

Purpose of Handbook

This handbook has been prepared as a guide and source of information for the following purposes:

1. To develop a code for students.
2. To provide direction for self-discipline and a desirable self-image.
3. To enter into a partnership with the home in sharing responsibility.
4. To assist in making decisions.
5. To keep the community informed and supportive.
6. To provide information on school goals and policies.

Where Students Can Go For Information

School Office

- To enroll in school
- To turn in note for an absence
- To check in if tardy 1st period and to check out for early dismissal
- To report a student accident
- To obtain application for the lunch program
- To bring in or ask for lost articles
- To obtain insurance forms
- To withdraw from school

Guidance Office

- To receive counseling for academic, social, and personal problems
- To schedule Parent/Teacher Conferences
- To obtain information about grades or school records

Cafeteria

- To deposit funds into lunch accounts. (Between 7:30 A.M. and 8:15 A.M.)

Technology

Technology has become an essential part of our school as we move through the 21st Century. In order to be prepared for the future students must have the skills for the 21st Century and as much experience and training as possible in the field of technology. Each middle school classroom is equipped with several types of equipment. Below you will find an outline of the technology in the middle school.

COMPUTER LABS:	EQUIPPED WITH:
Rooms 120, 121, 136,147	Promethean boards, computers

OTHER:	EQUIPPED WITH:
Room 137	Read 180 lab

Use of the Internet (Board Policy 4.406)

A written parental consent shall be required prior to the student being granted access to electronic media involving district technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent/legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be executed at kindergarten entry, at 6th grade entry and at 9th grade entry. It should be kept on file as a legal binding document. In order to rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the director of schools with a written request.

Attendance

IT'S THE LAW. Every parent or guardian is required to send his/her child to public or private school from age 7 through 17 inclusive. (Board Policy 6.201) Students are encouraged to establish good attendance habits, to attend class regularly, and to be on time.

Absences (Board Policy 6.200)

Upon returning to school, the student must present a **written** account of the absences signed by his/her parent or guardian to the office of the principal. The absence will be designated as excused or unexcused, and teachers will be notified.

Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances; 4
6. Doctor's Appointment;
7. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control; and
8. One day is provided for students when their parent or custodian is deployed into active military service. One day is also provided for students when the parent or custodian returns from active military service.

Early dismissals disrupt the learning day and are strongly discouraged. Such dismissals will be allowed only:

- (1) In case of emergencies;
- (2) With a valid doctor's appointment card
- (3) With a validation of funeral attendance of immediate family including spouse, child, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, uncle or aunt.

Early dismissal or late arrival of all students or any segment of students shall not be permitted for any reason except for emergencies such as inclement weather or other avoidable situations in which case instructional time will be made up in full.

Clock time for unexcused late arrivals or unapproved early dismissals will accumulate on the student's attendance record and will be considered as a part of the student's aggregate days missed as determined by the school calendar. These aggregate days may be reported to parents for five (5) days notifications and to the attendance officer for ten (10) day notifications in compliance with Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Grades 1-8

Student attendance will be accounted for following the guidelines of the TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.03(15). Excessive unexcused absences or trancies may be referred to the Family Resource Center, Attendance Officer, and/or Juvenile Court. Withholding of credit and/or a decision to retain a pupil will be based on the factors outline in policy 6.603. Attendance is one of the factors taken into consideration when determining a student's promotion or retention.

Attendance of Non-Resident Students (*Board Policy 6.204*)

Only students residing within the boundaries of Jefferson County will be eligible for enrollment, with the following exception: A student residing outside the boundaries of Jefferson County may attend schools within the school system only if the custodial parent of a student is a full-time employee of the school system.

Student Assignment (*Board Policy 6.205*)

TO SCHOOLS

Students, including those in kindergarten, are expected to attend the school in the school zone to which they are assigned by virtue of the residence of their legal and/or custodial parent(s).¹ Residence is defined as the location of property where the student lives in a dwelling with the parent on a daily basis, eating meals, sleeping, playing and performing what are considered routine family activities.

An application to attend school outside a student's zone of residence must be submitted to the principal.

Permission will be considered under the following conditions:

1. The student's attendance will not cause the student/teacher ratio to exceed the state guidelines in the class or grade-level for the out-of-zone school.
2. The parent will provide regular daily transportation to and from school.
3. The receiving principal agrees that the enrollment of the student will not adversely affect the efficiency of the operation of the school.
4. The director shall establish specific procedures for such enrollment.

TO CLASSES

The principal shall be responsible for assigning all students to classes. Students who enter the system from another school system are to be placed by the principal in the grade and/or level as indicated by records from the former school. If the student's placement is inappropriate in the grade or level assigned, he/she may be reassigned by the principal to another grade level. Parents shall be kept advised.

Transfers Within the System (*Board Policy 6.206*)

Transfer students will meet the same enrollment requirements as new students.

Students whose families change their residence to another school zone within the county after the first month of school may complete the school year at their former school. Students who present evidence that they will move during the school year and who desire to enroll in a new school in the new area may do so with prior written request for a change of school area. The superintendent may grant other exceptions to this policy for good and sufficient reasons.

Principals shall allow credit for work transferred from other schools only when substantiated by official transcripts or successful completion of comprehensive written examinations approved, administered and graded by the principal or his/her designated representative.

In the case of elementary school students, the examination shall cover the last grade completed.

If pupils are admitted to approved schools from unapproved schools by examination, it shall be the duty of the principal thus receiving them to keep the examination papers on file for a period of at least one year.

Students who are suspended from one school in Jefferson County cannot enter another school in Jefferson County.

Make-Up Work

All missed class work or tests (whether from excused or unexcused absence) may be made up if the student makes the request immediately upon returning to school and if class time is not taken from other students.

No student will be allowed to make-up semester exam unless his absence is excused.

The perfect attendance certificate will be awarded on the basis of the attendance record kept in the register.

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent/guardian.

Release During School Hours (Board Policy 6.208)

The following procedure will be observed with regard to dismissal of students:

1. No student will leave school prior to regular dismissal hours, except with the approval of the principal and parent. Elementary students will be permitted to leave school prior to regular dismissal time only in the company of a parent, legal guardian, school employee, police officer, court officer, or a person designated in writing by the parent(s).
2. When dental and medical appointments cannot be scheduled outside school hours, parent(s) must send a written request for dismissal or call for the student in person.
3. Children will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child, or who is the parent or guardian registered on the school record.
4. No principal or teacher shall permit a change in the physical custody of a child at school unless:
 - a. The person seeking custody of the child presents the school official with a certified copy of a valid court order from a Tennessee court designating the person who has custody of the child; and
 - b. The person seeking custody gives the school official reasonable advance notice of his/her intent to take custody of the child at school.

Code of Behavior

The Board of Education believes that acceptable behavior is an essential part of effective education programs. It expects students to conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect favorable upon themselves, their families, their community, and their school.

The professional staff is expected to ensure student conduct, which allows for an acceptable learning atmosphere both in and out of the classroom. Good behavior will help students develop self-discipline and self-direction.

The principal of each school is responsible for implementation and administration in his/her school and shall apply the Code uniformly and fairly to each student at the school without partiality and discrimination.

Staff-Student Relations (Board Policy 5.610)

Staff members shall maintain professional relationships with students at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Staff members shall be expected to regard each student as an individual and to accord each student the rights and respect that is due.

Staff members shall promote a learning environment that encourages fulfillment of each student's potential in regard to his/her program, consistent with district goals and with optimal opportunities for students. This goal may be reached by adapting instruction to individual needs, by:

1. Insisting on reasonable standards of scholastic accomplishment for all students;
2. Creating a positive atmosphere in and out of the classroom;
3. Extending courtesy and respect to students; and
4. Treating all students with consistent fairness.

Staff members shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Any appearance of impropriety

Interrogations and Searches *(Board Policy 6.303)*

If a student is suspected or accused of misconduct or infraction of the student code of conduct, the principal may interrogate the student, without the presence of parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians and without giving the student constitutional warnings.

If the principal has requested assistance by the police department to investigate a crime involving his/her school, the police shall have permission to interrogate a student suspect in school during school hours. The principal shall first attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the student of the intended interrogation unless circumstances require otherwise.

The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or his/her designee shall be present during the interrogation.

Any principal, or his/her designee, having reasonable suspicion may search any student, place or thing on school property or in the actual or constructive possession of any student during any organized school activity off campus, including buses, vehicles of students or visitors (*Notice shall be posted in the school parking lot that vehicles parked on school property by students or visitors are subject to search for drugs, drug paraphernalia or dangerous weapons*), and containers or packages if he/she receives information which would cause a reasonable belief that the search will lead to the discovery of:

1. Evidence of any violation of the law;
2. Evidence of any violation of school rules or regulations or proper standards of student or faculty conduct;
3. Any object or substance which, because of its presence, presents an immediate danger of harm or illness to any person.

A student using a locker that is the property of the school system does not have the right of privacy in that locker or its contents.

A student may be subject to physical search or a student's pocket, purse or other container may be required to be emptied because of the results of a locker search, or because of information received from a teacher, staff member or other student if such action is reasonable to the principal.

If public health or safety is involved, upon request of the principal who shall be present, police officers may make a general search of students' lockers and desks, or students' or nonstudents' automobiles for drugs, weapons or items of an illegal or prohibited nature.

Student Concerns, Complaints and Grievances *(Board Policy 6.305)*

STUDENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Decisions made by school personnel — such as aides, teachers, or assistant principals — which students believe are unfair or in violation of pertinent policies of the Board or individual school rules may be appealed to the school principal or a designated representative. To appeal, students will contact the principal's office in their school and provide their name, the issue and the reason for their appeal on a printed form available at the school office within two days. The appeal will usually be decided confidentially and promptly, preferably within five (5) school days.

However, if the principal does not make a decision within five (5) school days following the date of complaint, students or parents may appeal at that time by contacting the director of

schools/designee at the central office. The information provided should include the student's name, the school and a description of the problem.

An investigation and decision will be made within two (2) school days and communicated to the school principal and student by telephone. A written copy of the decision also will be sent to the student and the principal.

DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Filing a Complaint — Students may report an allegation of discrimination/harassment to any teacher or other adult employed in the school who shall inform a complaint manager of the allegation. The complaint should include the following information:

- Identity of the alleged victim and person accused;
- Location, date, time and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident;
- Description of what happened;
- Identity of witnesses; and
- Any other evidence available.

Investigation — Within twenty-four hours of receiving the student's complaint, the complaint manager shall notify the complaining student's parent/guardian and the principal who shall inform the director of schools. The parent/guardian shall be given notice of the right to attend an interview of the student in a non-intimidating environment in order to elicit full disclosure of the student's allegations. This interview shall take place within five (5) days from the time the complaint was first made. If no parent/guardian attends the interview, another adult, mutually agreed upon by the student and the complaint manager, shall attend and may serve as the student's advocate. After a complete investigation, if the allegations are substantiated, immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated. The complaint and identity of the complainant will not be disclosed except (1) as required by law or this policy; or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint; or (3) as authorized by the complainant. A school non-intimidating environment in order to elicit full disclosure of the student's allegations. This interview shall take place within five (5) days from the time the complaint was first made. If no parent/guardian attends the interview, another adult, mutually agreed upon by the student and the complaint manager, shall attend and may serve as the student's advocate. After a complete investigation, if the allegations are substantiated, immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated. The complaint and identity of the complainant will not be disclosed except (1) as required by law or this policy; or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint; or (3) as authorized by the complainant. A school representative will meet with and advise the complainant regarding the findings, and whether corrective measures and/or disciplinary action were taken. The investigation and response to the complainant will be completed within thirty (30) school days. Copies of the report will be sent to the student, principal, Federal Rights Coordinator and the director of schools. One copy shall be kept in the complaint manager's file for one (1) year beyond the student's eighteenth (18th) birthday. The director of schools shall keep the Board informed of all complaints.

Decision and Appeal — If the complainant is not in agreement with the findings of fact as reported by the complaint manager, an appeal may be made, within five (5) work days to the director of schools. The director of schools will review the investigation, make any corrective action deemed necessary and provide a written response to the complainant. If the complainant is not in agreement with the director of schools' findings of fact, appeal may be made to the Board of Education within five (5) work days. The Board shall, within thirty (30) days from the date the appeal was received, review the investigation and the actions of the director of schools and may support, amend or overturn the actions based upon review and report their decision in writing to the complainant.

Bus Conduct (*Board Policy 6.308*)

In order to maintain conditions and atmosphere suitable for learning, no person shall enter onto a school bus except students assigned to that bus or parents of students or other persons with lawful and valid business on the bus.

The school bus is an extension of school activity; therefore, students shall conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for safety and classroom behavior.

Students are under the supervision and control of the bus driver while on his/her bus, and all reasonable directions given by him/her shall be followed.

The principal of the student transported shall be informed by the bus driver of any serious discipline problem. A student may be denied the privilege of riding the bus if the principal determines that his/her behavior is such as to cause disruption on the bus, or if he/she disobeys state or local rules and regulations pertaining to student transportation.

No student may get off the bus at any point between the pick-up point and school. A student who wishes to get off the bus between school and their pick up point must present the bus driver with a note of authorization from the parent or the principal of the school that the student attends.

Any student wishing to ride a bus other than his/her designated bus must have written parental permission and the approval of the principal or his/her designee.

Students who transfer from bus to bus while enroute to and from school shall be expected to abide by the discipline policies adopted by the Board and rules adopted by the staff of the transfer school.

Use of Video Cameras

Video cameras may be used to monitor student behavior on school vehicles transporting students to and from school or extracurricular activities.

Video surveillance shall be used only to promote the order, safety and security of students, staff and property

Care of School Property *(Board Policy 6.311)*

Students shall help maintain the school environment, preserve school property and exercise care while using school facilities.

All district employees shall report all damage or loss of school property to the principal or designee immediately after such damage or loss is discovered. The principal or designee shall make a full and complete investigation of any instance of damage or loss of school property. The investigation shall be carried out in cooperation with law enforcement officials when appropriate.

School property is defined as buildings, buses, books, equipment, records, instructional materials or any other item under the jurisdiction of the Board.

When the person causing damage or loss has been identified and the costs of repair or replacement have been determined, the director of schools shall take steps to recover these costs. This may include recommending the filing of a civil complaint in court to recover damages. If the responsible person is a minor, recovery will be sought from the minor's parent or guardian.

In addition, the district may withhold the grades, diploma, and/or transcript of the student responsible for vandalism or theft or otherwise incurring any debt to a school until the student or the student's parent/guardian has paid for the damages.¹ When the minor and parent are unable to pay for the damages, the district shall provide a program of voluntary work for the minor. Upon completion of the work, the student's grades, diploma, and/or transcripts shall be released. Such sanctions shall not be imposed if the student is not at fault.

Cell Phones (Board Policy 6.312)

Students

Students shall not make any use of a cellular phone/beeper and/or pager on any school campus during the hours of the school day. Device should be powered off when entering the building until students are dismissed. This includes all forms of message modes currently available in electronic communication devices, i.e., voice communication, text messages, and transmission of visual images. All school handbooks should have rules and consequences applicable to this policy. For the first offense, the phone will be confiscated for 30 days. The second offense will result in two days out-of-school suspension and devices being taken up an additional 30 days.

Use of cameras on personal communication devices is strictly prohibited on school property or at school functions. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

First Offense: A student in middle school who has a cell phone powered on, will have that cell phone confiscated for the remainder of the day. Their parent(s) may pick up the phone at their convenience and sign a document acknowledging the consequences of the second offense.

Second Offense: A student in middle school who has a cell phone powered on for a second offense, will have that cell phone confiscated for 30 days and will only returned to a parent at the end of the 30 day period.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices such as CD players, Ipods or MP3 players, including devices with mobile wireless access, may be stored in backpacks, purses or personal carry-alls. However, the use of the devices during school hours is strictly forbidden. Use or improper storage of the personal electronic device will result in confiscation of the device until such time as it may be released to the student's parents or guardian. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

Field Trips (Board Policy 4.302)

Academic/Instruction Related Trips

Field trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry and to provide opportunities for social growth and development are considered appropriate extensions of the classroom.

To be educationally beneficial, a field trip requires thoughtful selection, careful advance preparation of the class, and opportunities for students to summarize the experience at the conclusion of the trip. To this end, teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in selecting field trips:

1. Value of the activity to the particular student group or groups;
2. Relationship of the field trip activity to a particular aspect of classroom instruction;
3. Suitability of the activity and distance traveled in terms of the age level;
4. Mode and availability of transportation; and
5. Cost — Cost per student shall not be calculated so as to include the payment of the cost of any school personnel, or others, except the sponsor(s) of the group or club which takes the trip.

Interscholastic Athletics (Board Policy 4.301)

No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any athletic program of the school. Equal athletic opportunity shall be provided for members of both sexes.¹ To be eligible to tryout or participate in interscholastic athletics, a student must be currently enrolled in that school.

Interscholastic athletics shall be administered as a part of the regular school program and shall be the principal's responsibility. The principal or his/her designee must accompany an athletic team on trips.

Middle school athletics shall be coached only by Board approved personnel. Middle school athletics shall be governed according to their respective conference bylaws and may not participate in a conference without bylaws. A copy of the bylaws must be on file with the central office.

Bylaws of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association shall regulate the operation and control of high school interscholastic athletics. 2 All high school coaches will be employed by the Board upon recommendation of the principal and director of schools.

There shall be a complete annual physical examination of every student prior to his/her participation in interscholastic athletics.3 Cost of the examination shall be borne by the parent or guardian of the student. These records shall be on file in the principal's office.

No principal or teacher of any school under the control of the Board shall dismiss his/her school or any group of students for the purpose of permitting them to practice or play baseball, football, basketball or any similar game within the regular school hours of any school day of the week without written permission from the director of schools. This does not prevent the inclusion of regular physical training lessons in the daily school program.4

Participation in interscholastic athletics, marching band or R.O.T.C. Military Science shall not be substituted for the lifetime wellness graduation requirement.5

Students shall not be disqualified from participation on a school athletic team solely on the basis of participation in another sport except where the season overlaps by more than two weeks. Principals shall ensure that practices are confined to established seasons and that school regulations regarding participation in a sport are reasonable.

Seniors who move out of their school area but who wish to continue attendance in the original school may continue to participate in athletics. The Board specifically forbids the recruitment of students in any fashion.

Athletic schedules shall be filed in each school principal's office.

Transportation of teams to athletic games is approved by the Board, provided the team's school reimburses the Board for mileage.

Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone or tolerate hazing activities as part of the athletic program.

An athletics' advisory committee, comprised of the high school athletic director and the athletic director of each middle school, will be formed for the purposed of assisting and advising the board

Student Clubs and Organizations *(Board Policy 6.702)*

Student organizations are an extension of the academic curriculum and are intended to complement the basic instructional program.

The principal, in cooperation with the faculty and student body representatives, shall approve all clubs and organizations within the school.

One or more staff members will serve as sponsors of each activity and will attend all meetings. Each sponsor will evaluate the activity and make recommendations concerning changes, continuance, or deletion from the school's activity program.

An approved copy of the aims, objectives, and constitution for each organization will be kept on file in the principal's office.

The director of schools shall approve all requirements imposed by clubs which have restricted membership. Sororities, fraternities, and all secret organizations are prohibited.

Testing Programs (*Board Policy 4.700*)

The Board shall provide for a systemwide testing program which shall be periodically reviewed and evaluated. The purposes of the program shall be to:

1. Assist in promoting accountability;
2. Determine the progress of students;
3. Assess the effectiveness of the instructional program and student learning;
4. Aid in counseling and guiding students in planning future education and other endeavors;
5. Analyze the improvements needed in a given instructional area;
6. Assist in the screening of students with learning difficulties;1,2
7. Assist in placing students in remedial programs;
8. Provide information for college entrance and placement; and
9. Assist in educational research by providing data.

State-mandated student testing programs shall be undertaken in accordance with procedures published by the State Department of Education.

Other tests may be given as requested by students, teachers or parents when approved by the principal. Any test directly concerned with measuring student ability or achievement through individual or group psychological or sociometric tests shall not be administered by or with the knowledge of any employee of the system without first obtaining written consent of the parents or guardians.

Results of all group tests shall be recorded on the students' permanent records and shall be made available to appropriate personnel in accordance with established procedures.

Reporting Student Progress (*Board Policy 4.601*)

Student progress reports shall be provided at least once every 9 weeks for grades K-12. The reporting procedure shall be in writing and shall be uniform for all reporting periods during each school year. Student progress reports shall indicate the students' conduct, attendance and academic progress and other information necessary to communicate effectively with the parents.

In addition to the regular progress reports, principals and teachers are encouraged to confer with parents on the educational progress of their children. All students in grades K-12 shall receive an informal midterm progress report at the mid-point of each nine-week instructional period. Teachers shall consult with parents of students who are working at an unsatisfactory level or whose performance shows a marked or sudden deterioration. Parents shall be notified by the teacher as early in the school year as possible if the retention of a student is being considered.

A supplemental letter of personal consultation may be used when a teacher desires to give some explanation not covered by other reporting methods.

Parent Conferences

At least two (2) times during the school year, conferences shall be scheduled in which parents and teachers may discuss any pertinent problems or other matters of concern regarding the development and education of each student. These scheduled conferences shall not use any portion of the 180 days of classroom instruction. The director of schools shall be responsible for scheduling and coordinating system wide conferences.

Conferences shall be physically accessible to all students, parents and/or guardians.