



Student Handbook

Mission

Ridge Technical College will assess, prepare, and place individuals in successful and rewarding careers in an increasingly competitive and changing employment market.

Vision

Ridge Technical College will be Polk County's premier workforce training institution.



Mission Statement:

The Mission of Polk County Public Schools is to provide a high quality education for all students.

Ridge Technical College is accredited by:

The Commission of the Council on Occupational Education (COE), 41 Perimeter Center East, NE, Suite 640, Atlanta, Georgia (www.council.org) 770.396.3898.



AdvancED 9115 Westside Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30009
(www.advanc-ed.org) 888.413.3669.



Ridge Technical College is part of the Polk County Public School System. All programs offered at the college are approved by the Florida Department of Education and most are approved by the Bureau of State Approving for Veterans' Training-Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance-Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and the U.S. Department of Education.

**The School Board of Polk County, Florida
Nondiscrimination Statement:**

The School Board of Polk County, Florida, prohibits any and all forms of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, age, homelessness, disability, genetic information or other basis prohibited by law in any of its programs, services, activities or employment. To file concerns, you may contact the Office of Equity & Compliance, Human Resource Services at 863-534-0513.

The School Board of Polk County, Florida, Policies 1.006 and 1.011, Florida Educational Equity Act, Section 1000.05, F.S., Rule 6A-19.000 through 6A-19.010, FAC, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504, Americans with Disabilities Act, Vocational Guidelines, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and Title IX.

Welcome,

Thank you for enrolling at Ridge Technical College to further your education at a postsecondary level. Our faculty and staff are professional individuals who are dedicated to making your experience at Ridge Technical College a successful one. Ridge is an accredited, postsecondary education institution which has been in existence since 1978.

Ridge provides instruction to both adults and high school students in occupational programs leading to a Certificate of Completion. The training opportunities offered will assist you in pursuing a career in the present and future job markets. Programs are designed to accommodate your needs by allowing entrance at various times, working at your own pace, and exiting when training and specific job skills are completed. Counseling, career assessment and job placement are also provided.

This handbook describes Ridge Technical College's policies and operational procedures. Ridge is dedicated in helping you acquire the skills needed for high/skill, high/wage or high demand careers. We hope your experience at Ridge Technical College will be very rewarding for you both personally and professionally. Best wishes to you in your chosen career!

Sincerely,

Dr. Wayne Dickens EdD

Director

THE RIDGE PHILOSOPHY

Every effort is made at Ridge Technical College to assist students in reaching informed decisions about entering career education training programs best suited to their individual needs, interests and aptitudes. Students are encouraged to choose their program after exploring potential choices and discovering their own strengths, weaknesses, aptitudes and interests. The Student Services Department is available to help students with program information, career assessment, financial assistance and completion of registration.

It is Ridge's philosophy to accept students at the level of competency they have achieved upon entering the program and provide skills training for various jobs. We make it possible for each student to meet both short- and long-range employment goals by tailoring instruction to a wide variety of student needs through our policy of open-entry/open-exit, self-paced, and individualized instruction. Students enter and exit Ridge when appropriate training and employment needs have been met. Students make progress through learning experiences at a prescribed rate and focus on attaining the competencies necessary to meet their personal career goals.

Ridge's programs resemble the job setting for which training is being offered. Equipment, tools, supplies and the environment closely match those in the job setting. Each program is managed by instructors who are not only skilled workers in their trade or business, but are well trained in the professional skills of teaching their business or trade to others. Our instructors exhibit pride in their profession and are enthusiastic about teaching it to others.

KNOW YOUR HANDBOOK!

This handbook will help you understand what is expected of you at Ridge. It is important that you study it and keep it handy for quick reference. As you will notice, our approach to learning at Ridge is different from that of other institutions. There are many details which you simply must understand to avoid

making mistakes and wasting your time. Once you have learned about the self-paced system, the rest is easy. This handbook contains clear explanations of many procedures, so read it carefully.

ADMISSION POLICY

Most of the training programs at Ridge Technical College have minimum admission or state licensure requirements. Applicants must be at least sixteen (16) years of age, be interested in career education and have basic skills necessary for potential success in the training program chosen. Students should provide proof of age and two proofs of residence with picture identification. Assessment is accomplished by completing the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) which is used as a diagnostic tool to determine completion of a program. The college complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1973 in regard to students with disabilities. The college also strictly adheres to the Non-discrimination Policy adopted by the School Board of Polk County. Reasonable accommodations can be made for special needs students. Qualified students applying for admission are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis during open enrollment periods.

Admission Procedures for Adult (Postsecondary) Students

1. Take Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment (\$20 fee and picture identification are required prior to testing). This assessment is required for all programs 450 hours and over. Students who possess an Associate Degree of Applied Science or higher level from an accredited institution or graduated 2007 and beyond from a Florida public high school with a standard diploma are exempt from this requirement.
2. Interview with appropriate counselor to interpret test scores; discuss educational plans, future employment possibilities, entry date, tuition and fees.
3. Register for program by:
 - a. Completing a FOCUS application
 - b. Providing a state issued picture identification
 - c. Providing a Social Security Card
 - d. Providing two (2) proofs of residency
 - e. Remitting an application fee of \$30 (cash, checks, credit cards accepted)
4. Apply for financial assistance if applicable and/or pay tuition and fees.

Note: Some programs may require additional steps and/or a formal interview with an additional staff member for admission.

Health Science Education – Adult/Postsecondary Admission Procedures

Applicants desiring entry into the Technical College Health Science Education programs must complete all admission criteria specific to the health program selected and meet all general admission requirements for the college.

1. Take the Level A TABE (if applicable). For most health science programs, a Level A TABE is administered; with the exception of Massage Therapy which is a Level D TABE assessment.
2. Meet with a Guidance Counselor in Student Services and discuss TABE results. Receive information for initial enrollment for program desired.

3. Complete the FOCUS application. Complete all information on the application. Specific program information is provided at monthly information sessions **after** the application process is completed.
4. Submit official high school transcript or official GED grade record. Applicants who graduated from a Florida public high school after 1980 may use the FASTER system; transcripts are electronically transmitted using this system. Transcripts from foreign countries must be translated and evaluated for certification. Official high school transcripts are always required for the Patient Care Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant and Practical Nursing programs.
5. Background screening is required for most health science programs. A Level 2 screen with fingerprinting is required for Practical Nursing. Certain offenses may prevent students from obtaining clinical hours needed for completion of a Health Science Program.
6. Practical Nursing requires the TEAS V (Test of Essential Academic Skills) exam for admission. Days and times of assessment are available from the Health Science Department.

Admission Procedures for High School (Secondary) Students

The college, in conjunction with student's home high school, offers two high school diploma options: the 4-year, 24 credit standard high school diploma; and the State of Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma.

Standard Diploma

Students spend the entire day at the college and can earn elective and academic credits each year. However, due to limited academic offerings at the college, counselors, students and parents/guardians have to carefully develop the first year plan and consecutive years to ensure all credits for graduation can be attained. Tuition and books are free; however, some programs require laboratory fees, kits, consumable supplies and workbooks, uniform costs and/or state testing fees. High school students should remember that the focus of a Technical College is to provide job skills for those individuals ready to seek employment and/or continue into higher education. Students must be willing to accept personal responsibility and function in a career atmosphere.

Entry Procedures:

1. Must be at least 16 years of age.
2. Must be a student (preferably at the junior or senior level) or at the 9th or 10th grade level who only need limited academic credits to graduate.
3. Have an acceptable attendance record.
4. Have a positive discipline record.
5. Must take the TABE assessment.
6. Must take an Interest Inventory and possibly an Aptitude Assessment.
7. Complete FOCUS application in Student Services Department.
8. Consult with a Guidance Counselor. All related paperwork necessary for transferring from the home high school will be explained.
9. Transfer from home high school and report to Technical College with all required paperwork.
10. If all admission requirements are met, space is available, and administrative approval is granted, a counselor will register the student for a program.

State of Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma

In order to prevent many students from dropping out of school at the later middle school level and/or early senior high stages of their educational program, students lagging behind on credits can be designated as 11th or 12th graders for the purpose of allowing them to attend the Technical College under the Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma Option. Grade designation is not based on number of high school credits. If a student returns to a regular high school, grade in school will be based on number of credits. A State of Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma will be awarded for those who successfully pass the FCAT, FSA, GED and attain at least one Career Education Occupational Completion Point.

Entry Procedures:

1. Students are required to take the TABE, Interest and possibly an Aptitude Assessment prior to enrolling.
2. Students must transfer from their last high school or from an out-of-county or middle school and be 16 years of age or older.
3. Students must meet at least one of the alternative education criteria established by Florida Statutes:
 - a. Retained or administrative promotion, one or more times, prior to referral
 - b. Failure to achieve minimum (or master 80% of basic skills) on state assessment testing
 - c. Disinterest in school documented by two or more sources
 - d. Excessive absences

Parents and students who choose this option agree in writing to the following:

1. A regular standard diploma will not be attainable.
2. A State of Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma may be attainable.
3. The primary function of such grade designation is to provide the student with technical job skills.

Students work on career education skills as well as academic skills necessary to pass the GED. Students who meet the appropriate career and academic criteria, as well as successfully pass the FCAT, FSA, GED assessment, earn an Occupational Completion Point in their career education program and maintain excellent attendance will be awarded a Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma. Students enrolling from out-of-county or out-of-state may enroll directly into the Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma Program. They do not have to enter through a high school or middle school. However, they must meet all entrance criteria like any other student new to Polk County. Direct enrollments into the Technical College apply only to the Florida High School Performance-Based Diploma Program and not for students completing their high school credits toward regular graduation.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Ridge Technical College observes the School Board of Polk County Bylaws and Policies <http://www.neola.com/polk-fl> in determining which absences will be excused and which will not.

Polk County Schools Attendance Procedures:

Attendance Expectation	Consequences
Daily attendance	Maximum instructional time Increased opportunity to learn Increased opportunity for academic success/graduation Increased opportunity for social engagement

Excused Absences	Expectations for absences to be excused
Personal Illness	Parent note &/or call for days absent
Family death/illness	Parent note &/or call for days absent
Chronic/long-term illness	Medical documentation
Parent trips	Pre-approved by principal
Educational trips	Pre-approved by principal
School sponsored activity	Pre-arranged w/administration Student to be marked present
Judicial action	Copy of subpoena or summons Notice of juvenile detention
Military dependents visits in time of combat duty	Approved by principal

Excessive Absences	Interventions/Consequences
parent notes accepted for 10 days of illness in 90 calendar days	Letter sent to parent requiring doctor's note for additional absences to be excused <i>Medical Documentation for Absences from School</i> form for chronic/long-term illness

5 unexcused absences in a 30 calendar day period	Letter sent to parent to contact school about reason for absences Parent meeting may be scheduled with Problem Solving Team Attendance contract
10 unexcused absences in a 90 calendar day period	Letter sent to parent scheduling a meeting with the Problem Solving Team Attendance contract
15 unexcused absences in a 90 calendar day period (truancy)	Letter sent to the parent scheduling a meeting with the Problem Solving Team Attendance Contract Possible referral to Youth and Family Alternatives for truancy Possible pursuit of parental prosecution for non-attendance Possible suspension of driver license privileges
50% or more of day absent unexcused	Counted as one unexcused absence for truancy reports

In order to obtain the most from your program at Ridge, **you must be here and on time!** You are held accountable for regular, punctual class attendance, as well as for the constructive use of your class time during each school day. Potential employers will inquire with your instructor and support staff not only about your performance in the program, but also about your attendance.

Attendance is critical for Financial Assistance. All licensure program “make-up time” for the attainment of hours does not count toward Pell Grant or any other financial assistance hours.

Attendance requirements in programs that lead to board licensure may be more stringent than Ridge's overall attendance policy.

Excused Absences: Ridge Technical College observes the School Board of Polk County Bylaws and Policies <http://www.neola.com/polk-fl> in determining which absences will be excused and which will not.

Excessive Absences: If attendance requirements are not met, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) will be notified. Students with excessive absences may be allowed to re-enter the following term, but will be placed on an Attendance Contract.

An adult student may be withdrawn from school if the student accumulates 60 total hours of absences or student is absent five (5) consecutive days and has not initiated a Leave of Absence Request. A Leave of Absence Request (for adults only), may be granted for up to ten (10) consecutive days in a year.

Returning After an Absence: High school students returning to Ridge following any absence should report to the Student Services Department to submit their excuse and receive a completed ‘admission to class’ form indicating the status of the absence. High school students are required to bring in written notes signed by a parent or guardian for all absences on the first day back to school. These notes are kept in the Student Services Department.

Makeup Work for High School Students:

1. Students are expected to make up all work missed for excused absences.

2. Students and parents have the responsibility to request makeup work from their teachers on the first class meeting upon returning to school.
3. Work missed during the student's first three (3) days of unexcused absences during a semester is expected to be made up. This includes absences caused by an out-of-school suspension. **Students request to make up work on the fourth unexcused absence and all other days of unexcused absences per semester may be denied.**
4. The student will have the same number of days absent plus two to submit make-up work for credit. For example, if a student is absent two days, he/she will have four days after returning to school to submit work for credit.
5. High school students must be in attendance a minimum of 67 1/2 hours in accordance with accreditation standards in order to be eligible for the awarding of credit for a half credit. Failure to do so may result in the loss of credit regardless of grade earned.

Note: *If you are continuously ill and repeatedly absent over ten (10) days, a doctor's verification will be required. Medical Documentation for Absences from School form must be completed.*

Checking Out Early: All students, high school and adults, must check out in the Student Services Department prior to leaving campus.

Illness: In case of emergency, such as personal illness, an adult student may be released during school hours. Before leaving, you must check out with your instructor and then check out on the Student Checkout Form in the Student Services Department. If a high school student needs to be released for reasons of illness or other emergency, the parent or guardian will be notified by the Student Services Department. Records are kept by the Student Services Department of departures from campus.

Medical and Dental Appointments: Students are urged to make every effort to arrange appointments of this type outside of school hours. However, if this cannot be arranged, high school students must present a note explaining the circumstance signed by their parent/guardian or doctor, and their parent or guardian may be contacted by telephone to verify.

Tardiness: A warning bell rings at 7:55 a.m. Any students not in their program area by 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. The only exception will be for students riding a bus which arrives late. The instructor will determine if a tardy is excused or unexcused.

Tardiness will be handled in the following manner:

1st Unexcused Tardy - Caution student on punctuality.

2nd Unexcused Tardy - Formal conference with the Guidance Counselor advising student of the college's tardy policy.

3rd Unexcused Tardy - Student will be sent to Assistant Director of Administration with referral.

Ridge Technical College encourages and expects all students enrolled in programs to attend regularly, to derive maximum benefit from the instructional program, and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RIDGE STUDENTS

Insurance: In-school accident insurance is provided for all students. Additional supplemental school insurance is available for a nominal fee.

Identification Badges: Student identification badges are required to be worn by all students. The fee for the RTC picture identification badge is \$5. For new adult students, the ID badge fee is included in the application fee paid at the time of enrollment. The paid receipt for the application fee must be shown to

receive the new ID. High school students will need to pay a \$5 fee to the cashier and receive a receipt prior to having an ID issued. The cost to replace a lost or damaged ID is \$5.

Parking Permits: School issued parking permits are required for any student that desires to park their vehicle on the RTC campus. The decal must be on the lower left-hand corner of the vehicle's rear window. For new adult students, the parking permit decal is included in the application fee paid at the time of enrollment, High school students will be charged \$5. A valid driver license and proof of automobile insurance will be required by all students before the permit will be issued. Parking permits are issued at the at the Cashier's Window Monday through Friday 7:30am to 3:00pm.

Campus Policy: After arriving on campus, students are required to remain in their assigned areas until the conclusion of the school day. The parking lots are NOT considered assigned areas. Except in case of emergency, students will not be excused from their program to go to the parking lot. Students are expected to park before 7:55 a.m. and not return to their vehicle or leave campus before 2:00 p.m. each day. No instructor has the authority to allow any student, either high school or adult, to leave school. Dismissal time is at 2:00 p.m. for most programs and must be strictly adhered to by all students unless an official excuse for early dismissal has been issued by the instructor and approved by personnel in the Student Services Department and/or Administration.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Ridge Technical College is part of the Polk County Public School System. As such, 2017-2018 Parent Guide & Code of Student Conduct is the basis for all school rules and regulations. Students should read this booklet and become familiar with all school policies and rules.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Ridge Technical College follows the Polk County School Board's Policy on Personal Communication Devices (PCD) located in the Code of Student Conduct - **SECTION 5.25**. It states the following:

Students may possess personal communication devices (PCDs) in school, on school property, during after school activities (e.g., extra-curricular activities) and at school-related functions. **Technology including, but not limited to, PCDs intended and actually used for instructional purposes (e.g., taking notes, recording classroom lectures, writing papers) will be permitted, as approved by the classroom teacher or the building principal. However, the use of a PCD to engage in non-education related communications is expressly prohibited.**

For purposes of this policy "personal communication device: includes computers, tablets (e.g., iPads and similar devices), electronic readers ("e-readers"; e.g., Kindles and similar devices), **cell phones (e.g., mobile/cellular telephones), smartphones, (e.g., BlackBerry, iPhone, Android devices, Windows mobile devices, etc.)**, and/or any other web-enabled devices of any type. Students may not use PCDs on school property or at a school-sponsored activity to access and/or view Internet web sites that are otherwise blocked to students at school. Students may use PCDs while riding to and from school on a school bus or other Board-provided vehicles or on a school bus or Board-provided vehicle during school-sponsored activities.

Distracting behavior that creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated. Under certain circumstances, a student may keep his/her PCD "On" with prior approval from the building principal.

PCDs, including but not limited to those with cameras, may not be activated or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include, but are not limited to, locker rooms, shower facilities, rest/bathrooms, and any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The Superintendent and building principals are authorized to determine other specific locations where use of a PCD is absolutely prohibited.

Students shall have no expectation of confidentiality with respect to their use of PCDs on school premises/property.

Students may not use a PCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. See Policy 5517.01- Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior. In particular, students are prohibited from using PCDs to: (1) transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs; and (2) engage in “sexting”- i.e. sending, receiving, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are also prohibited from using a PCD to capture, record, and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using PCDs to receive such information.

Possession of a PCD by a student at school during school hours is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise abuses this privilege.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the PCD. The building principal will also refer the matter to law enforcement or child services if the violation involves an illegal activity (e.g., child pornography, sexting.) Discipline will be imposed on an escalating scale ranging from a warning to an expulsion based on the number of previous violations and/or the nature of or circumstances surrounding a particular violation. If the PCD is confiscated, it will be released/returned to the student’s parent/guardian after the student complies with any other disciplinary consequences that are imposed, unless the violation involves potentially illegal activity in which case the PCD may be turned over to law enforcement. A confiscated device will be marked in a removable manner with the student’s name and held in a secure location in the building’s central office until it is retrieved by the parent/guardian or turned over to law enforcement. School officials will not search or otherwise tamper with PCDs in District custody unless they reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of the law or other school rules. Any search will be conducted in accordance with Policy 5571 – Search and Seizure. If multiple offenses occur, a student may lose his/her privilege to bring a PCD to school for a designated length of time or on a permanent basis.

A person who discovers a student using a PCD in violation of this policy is required to report the violation to the building principal.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their PCDs. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or damage to, or misuse or unauthorized use of, PCDs brought onto its property.

Parents/Guardians are advised that the best way to get in touch with their child during the school day is by calling the school office.

Food Products: Consumption of food and beverages are restricted to the Patio and Cafeteria with the exception of bottled or covered water.

Student Dress and Appearance: The nature of most career education programs dictate that appropriate dress code measures be followed. You are required to wear clothing appropriate to the program in which you are training.

All students are expected to be neat and clean in appearance; however, there are specific dress standards that must be followed.

1. **Shorts:** No Shorts Allowed
2. **Shirts:** **Allowed** - Long or short sleeve, button-up shirts or T-shirts. Sleeveless tops can be worn by girls. Spaghetti straps clothing must be worn with a cover.
Not Allowed: Tank tops or loose sleeves, sheer fabrics that show undergarments, or midriff tops.
3. **Pants:** **Allowed** - Properly fitting long pants or jeans with a belt and worn at the waist.
Not Allowed: Loose-fitting pants that would expose underclothes and/or the body, spandex, stretch tights, or jeans with holes.
4. **In addition to the Polk County School Board Uniform Policy are:**
 - a. No shorts of any kind (capris must fall to mid-calf)
 - b. No spandex pants and/or stretch tights
 - c. No jeans with holes
 - d. No house or bathroom slippers
 - e. No heeled shoes higher than 1½ inches
 - f. No stiletto (type of heel) of any kind
 - g. No flip flops or the like, including plastic/rubber flats
 - h. No blankets of any kind - students must wear appropriate warm clothing
 - i. Shoes must be safe, appropriate, and have enclosed heels or a heel strap (slides and sandals without heel straps may not be worn).
 - j. Clothes must be appropriate size, with waist of garment worn at student's waist.
 - k. Clothing that is too tight or too loose is not appropriate for school.

In industrial programs, long pants and leather shoes or boots are required. Safety hats and glasses **must** be worn whenever applicable. Proper footwear is required – no open toed shoes (thong/flip-flops, sandals, etc.). Jewelry presents a safety hazard; therefore, it should not be worn.

Some programs have "dressing for success" in their curriculum. Instructors of these programs have the option of having one day each week for dressing for an interview or appropriately for the specific program area.

Hair which is long enough to create a safety hazard **must** be confined to shoulder length and/or protected in such a way as to prevent it being caught in moving machinery.

Inappropriate head coverings, as determined by RTC administration, school district policy, and local, state, and federal law (Do rags, hats, caps, bandannas, etc.) are **NOT** to be worn at Ridge Technical College.

Advertising gangs, tobacco, alcohol, drugs or violence or anything prohibited in the School Board of Polk County's 2017-2018 Parent Guide & Code of Student Conduct on clothing or in any other way is prohibited!

Some programs impose additional clothing requirements. Those are given as a handout in Program Orientation. Instructors will discuss other individual program dress codes in detail during the program

orientation. All students are urged to dress and groom themselves in a manner that conforms to standards set by business and industry.

Campus Security: Students and school employees of Ridge should be aware that all city, state, and federal laws, in addition to the rules and regulations in the 2017-2018 Parent Guide & Code of Student Conduct will be enforced. Any violations of these rules or other emergencies should be reported to one of the college's staff members.

The parking lot and facilities are patrolled by both school board employees and local law enforcement agencies. School officials maintain a working relationship with the Winter Haven Police Department, Polk County Sheriff's Department, Florida Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies in order to provide a safe and orderly environment. All staff and students should recognize everyone's right to live in a crime-free environment and are asked to report suspicious activity to the college's administration.

Lunch: Lunches are available at a minimum cost along with vending machines and microwaves. Lunch should be eaten in the Cafeteria or the Patio Areas only. Lunch must be paid for with cash at the time food is purchased.

Prohibited Items: As specified in the 2017-2018 Parent Guide & Code of Student Conduct, certain items such as knives, guns, etc. are not allowed at the college. Instructors or staff may identify other items which are disruptive or could be used in an illegal manner, which are also prohibitive.

Release of Personally Identifiable Information: From time to time, Ridge Technical College releases the identities and digital images of staff and students for promotional, job placement, and recognition purposes. Students and/or their parents who wish to opt out of this policy may do so by completing the forms found in the back of the Parent Guide & Code of Student Conduct and returning them to the Student Services Department.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A student has the privilege to question a decision by a staff member, including allegations of discrimination in any phase of education programs and activities, and the application of rules of behavior, sanctions and other treatment.

The purpose of these procedures is to settle a grievance at the lowest level. The following procedures shall be used to submit a grievance:

1. If a student wishes to question a decision of an instructor or administrator other than the Director of the college, the student shall first communicate courteously to the instructor or administrator.
2. If the student is not satisfied after talking with the person concerned, the student may submit an appeal, in writing, to the Director of the college to review the matter. Such an appeal shall be submitted within three days of the incident.
3. The Director shall investigate the problem and shall render a decision on whether to sustain or overrule the decision of the instructor or administrator. The decision shall be given to the student, in writing, within five days of the written notice of appeal.
4. Any appeals beyond the Director shall be made according to the following order: Assistant Superintendent of Career, Technical, Adult and Multiple Pathways, Associate Superintendent, Teaching and Learning Services; Superintendent and the School Board of Polk County.
5. If the grievance is not settled at the local level, the student may contact Ridge's accreditation agency:

Council on Occupational Education
7840 Roswell Road
Building 300, Suite 325
Atlanta, GA 30350
770.396.3898

AdvancED
9115 Westside Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30009
888.413.3669

TRANSFER POLICIES

Transfer of students from one program into another program: Students transferring from one program to another must secure written approval of a Guidance Counselor or Administrator. Transfers are only warranted at the end of the first term. Students desiring to transfer between programs at Ridge Technical College must visit the desired program prior to transferring. Both the sending and receiving instructors and the applicable student services personnel must be involved in the transfer. Some programs have transferable competencies to other programs.

Transfer of students from other institutions: Students transferring to Ridge Technical College from another institution must file their application and supporting academic documents in the Student Services Department. Students must be in good standing at the transferring institution. Transcripts are reviewed for transfer credit and placement prior to enrollment.

All transfers are considered on an individual basis provided space is available and admission requirements are met. The appropriate Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System discipline committee has reviewed and assigned a "transfer value" to the curriculum content for certificate programs. Student placement will be the result of mutual planning by the student, instructor, counselor/career advisor and administration. Some licensure programs may have additional transfer requirements to ensure that licensure and certification standards are met. These requirements are set forth in program information and application packets and on the school website.

Florida Statute 1007.24(7) states that: *Any student who transfers among postsecondary institutions that are fully accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education and that participate in the statewide course numbering system shall be awarded credit by the receiving institution for courses satisfactorily completed by the student at the previous institutions. Credit shall be awarded if the courses are judged by the appropriate statewide course numbering system faculty committees representing school districts, public postsecondary educational institutions and participating nonpublic postsecondary educational institutions to be academically equivalent to courses offered at the receiving institution, including equivalency of faculty credentials, regardless of the public or nonpublic control of the previous institution. The Department of Education shall ensure that credits to be accepted by a receiving institution are generated in courses for which the faculty possess credentials that are comparable to those required by the accrediting association of the receiving institution. The award of credit may be limited to courses that are entered in the statewide course numbering system. Credits awarded pursuant to this subsection shall satisfy institutional requirements on the same basis as credits awarded to native students.*

WITHDRAWALS

Withdrawals: Any student desiring to withdraw from Ridge Technical College is required to observe the following procedure:

1. Satisfy all financial obligations to Ridge Technical College.
2. Complete 'Student Exit Survey' in classroom, the Student Services Department or Media Center.

REFUND POLICY

Job Preparatory Programs: The following guidelines will govern the refund of student fees:

1. A full refund of tuition and fees paid will be granted if administration cancels a class with the exception of cost incurred by applicants to secure required immunizations or medical documentation. Class fees will be refunded by check from the School District for any class canceled by the Technical College. The refund shall be made within forty-five (45) days after the planned start date of the program/class. Any credit card payments will be refunded to the card charged.
2. A refund will be granted if a student withdraws on or before the first day of class. No more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of the tuition and fees will be retained by the Technical College.
3. Prorated refunds:
 - a) After the end of the second day of enrollment, tuition refunds will be pro-rated up to thirty (30) days; there will be no refund for application, background check, or consumable lab fees.
 - b) Day Classes: There will be no refund of any fees after thirty (30) school days for full-time students.
 - c) Evening Classes: There will be no refund of any fees after twelve (12) school days for part-time students.
4. Any seat deposit of \$100.00 is non-refundable; however, this deposit will be applied to the program's first semester fees.
5. Refunds, when due:
 - a) Will be made without requiring a request from the student.
 - b) Will be made within forty-five (45) days from the last day of attendance if written notification of withdrawal has been provided to the school by the student or
 - c) Will be made within forty-five (45) days from the date the school terminates the student or determines withdrawal by the student.
6. Students enrolled who have not visited the college previously, will have the opportunity to withdraw without penalty within three (3) days following either attendance at a regularly scheduled orientation or following a tour of the facilities and inspection of the equipment.
7. A student may choose to apply any refund, as described in this policy, to enroll in other programs during the same academic year.
8. Credit card payments are refunded to the card charged. All other refunds will be issued by check from the School Board of Polk County. Students should allow thirty to forty-five (30-45) days for receipt of a refund check.
9. Early full program completers will not receive a prorated refund. Students who require more paid instruction beyond planned program hours will be eligible for a prorated refund upon program completion.

Continuing Workforce Education Programs (Short-term): For short-term classes, no fees will be refunded if the student chooses to withdraw. Class fees will be refunded by check for any class canceled by the college.

Funding Agency Reimbursement: Reimbursement, based on student completion hours, will be made to a funding agency, if the agency paid tuition and fees and the student withdrew prior to completion. **Note:** Pre-paid state licensure exam fees will be refunded if the student withdraws prior to taking the exam.

GRADING SYSTEM

Skill Grade: The grading system is based on the philosophy that students are held accountable for the actual hours to be attained while enrolled in a program. Specifically, if a full-time day student is receiving 330 minutes (5 ½ hours) of instructional time per day in a program, five days per week for nine weeks (a grading period), there would be a total of 247 instructional hours available for instruction. The student would be held accountable for 247 hours of task attainment or "standard hours". The standard hours assigned to each task indicate the time typically spent mastering the task.

The skill grade is determined by planned tasks with their corresponding standard hours as close as possible to the 247 hours. As tasks are attained, the standard hours are added (not the clock hours of time it actually took to attain each task). The actual standard hours on completed tasks are converted into a percentage. This percentage reflects the proportion of hours attained to those planned for the grading period. For example, if the student's planned hours were 247 and he or she attained 205 of those, the calculation of that skill grade would be 90% or an A by Polk County's Grading Key.

The standard time reflects the complexity of the task--not the difficulty. Difficulty may vary greatly for a given task, from one student to another. Complexity, on the other hand, is a factor determined by the nature of the task. For example, if ten students spend an average of seven hours on Task A-03 and ten students spend an average of 15 hours on Task B-06, it is reasonable to assume that Task B-06 is more complex than Task A-03; therefore, a fair "standard hour" time can be computed after several students complete a given task. This is computed by adding the actual clock hours each student spends on a task and then averaging by the number of students who attained the task. Until this average is obtained, a careful estimate of time is made by the instructor. This computation for each task is completed at the end of each school year.

The Polk County grading key below is used in determining letter grades. High school students are graded by this key.

Polk County Grading Key:

A	(90 - 100%)	Outstanding
B	(80 - 89%)	Above Average
C	(70 - 79%)	Average
D	(60 - 69%)	Below Average
F	(0 - 59%)	Failing
I	(Incomplete)	

Occupational Completion Point (OCP) Accomplishment Award: This award is presented when all tasks in the OCP are completed. An OCP is an exit point prior to program completion that is linked to an occupational/job title DOT (Dictionary of Occupational Titles), SOC (Standard Occupational Classification System), SIC (Standard Industrial Classification), or OES (Occupational Employment Statistics). It is highly encouraged that the full program be completed to warrant better job opportunities with higher salaries. A copy of the Certificate of Completion and Occupational Completion Point Accomplishment Awards will be kept in your file in the Student Services Department as well as a transcript. There is a \$3.00 fee for copies of your transcript for future inquiries.

Certificates of Completion: These certificates are awarded after completing 100% of the total standard hours of a career education program.

Academic Progress: Students at Ridge are expected to maintain satisfactory progress in their programs. Students who receive financial assistance or scholarships must:

1. MAINTAIN A MINIMUM OVERALL GRADE EVALUATION OF 'C' OR BETTER on all theory, clinical or shop performance each evaluation period.)
2. SATISFACTORILY COMPLETE THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF COMPETENCIES within the timeframe that is established for ALL students as defined by individual program guidelines for that evaluation period. Therefore, if a student's work is satisfactory, but he/she is behind schedule in completing the program's competencies, he/she cannot be reported as satisfactory for financial aid.

Ridge Technical College does not offer an appeals process for financial aid.

GENERAL SAFETY

The Program Safety Pledge: At the beginning of your program at Ridge, you will be given a copy of the Program Safety Pledge. This document will be explained to you. You will be asked to sign and submit it to your instructor. High school students must also obtain their parent's or guardian's signature on this pledge.

By signing, you indicate your willingness to comply with the requirements of the pledge. Instructors in all Ridge programs will present safety instruction to all students. These will include general and specific safety requirements applicable to the individual program.

Program Safety Test: At the close of the program safety instruction mentioned above, you will be given a task by the instructor covering the material included in the unit. **NO STUDENT MAY BEGIN WORK IN THE LAB UNTIL BOTH A PROPERLY SIGNED AND DATED COPY OF THEIR PROGRAM SAFETY PLEDGE AND HAS BEEN SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED!**

Enforcement of Safety Regulations: Instructors are asked to firmly enforce safety regulations at all times and with all students. In the interest of your personal safety and the safety of your classmates, you are not only asked, but also required to obey all safety regulations at all times!

An instructor who sees a safety violation committed in the lab will immediately call it to the attention of the offender. The offender will be expected to comply with the instructor's request and to make every effort not to repeat the violation. Students who commit repeated violations will be asked to withdraw from Ridge. This applies to all high school and adult students.

Drug-Free School Policy: It is the policy of Ridge to be an institution free of drugs and violence and to provide a safe, orderly and disciplined learning environment. Students who desire information on substance abuse should consult a guidance counselor or social worker.

Health and Safety: You will receive from your instructor necessary information regarding the safe handling and use of hazardous materials and flammable liquids and gases pertinent to your program. For your own protection and the protection of others, you are required to follow these procedures.

Polk County School Board makes it mandatory that every public school in the county have regularly scheduled health and safety training for all students and employees. Fire and tornado drills, hurricane warnings and bomb threats will be practiced by all.

- Learn the drill procedures for your program.

- Learn to carry out any special drill duty assigned to you by your instructor.
- Follow the instructor's directions.
- Participate in every drill in a conscientious, serious manner.

Eye Safety: Eye safety considerations are important in the operation of an institution such as Ridge. With this in mind, the school has furnished industrial programs with eye protective equipment. Eye protective equipment is addressed in Florida's school law. For your own safety, you are required to use the proper eye protective equipment when performing such tasks as welding, cutting, chipping, grinding, drilling, turning, milling, etc. Remember, a pair of safety glasses in your shirt pocket will not keep that fragment of flying metal out of your eye.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Cashier's Window: The Cashier's Window is available for payment of application fees, tuition, lab fees and all other fees. Payments may be made with cash, check or credit card.

Books: Must be purchased from Akademos On-Line Bookstore

<http://ridge.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php>

Note: Only **REQUIRED** textbooks should be purchased through Akademos.

Career Counseling: The counselors, instructors, social worker and staff in the Student Services Department are available to assist you with program information and career counseling. .

Financial Assistance: Students in need of financial assistance should meet with the Financial Aid Coordinator. Several forms of financial assistance are available: Pell Grant; Veteran/Dependent; Ridge Scholarship, Workers' Compensation; WIA Dislocated Worker; WIA Adult; Farmworker; Florida Bright Futures Scholarship; Vocational Rehabilitation, ALPI, etc.

Applied Academics for Adult Education (AAAE): To qualify for a Certificate of Completion, students must attain the state mandated minimum score for their program area on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Adult students who fail to meet the requisite TABE scores for their chosen career path **will be required** to enroll in Applied Academics for Adult Education (AAAE). The purpose of AAAE is to help students overcome deficiencies in reading, language and/or math skills. Students with skill deficiencies may not be able to succeed in their career education program until they have acquired remediation in AAAE for several weeks or months. The goal of AAAE is to enable adult students (age 16 or older) to enter and succeed in career education through a program designed to remedy individual deficiencies. There is a semester fee for this program.

Job Placement: Ridge offers job placement assistance to both high school and adult students. Assistance is also offered through CareerSource Polk, Occupational Advisory Committees and the School Advisory Council.

Media Center: The Media Center is located in Building 1 and is open from 7:40 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Monday through Friday. Media services are available to all Ridge students and personnel. A list of books is published periodically by the Media Center and sent to every classroom for posting. These lists contain the names of books recently received at Ridge. Books may be checked out for a period of two weeks and renewed if necessary. Reference books may be checked out overnight. Also available is a wide assortment of periodicals, newspapers, pictures, prints and audiovisual materials and equipment. There are computers available to you in the Media Center.

Clinic: Clinic services are available for first aid or in the case of an accident or injury at school. If clinic services are required, the student requests a written "clinic" pass from the teacher.

In case of an accident or injury at school, first aid services are provided by authorized school staff. A Student Accident Report is completed by the instructor and sent to the Director's secretary within 24 hours of the accident. If the student is referred to a hospital or health care provider, the student may obtain an insurance card from the Directors' secretary to assist with payment. There is no guarantee that health services will be paid in full with the card. In all cases of accident or injury of secondary students, the parent or guardian is notified. If a parent or guardian, or significant other in case of adult students, cannot be notified and administration confirms that the student's condition requires immediate action, 911 may be called to transport the student to a hospital emergency department. However, the student is responsible for payment of all 911 services.

Medications can only be dispensed to students per School Board regulations. Secondary students who use an inhaler, epinephrine, or other physician prescribed medication that must be taken at school are required to provide the medication to administration at the beginning of the year. The physician prescribed and correctly labeled medication is kept in the School Clinic in a locked cabinet. The parent must provide written permission for administration to administer the prescribed or over the counter medication. Parent or guardian Medication Authorization forms may be obtained from the Student Services Department. Over-the-counter medications, as Tylenol, are not stocked in the clinic for distribution.

Bulletin Boards: A bulletin board is located in the main hallway of Building 1 for the purpose of posting information for high school students and other notices of general interest to students. In addition, there is a bulletin board in Building 1 for job postings. Persons wishing to post notices on this bulletin board must obtain permission to do so from an administrator.

Lockers: Lockers are provided in some program areas for you to secure your equipment and personal belongings. Your instructor will assign lockers which are subject to inspection at any time by school personnel.

Student Organizations: To enrich your career education training program, you are encouraged to join the appropriate student organization which applies to your program area and fully participate in its activities:

- Florida Future Educators of America (FFEA)
- Future Builders of America (FBA)
- National Technical Honor Society (NTHS)
- SkillsUSA

Student Records: Each student at Ridge has a folder maintained in the Student Services Department. This folder of student records is maintained to facilitate instruction, guidance, academic progress and job placement.

Student records are confidential. They shall be directly accessible only to the authorized professional staff of the school system, to parents or guardians of students under the age of 18, to eligible students 18 years of age or older and to such other individuals and agencies as set forth by law, School Board policy, rules and guidelines, or as authorized in writing by the parent, guardian, or to any person in parental relationship to a student or by the student in some situations.

Cafeteria: The Cafeteria, located in Building 1, provides snacks in vending machines and hot meals (during lunch hours only) for the convenience of students and staff before school, during breaks and lunch time.

Food and Drinks: Food and drinks are to be confined to the Cafeteria and patio. The consumption of food and beverages (except water in a closed container) in the hallways or any classroom is prohibited at all times.

Phones: An emergency phone is located in the Student Services Department.

Messages: Personal calls and messages to students cannot be accepted through school phones. These lines must be kept open for school business. Students will not be called to the phone nor will messages be delivered except in the case of a family emergency. Please try to make appointments, bus plans, alternate car rides, etc. before you leave home.

Deliveries: No personal deliveries will be accepted at the reception desk at any time unless approved by administration.

Lost and Found: Lost and found items will be available at the Receptionist Desk.

Visitors: Students are **NOT** permitted to have visitors during the school day unless prior arrangements are made and approved by administration. If approved, visitors of Ridge must have a driver license or picture ID and sign in at the receptionist's desk in Building 1 (Administration) and obtain a visitor's pass. The receptionist will check with the instructor before allowing a visitor to enter a program area. Many programs use equipment that could be a safety hazard if visitors are not properly supervised and cautioned.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus Students (High School only): If you ride a bus to Ridge Technical College, you are expected to observe the following regulations or lose your bus privileges:

1. Follow instructions of the bus driver.
2. Occupy the seat assigned to you and stay seated while the bus is in motion. Do not stand up until the bus has come to a complete stop.
3. Hold all talking to a normal conversation level.
4. Warn the driver of approaching danger if necessary.
5. Leave the bus only with the consent of the driver.
6. Observe precautions in crossing the road after leaving the bus.
7. Obey instructors on duty in the bus loading zone.
8. Report to the Assistant Director if you are told to do so by the bus driver.

Students Left by Buses: Every effort is made at the high schools and Ridge to see that buses do not leave early and consequently cause students to miss them. By the same token, students should conform to the bus schedule and arrive in time to load onto the bus.

Ridge does not consider missing a bus to be an excusable reason for absence from school. Ridge cannot be responsible for transportation of students who miss their afternoon buses.

Multi-Stop Buses: Students who are transported to and from RTC by buses that make stops at other county schools in route are required to stay off the campuses of those schools unless they have official business to transact. During these stops, students should stay on their bus, wait in the bus loading area, or leave immediately if the stop is their exit point. Students riding buses must obey all rules established by the campus they are on. They should follow directions given by school officials on the campus and refrain from any prohibited activities.

Students Who Drive onto RTC Campus: If you drive to RTC, you are required to observe the following regulations. Driving to Ridge is a privilege, not a right. Violation of these regulations will result in the suspension or loss of driving and parking privileges. A valid driver license and proof of automobile insurance are required to obtain a parking permit for Ridge Technical College Campus. The parking permit can be purchased at the Cashier's Window upon presenting required documentation.

1. Observe all speed limits, both on and off campus. Campus speed limits are clearly posted: 20 M.P.H. throughout the campus, All speed limits are enforced.
2. No reckless driving or hot rodding.
3. Do not arrive on campus before 7:00am.
4. Arriving prior to 8:00am, students should report to the Cafeteria or patio area. Do not remain in the parking lot. Students should not be in program areas or the halls prior to 7:55 am.
5. Close car windows, lock doors, and secure valuables in the trunk. Ridge is not responsible for theft from or damage to any vehicle parked in the campus lot.
6. Obtain a parking decal (\$5.00) and affix it to the lower left-hand corner of your vehicle's rear window. Consecutively numbered Ridge parking decals are issued to all personnel and students driving to the campus. A parking ticket will be issued if you do not have a parking decal.
7. Park in designated parking spaces only, not in spaces reserved for visitors and staff, driveways, islands, or on the grass.
8. Do not back into spaces.
9. Do not park in the service yards or on the shop aprons unless official arrangements have been made to have your vehicle worked on.
10. If you ride a motorcycle, park it with several other motorcycles in a space allotted for one car.
11. Do not drive to any other school in the county at any time before or after school or while school is in session unless you are a high school student and have specific school business to transact at your own high school or you are an adult who has a son or daughter to take or pick up from school.
12. Observe the exit procedure outlined below.

Exit Procedure from Campus Parking Lot: There will be a staff member in the parking lot at arrival and dismissal time every school day. The purpose of this is to supervise and direct the exit of all vehicles, including school buses, from the parking lot. You should completely familiarize yourself with the rules and cooperate fully with staff members. Violations of the following exit procedure at dismissal time will result in suspension of driving privileges.

1. Observe the *exit road speed limit of 20 M.P.H. This limit is strictly enforced. *The exit road runs north and south along the east side of the parking lot.
2. Be sure your vehicle has come to a complete stop before picking up or discharging passengers.
3. Stop to let school buses into the traffic pattern.
4. Obey the requests of staff members.