Center** or a disciplinary program
- The **Superintendent may modify the expulsion period** on a case-by-case basis based on the best interest of the student and the school system

Disciplinary Actions

Guidelines for In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, and Expulsion

In-School Suspension (ISS)

- ISS provides an alternative classroom setting for students removed from regular classes.
- Students continue working on **essential assignments** provided by their regular teachers.
- **Report Time:** Students must check in to Student Affairs by **7:30 a.m.**
- **Cellphones** will be collected and securely stored by the assigned teacher or administrator.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

- Students may be suspended **from school or from bus transportation**.
- All related absences will be recorded as **administrative absences**.
- Students are allowed to **make up all missed assignments**.
- Suspended students may **not participate in or attend any school-sponsored activities** during their suspension.

Expulsion

- Expulsion is the **removal of access to the traditional Leon County School experience**.
- Students will be placed in an **alternative educational setting or assigned to home school**.
- Expulsion may be recommended for **serious or repeated misconduct**.
- Only the **Leon County School Board** can enforce or rescind expulsion.
- Expulsion length may extend through the remainder of the current school year plus **one additional school year**.
- The principal will initiate a **10-day suspension** with a formal recommendation for expulsion.
- Notification will be sent to the **Superintendent and the student's parents** by official letter.
- For more details, see the **Student Code of Conduct**.

Athletics

Team Guidelines & Oversight

- Athletic teams are created and supervised by **school administration**.
- Each team operates under the guidance of the **Athletic Director** and the appointed **head coach**.
- All sports programs follow the **rules, procedures, and regulations** set forth by:
 - The **Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA)**
 - The **Leon County Co-Curricular Handbook**

For any questions or concerns, students and families should contact the **head coach or Athletic Director** directly.

Baseball	Phillip Blake
Basketball (girls)	Chariya Davis
Basketball (boys)	Eli Bryant
Bowling (girls/boys)	Miranda Dobbs
Competitive Cheer	Johnetta Wells
Cross Country	TBA
Dance	TBA
Flag Football	Antonio Wimberly
Football	Quintin Lewis
Golf (boys/girls)	Jeff Rauschenberg
Lacrosse	TBA
Sand Volleyball	Jamilah Loriston
Soccer (girls)	TBA
Soccer (boys)	Chris Holland
Softball	TBA
Swimming & Diving	Arlando Williams
Tennis	Jeff Rauschenberg
Track and Field (boys)	TBA
Track and Field (boys)	TBA
Volleyball (girls)	Jamilah Loriston
Weightlifting (girls)	Terraca Jones
Weightlifting (boys)	Quintin Lewis
Wrestling	Roosevelt Sea (Interim)

Off-season conditioning opportunities are scheduled for most sports. Contact the coach for more information. We ask that every student athlete be registered on the Athletics Clarence Website.

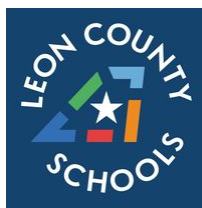
FHSAA physical forms (good for one year from the date of the physician's signature) are required to participate in any of the above sports. All forms are available for download on the Rickards website under the Athletics tab. After all required forms are complete, students should receive their green clearance form from Ms. Mendoza.

Student Organizations & Activities

All students are encouraged to participate in the many and varied extracurricular offerings. To be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.00 as defined by the Florida Legislature (FS232.425). Each established club must be recognized by the administration and have a Rickards employee to serve as faculty sponsor. All club activities will abide by Leon County School Board policy and are open to ALL Rickards High School students. Any form of initiation must be approved by the administration and adhere to school board policy. **Hazing is strictly forbidden in any form.**

Internet Access

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of privileges. The use of student accounts must be related to class assignments (i.e., school research) and follow the policies of the Leon County School District's Internet and Network Use Guidelines. A copy of these Guidelines may be obtained from the Technology Coordinator. Each student **MUST** complete an Internet Access form, signed by the student and parent/guardian, before school Internet accounts are activated.



NONDISCRIMINATION NOTIFICATION & CONTACT

"No person shall on the basis of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, color, pregnancy, disability, military status or genetic information be denied employment, receipt of services, access to or participation in school activities or programs if qualified to receive such services, or otherwise be discriminated against or placed in a hostile environment in any educational program or activity including those receiving federal financial assistance, except as provided by law." No person shall deny equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.

An employee, student, parent or applicant alleging discrimination with respect to employment, or any educational program or activity may contact:

Tonja Fitzgerald, Divisional Director Equity
Compliance Officer (Students) Leon County School
District
2757 West Pensacola Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304
(850) 487-7309
fitzgeraldt@leonschools.net

Wallace Knight, Director Equity
Compliance Officer (Employees)
Title IX Compliance Officer Leon
County School District 2757
West Pensacola Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304
(850) 487-7210
knightwa@leonschools.net

A student or parent alleging discrimination as it relates to Section 504 of the
Rehabilitation Act may contact:

Jennifer Benton, 504 Specialist
(850) 487-7317
bentonj@leonschools.net