

The Non-Negotiables

In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to academic progress, many Winter Springs teachers, with the support of the administrative team, are cooperating in the application of rules. This program is called the Non-Negotiables.

The Five Non-Negotiable

1. Students will be on-time and ready to learn when the bell rings and class begins.
2. Unapproved electronic devices—such as cell phones, iPods, and other music players—will not be seen, heard, or used during the instructional day.
3. Food and drink (with the possible exception of water) is not permitted in classrooms.
4. Dress code must be followed.
5. Students will participate in classroom activities.

Note that the program introduces no rules new either to Winter Springs High School or to Seminole County Public Schools; it simply supports the consistent and uniform application of these rules on campus.

The goal of the Non-Negotiables is to enhance the learning environment by removing distractions from the school. Another goal of the Non-Negotiables is to make following the rules easier for students who have become confused by past uneven application of these tenets.

The Non-Negotiables are posted in all participating classes throughout the year, so that students can always remind themselves of the discipline code.

The introduction of the Non-Negotiables on the first day of class attendance serves as adequate communication and activates their implementation. The first offense of any of these rules will result in a teacher-assigned detention. The second offense will result in a second teacher-assigned detention. The third offense and all subsequent offenses may result in a teacher-assigned detention or a referral to the discipline office.

Teacher-assigned detentions will be held from 2:30 pm–3:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If a detention is assigned on Monday or Tuesday, that detention is to be served that Thursday; if the detention is assigned Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, it is to be served the following Tuesday. The assignment of a teacher-assigned detention will be accompanied by a note home to the parent/guardian through the student that gives the reason for the detention and the time and location where the detention is to be served and with what teacher. This note fulfills the requirement for parental notification. Students are instructed to bring this detention notice with the signature of a parent or legal guardian to their detention, although students failing to do so will still be allowed to successfully serve their detention. A missed teacher-assigned detention will result in an automatic referral to the discipline office.

Anticipated questions regarding the Non-Negotiables

Concerning tardiness: What consists of tardiness? As each teacher has a unique learning environment and classroom style, each will have a slightly nuanced interpretation of this rule. The best advice for a student to adhere to these rules is to be in his seat, with all required materials ready when the bell rings.

Concerning cell-phones: How can parents stay in touch with their children? There are many ways for parents to stay in touch with their children without compromising the academic environment of a school setting. For predictable issues, parents and children are encouraged to communicate before the school day. This would include information about scheduled doctor's appointments, scheduled club and activity meetings and practices, and scheduled transportation arrangements. Situations may arise where a parent needs to contact a child during the school day. Parents are encouraged to contact Winter Springs High School at 407-320-8750. If the message is not of immediate urgency, but requires action or communication before the end of the

school day, a message will be delivered to the child. If a message is of immediate urgency, the parent's telephone call will be routed directly to the teacher's classroom where their student is in attendance. Students may also request permission to use a school telephone to contact a parent should the need arise. Even if a parent is the cause a child's violation of the policy on cell phones not being seen, heard, or used, the child will not be excused from the consequences of the infraction.

Concerning electronics: What about headphones? Visible headphones and anything that they are attached to will be subject to this rule. Headphones hanging out of the collar of a shirt or dangling from the ears or the neck, even if they are not currently attached to anything, or Bluetooth earpieces are themselves unapproved electronic devices, and they will activate implementation of the Non-Negotiables.

Concerning electronics: Will electronics (phones, music players, headphones, etc.) be confiscated? Yes. Any unapproved electronic device will be confiscated if seen by a Non-Negotiable teacher. Students are to surrender the offending electronic device to the teacher. The teacher will put the device in a zip-loc bag with the name that the student provides on a note. That package will be taken to the discipline office. The student may retrieve the device any time after the end of that school day. Since students will be required to present ID to retrieve an item, they must give their own name at the time of the violation; giving a false name in order to attempt to avoid detention will result in a referral. Students may not retrieve items for others.

Concerning the food or drink provision: What will happen to the food or drink that the student has that results in the violation? That is up to the teacher. The general viewpoint is that food or drink that consists of something healthful that is intended to be part of a nutritious lunch or after-school snack will be retained by the student to be put into a backpack or purse until the appropriate time of the school day, but items that are unhealthful (chips, candy, cookies, soda, energy drinks, coffee, et al.) may be discarded. Failure to comply with these instructions will result in a referral to the discipline office. Best advice: Save lunch until lunch, and there will never be a problem. Note that plain water is generally permitted.

Concerning the food or drink provision: My child is diabetic or has another medical condition that requires more frequent caloric intake. How does this fit in with The Non-Negotiables? All medical diagnoses, treatments, and maintenance that will affect a child during the school day should be noted to the school and the district according to the governing policies and laws. Please contact the school nurse or an administrator to make the necessary provisions. If an exception needs to be negotiated and implemented, this is the first step.

Concerning the food and drink provision: How will gum chewing be treated? Gum chewing is not allowed in Seminole County Public Schools. Students who chew gum should note that this behavior puts them at risk for disciplinary action.

Concerning the dress code: What are the official guidelines for the dress code? The Seminole County Public Schools Student Conduct and Discipline Code 2008-2009 outlines the Student Appearance and Dress Code. Please familiarize yourself with it.

Concerning the dress code: What happens when a student who is informed of a dress code violation disagrees with the school official's interpretation? A final decision will be made by an official from the discipline office (a dean or an assistant principal or a legal designee).

Concerning the dress code: What happens when a student who is informed of a dress code violation offers to immediately rectify the situation, e.g.: "I can put on a jacket over my spaghetti-strap outfit. I have it in my backpack.?" The student has already voluntarily violated dress code. The promise to stop violating dress is an explicit admission of breaking dress code. A teacher-assigned detention for current non-compliance will

not be avoided by a promise of future compliance. A student in such a situation will receive a teacher-assigned detention AND will be required to rectify the dress code infraction.

Concerning the dress code: How will a student who is informed of a dress code violation be informed to rectify the situation? The discipline office keeps a stock of clothes that comply with the dress code. If there is nothing suitable or appropriate found to bring the student into compliance, a call home may be made to rectify the situation. If a student takes himself out of compliance by undoing the remedy provided, that student is subject to further citations for violation of dress code.

Concerning student participation: What consists of adequate student participation? The absolute minimum threshold for student participation requires that they are to be attentive. Inattentive behavior is defined in the Seminole County Public Schools Student Conduct and Discipline Code as “conduct that demonstrates a lack of engagement or attention in lessons or class activities, including, but not limited to, non-participation, putting head down on desk, napping, or sleeping in class.” Interpretation of “lack of engagement or inattention” and “non-participation” will be up to the teacher. An interpretation of these provisions can be appealed to the administrative team from the discipline office. Non-Negotiable teachers help students who seem about to violate this rule with a reminder and suggestions about actions the student can take to ensure adequate participation.