

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student/Parent Handbook

2020-2021



129 NC Highway 109 S.

Mount Gilead, NC 27306

Phone: 910-572-9378

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Principal – Chanda Stokes

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Name: _____

Vision

West Middle School will empower students to become future ready for lifelong success.

Mission

West Middle School will prepare students to be future ready through relationships, relevance, rigor, and results.

COVID 19 DISCLAIMER

Montgomery County Schools is committed to providing quality education to all of our students. We want to partner with parents and families consistently during this pandemic to make sure that we are doing all we can to provide a SAFE and nurturing environment for your child in our school buildings. While we cannot guarantee that your child won't be exposed to this virus at school, we can guarantee that we have taken the necessary precautions and followed all of the recommendations of the CDC to ensure the safety of our students. We understand that every challenge we will encounter during the 2020-21 school year will not be addressed in this book due to the historic nature of this pandemic and its effect on our society and schools, but our goal is to strengthen our collaboration with parents and all family members to ensure that we provide your child with the best and safest educational opportunities as possible.

As we follow state and federal guidelines, we hope that all parents will NOT send their child to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms or have been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 over the last two weeks. Those symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headaches
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Frequent nasal discharge
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Each school has worked diligently this summer to put proper procedures in place at their school based on the resources available for that particular school to provide a safe learning environment for your child. Also, we are prepared to offer your child remote learning if you feel that is the safest option for your child. However, please understand that we believe there is no substitute for face to face instruction with a quality instructor.

Each school will have hand sanitizer and masks available and a system for checking daily health for all employees, visitors, and students as they enter our schools. Each school has developed robust safety procedures and protocols for their site that include guidance based on the CDC recommendations. The procedures call for classrooms to be cleaned daily to further ensure the safety of your child in our schools.

We understand that your child has already missed a large amount of instruction for the 2019-20 school year, however, if your child has to be quarantined for large periods of time, we are prepared to switch your child to remote learning. The time at home will not be counted against your child under our attendance policy as long as it is understood that for the safety of all, your child is staying home due to COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Katie Hursey, Public Information Officer at 910-576-5411 ext. 0271 or Dr. Dale Ellis, Superintendent at 910-576-6511 ext. 0223.

Montgomery County Schools

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Doors will open at 7:30am. Car riders may begin entering and busses will begin unloading at this time. All students must report directly to their homeroom/study hall when they enter the building.

At the end of the day, bus riders are dismissed at 2:45pm. Car riders are dismissed once busses have cleared the lot, approximately 2:50pm. Students that are not picked up by 3:00pm will report to the office to contact parents/guardians.

Car Rider Procedures

Students will be dropped off and picked up in the bus parking lot near the gym. Students are not to be dropped off or picked up in the parking lot in the front of school.

Bus Rider Procedures

Students will unload and load buses in the back parking area. If a student does not normally ride a bus, or is riding a different bus than normal, they must have a note from a parent and approval from an administrator. These notes should be submitted to the office before the start of the school day. A bus slip will be written for the student to give the bus driver.

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is necessary for a student's success. **If a child is unable to attend school due to illness or other emergencies, the parent must send a note when the student returns to school stating the student's name, date of absence, reason for absence, and parent/guardian signature.** The note must be turned in to the office within two days. If a written note is not turned into the office within two days of the absence, the absence will be coded unexcused. **North Carolina has a Compulsory Attendance Law making it unlawful for a student to be frequently absent from school. If attendance is an issue, our attendance committee will contact parents to schedule a meeting to identify and address the problem.**

Lawful (Excused) Absences

The only lawful, excused absences from school are in the case of illness or injury, quarantine, death in the immediate family, medical or dental appointments, court or administrative procedures, religious observations, or educational opportunity.

Unlawful (Unexcused) Absences

Any absence that does not have a note on file in the office within two days or does not have a reason falling within the lawful absence guidelines previously stated will be coded as unlawful. Administration will notify the parent/guardian on a student's 3rd, 6th, and 9th unexcused absence from school. Parents/guardians may be required to meet with our attendance committee in these cases. Accumulating 10 unexcused absences exposes the parent/guardians to potential criminal prosecution under the Compulsory Attendance Law.

Excused Absence for Educational Opportunity

Students who are absent from school for educational purposes should request an EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY. **The completed request should be submitted to the principal in writing at least one week prior to the anticipated absence.** Failure to request an educational opportunity in a timely manner shall result in denial. For trips to be considered educational, they must have specific educational goals. Students will receive make-up work when they return. Be aware that absences for educational trips are still absences – they are simply excused instead of unexcused.

Tardiness

School begins promptly at 8:00 am. It is important that students arrive on time for school each and every day. If a pattern of tardiness develops, the administration, counselor, and social worker will arrange a conference with the parent/guardian to identify and address the problem.

Leaving School Early

Dismissing a student from school early is a disruption to all the students in that particular classroom. Our success at WMS is based on strong, meaningful instruction all day, every day. For this reason, it is important that all students be at school for the entire instructional day. In the event that an early dismissal cannot be avoided, parents/guardians or their designee must come to the office prior to 2:40 pm to sign the student out. If a student is regularly checked out early that student and their parent/guardian will be asked to meet with the administration, guidance counselor, and school social worker to identify and address the problem.

After School

Students involved in after school activities will immediately report to the staff person in charge after the second bell (car rider bell). All students remaining after school must be under the direct supervision of a staff member. Any student participating in an after school event must be counted present for the school day. After school events include, but are not limited to, dances and athletic events.

Note: Students may not attend dances, athletic events, or other special after school activities on days in which they have had ISS or OSS.

Dress Code

Students will adhere to the dress code adopted by the Montgomery County Board of Education. Students are expected to dress appropriately at all times. Students not in dress code will be sent to AISI to call home for a change of clothing and will remain in AISI until the violation has been fixed. Any student who fails to comply with direction in relation to improper attire is in violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Students are expected to comply with the following rules for dress:

- Dresses and shorts cannot be shorter than 3 inches above the knee.
- Students may not wear attire that reveals their mid-section.
- Leggings may be worn as long as they are paired with a top that is fingertip length.
- Strapless tops, spaghetti straps, and/or tank tops may not be worn.
- Bedroom shoes may not be worn. Students may wear flip-flops or slides. However, students must wear shoes with a secure back in order to participate in P.E.
- No hats
- Clothing cannot have any frays or holes above the knee that reveal skin.
- Clothing cannot be excessively tight, form fitting, or revealing.
- Clothing or accessories that are disruptive to the school day, provocative, or obscene, are prohibited.
- Clothing or accessories, including bandanas or sweatbands, that could be considered gang related are prohibited.
- Clothing or accessories that endanger the health and safety of any member of the school community is prohibited.
- Pants and skirts must be worn around the waist. Sagging is not allowed.

Frequent violations of the dress code may result in disciplinary consequences.

Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Device/Earbud Use

All WMS students are expected to complete and return a cell phone contract in order to have a cell phone or other non-school issued electronic device at school. All policies apply to all personal electronic devices and apply to all students, with or without a cell phone contract on file.

Cell phones, other personal electronic devices, and earbuds/headphones may not be out or visible during any part of the school day. Cell phones and any other personal electronic devices and/or accessories (such as earbuds/headphones) are expected to be turned off and kept in lockers during the school day. Students may not, under any circumstance, photograph or video staff or other students on school property, including busses.

If a cell phone or other device is seen outside of a student locker, it will be confiscated. Failure to turn over a device when asked is considered insubordination.

1st incident – Device(s) confiscated and taken to front office and can be picked up ONLY by a parent/guardian at the end of the day. If a cell phone contract is not on file, the parent will complete one when the phone is picked up from the office.

2nd incident – Device(s) confiscated and taken to the front office and can be picked up ONLY by a parent/guardian after the **third day**.

3rd and subsequent incidents – Device(s) confiscated and taken to the front office and can be picked up ONLY by a parent/guardian after the **fifth day**.

These consequences apply to the incidents per student, NOT incidents per cell phone.

West Middle School is not responsible for the theft, damage, or loss of a cell phone or electronic device pursuant to Montgomery County Board of Education Policy #4318.

Responsible Student Behavior

We strive to develop responsibility in our students for their actions and behaviors. We do not tolerate classroom disruptions because we believe that every learning opportunity is important. We have three very important rules at West Middle School for all students at all times; (1) Respect Yourself, (2) Respect Others, and (3) Always Act Responsibly. Please be sure you have reviewed the Montgomery County Schools Student Code of Conduct, which can be found on the Montgomery County Schools website. Teachers and staff may have additional rules and procedures for their students, which students are expected to follow.

We provide each student with the maximum opportunity to succeed. We have a structured program to address student behaviors that are inappropriate in a school setting. Students who have difficulty behaving responsibly will be issued either an AISI referral or office referral. All office referrals will be handled by an administrator. The administrator will make decisions about consequences and the student's parent/guardian will be contacted by an administrator or their designee. Students will receive a copy of their discipline referral to bring home to parents/guardians. Inappropriate behaviors that lead to severe discipline consequences will limit or exclude a student's ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. For example, a suspension may remove the privilege of attending extra-curricular activities, such as athletics and special school events.

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL -- DISCIPLINE POLICY 2020-2021

Class 1 Violations

Infraction	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Dress Code	Change clothes or ISS to call home	ISS during lunch call parent	Admin. conference with student and parent
Inappropriate Language/Disrespect	ISS for a class period	Up to half day ISS	Up to 1 day OSS
Inappropriate Language/Disrespect of Faculty	Up to 1 day OSS	Up to 2 days OSS	Up to 3 days OSS
Insubordination/Noncompliance	Up to half day ISS	Up to 1 day ISS	Up to 3 days ISS
Truancy (off campus)	Up to 2 days OSS	Up to 2 days OSS	Up to 2 days OSS
Truancy (on campus)	Up to 1 day ISS	Up to 3 days ISS	Up to 2 days OSS
Cell Phones/Electronic Devices/Earbuds/Headphones	Item taken and returned to parent at the end of the school day.	Item taken and returned to parent after 3 days.	Item taken and returned to parent after 5 days.
Classroom Tardiness	Conference with administrator & warning	Student addressed according to on campus truancy.	Student addressed according to on campus truancy.
Bus Misconduct	Conference with administrator & warning	1 day bus suspension	Up to 3 day bus suspension

Class 2 Violations

Infraction	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Disruptive/ Aggressive Behavior	Up to 3 days ISS	Up to 5 days OSS	Up to 10 days OSS
Bullying/ Harassment	Up to 3 days OSSs	Up to 5 days OSS	Up to 10 days OSS
Communicating Threats	Up to 3 days OSS	Up to 5 days OSS; possible recommendation to MLA	Up to 10 days OSS; possible recommendation to MLA
Possession of Alcohol/ Drugs	Class 3 violation -- up to 10 days OSS; possible referral to MLA	Class 3 violation -- up to 10 days OSS; possible referral to MLA	Class 3 violation -- up to 10 days OSS; possible referral to MLA
Property damage < \$1,000	Up to 5 days OSS; restitution	Up to 5 days OSS; restitution	Up to 10 days OSS; restitution and recommendation to MLA
Theft < \$1,000	Up to 3 days OSS; restitution	Up to 5 days OSS; restitution	Up to 10 days OSS; restitution
Possession/Use of Tobacco	Up to 3 days OSS	Up to 5 days OSS	Up to 10 days OSS

Class 3 Violations

All Class III Violations will result in OSS for 10 days with a recommendation for long term suspension for the remainder of the school year. This includes affray, assault on student/school personnel, Breaking and Entering, Communicating threats to an adult, fighting, gang activity, sexual harassment/sexual assault, sexual misconduct/offense, property damage > \$1,000, Theft > \$1,000, possession of weapons, possession/use of controlled substance and alcohol beverage on campus or off campus.

Teachers should exhaust every effort of intervention prior to submitting a disciplinary referral.

Final decisions are determined by administration.

Food and Drinks

Food, drinks, gum, and candy are only allowed at times as specified by the teacher and must stay contained within the designated setting.

Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker. These lockers have built-in locks. They must be kept locked at all times. No locks other than the built-in lock may be used. Students may not share lockers. Students are responsible for all items in their assigned locker.

Safety

We take safety very seriously. In order to assure the safety of our students the following guidelines must be observed:

1. Always walk on the right side of the hallway.
2. Remain in supervised areas at all times.
3. Immediately report suspicious activity or unsafe conditions to an adult.
4. Always comply with instructions given by teachers, staff, and administrators.

Safety Drills

Fire Drills are conducted monthly in order to ensure that we can safely evacuate the building quickly should any emergency arise. Building evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms. Students must proceed in orderly lines in silence.

Tornado Drills are conducted each year to prepare students should an emergency arise. Each class is assigned a location and instructed on the position to assume. Orderliness and silence are mandatory to prevent confusion.

Lockdown procedures are in place should the need arise. We will practice lockdowns and evacuations throughout the school year.

Athletics

Students are encouraged to participate in school athletics. Athletic teams include cross-country, tennis, football, basketball, cheerleading, softball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, and wrestling. Per Montgomery County Board Policy, interscholastic athletics are available to students in 6th, 7th and 8th grades, with the exception of football, which is offered in 7th and 8th grades only. To participate, student athletes must have a current physical on file. To be eligible, student athletes must be passing their core classes and have at least 85% attendance (no more than 14 absences) in the previous semester. **To remain eligible and avoid athletic suspension student athletes must maintain passing their classes as outlined in the Montgomery County Schools Athletic Handbook. Additionally, student athletes must comply with school attendance and behavioral guidelines. Coaches will routinely check academic progress with teachers to be sure that student athletes remain eligible.**

Per the Montgomery County Schools Athletic Handbook, students are ineligible to play in games on days in which they had ISS or OSS.

Our student athletes must represent our school in a positive manner. Our student athletes are students first and athletes second.

Bus Transportation

The state of North Carolina provides school buses as a means of transportation to and from school. Students, in accordance with school and state regulations, have the **privilege** of school bus transportation as long as their conduct does not materially or substantially disrupt the transportation process or jeopardize the safety of themselves and/or others. All school rules apply to the bus as well. In addition to discipline under the Code of Student Conduct, misbehavior on buses may result in short or long term suspension from the bus and/or from school.

Bus riders must:

1. Comply with the verbal and/or written instructions of the driver or administration.
2. Behave in a manner that will not distract the attention of the driver.
3. Wait at the bus stop without engaging in horseplay or fighting.
4. Never eat or drink on buses.
5. Remain seated, facing the front of the bus at all times.
6. Respect the rights and properties of others.
7. Not throw anything out of bus windows.

Students are assigned to a specific bus. Unless a student has a note from home, he/she will not be permitted to ride a different bus or get off at a different stop. Changes in bus transportation must be brought to the office **before the start of the school day**. Students will be issued a note to ride a different bus if there are seats available.

Grading

The following scale will be used to evaluate students:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 60

At the end of the first nine weeks all parents are given the opportunity to conference with teachers, but we welcome conferences anytime. If a problem arises concerning your child's progress, the first step is to contact the teacher directly. If no solution to the problem is reached, administration will become involved. Communication between the school and the home is essential to promote student success.

Students are recognized for academic achievement through the establishment of an Honor Roll at the end of each semester. The criteria is:

- A/B Honor Roll – All As and Bs
- A Honor Roll – All As

Students cannot have a term grade lower than an 80 for A/B Honor Roll and no term grade lower than a 90 for A Honor Roll.

Visitors

All visitors, including parents, must check in at the front office before proceeding into other areas of the building. This policy is for the safety of our students and staff. Visitors will be given an identification badge and should check out in the office prior to their departure.

Volunteering

Volunteers are always welcome at West Middle School. We appreciate the many hours our volunteers contribute to our school. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the school. All volunteers must complete a background check via the Montgomery County Schools website.

Medication Authorizations

School personnel are not allowed to dispense or allow students to take any type of medication without a "Physician's Authorization for Medication" form. The authorization form must be turned into the office. All medical authorization forms must be re-submitted every school year. All medications must be in a container labeled by the pharmacy or its original container and may not expired. This includes both prescription and non-prescription medications. Students are not allowed to carry medication of any kind on their person or in their book bag unless they have a physician form on file in the office stating that they can self-carry medications and the school nurse has had a meeting with a parent/guardian to grant approval.



**STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I attest that I have read the West Middle School Student/Parent Handbook and the Montgomery County Schools Student Code of Conduct and understand the rules and regulations stated therein. If I have a question or concern, I am encouraged to speak with faculty or staff member or an administrator at West Middle School for clarification.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____