

Thatcher Middle School

Student Handbook

Grades 7th and 8th

School Year 2026-2027



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“A great place for kids to learn”

Welcome to Thatcher Middle School

The purpose of the **TMS Student Handbook** is to inform you of important information pertaining to our school including policies and procedures. Please read it carefully as you are expected to understand and follow the information. We want you to have the best experience at our school and we look forward to you being part of EAGLE NATION. **Welcome to Thatcher Middle School!**

Mission Statement

The mission of **Thatcher Middle School** is to make students our top priority and to provide an environment that allows students to discover, create, learn, and progress to their maximum potential. This will happen through the cooperative efforts of the administration, parents, community, school board, staff, and the student body.

Belief Statements

WE BELIEVE we have the responsibility to provide a variety of educational experiences in the classroom and in extracurricular activities.

WE BELIEVE we have the responsibility to provide the students with, at very least, the basic knowledge and skills to function well in society.

WE BELIEVE every student can learn and achieve.

WE BELIEVE we have the responsibility to teach life skills such as promptness, dependability, self-motivation, discipline, mutual respect, personal pride, and elements of integrity such as honesty and responsibility.

WE BELIEVE students can be taught to take responsibility for their own choices and each student should be held responsible for their own behavior.

WE BELIEVE each student has the right to attend school in a safe environment.

WE BELIEVE no student should be allowed to infringe on the rights of others to gain an education.

THATCHER MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Respect the rights of others to study and learn.

Students come to school for an education. No one has the right to interfere with the education of others.

Attend school daily unless ill or emergency.

Students have a responsibility to take advantage of every opportunity to learn so they can function effectively in society. Students who maximize their opportunities to learn are more successful in school and later in life.

Be on time for all classes.

Students who enter a classroom after a class has begun are interfering with the rights of others to learn and study.

Complete all in-class and homework assignments, and meet deadlines.

The primary responsibility for learning belongs to the student. Since everything that must be learned cannot be accomplished during the school day, there will be homework assignments. Education is an ongoing process that doesn't stop when the school day ends.

Come to class with necessary books and materials.

A teacher should not have to delay class because a student has come unprepared to begin work. This interferes with the rights of others to learn and study. Getting an education requires more than merely being in class; students are expected to actively participate in their learning.

Respect public property and carefully use and return all materials and equipment.

Schools are a community's gift to its young people. It is wrong to abuse that gift. Responsible use of materials and equipment will preserve them for future students.

Obey school rules.

Rules are designed to ensure schools and classrooms are learning environments where students are safe and successful. Students have a responsibility to obey these rules so each student has the proper environment in which to learn.

See that school documents and correspondence to parents/guardians reach home.

Education requires a partnership between the home and the school. For the partnership to work, those involved must know what is happening. Teachers regularly offer documents, for parents to review, that outline the academic progress of their children. Student, parents/guardians, and teachers should work together to maximize learning.

Comply with legal responsibilities.

Students are to comply with policies and regulations, pursue the required course of study, and respond appropriately to the authority of the teachers, administrators, and Governing Board members.

Philosophy and Goals

Thatcher Middle School is committed to a school environment that provides a quality education for all students. To do this, we will teach the basic academic disciplines along with a foundation of basic values. We believe the school must:

- Provide classroom instruction with high academic standards.
- Assist students in developing their physical, emotional, mental, social, moral and creative potential.
- Provide resources for students with special needs.
- Supervise and enforce a fair system of discipline.
- Provide students with activities that develop self-worth.
- Recognize the unique problems associated with middle school students and provide counseling to assist with related problems.
- Provide a smooth transition for all students from elementary, to middle school, and on to high school.
- Encourage all students to strive for the best possible education by maintaining high standards of excellence both in and out of the classroom.
- ***Work together with parents and the community to provide for the total education of all students.***
- ***Provide instruction and resources to help align student abilities with state and district academic standards.***

Non-Discrimination

Thatcher Unified School District #4 (TUSD #4) is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of national origin, race, color, sex, age, marital status, ethnicity, religion, gender, or disability in its educational or employment opportunities. Inquiries or complaints concerning discrimination may be referred to the **Thatcher Unified School District #4 District Office** located at 3490 West Main Street, Thatcher, AZ 85552

Equal Educational Opportunities

The right of a student to participate fully in classroom instruction shall not be abridged or impaired because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, and disability, or any other reason not related to the student's individual capabilities.

The right of students to participate in extracurricular activities shall be dependent only upon their maintaining the minimum academic and behavioral standards established by the Board, and their individual ability in the extracurricular activity.

School Information

Courses

7th Grade	8th Grade
REQUIRED: 7th Grade ELA	REQUIRED: 8th Grade ELA
REQUIRED: 7th Grade General Math	REQUIRED: 8th Grade Pre-Algebra or Algebra 1**
REQUIRED: 7th Grade Science	REQUIRED: 8th Grade Science
REQUIRED: 7th Grade Social Studies	REQUIRED: 8th Grade Social Studies
REQUIRED: 7th Grade Strategic Reading	REQUIRED: 8th Grade Computers
REQUIRED: Boys/Girls PE	Elective Choice
Elective Choice or Resource* (if assigned by Administration)	Elective Choice or Resource* (if assigned by Administration)
	*Resource is assigned only to students who meet the criteria.
	**Based on availability and student proficiency level.

Elective Choices
Art
Band
Introduction to Choir
Orchestra
Percussion
PE Boys/Girls 8 th Grade
Robotics
Spanish
Theater

The course description booklet is available on the TMS website.

Bell Schedule

Default Schedule	Early Release	RE: Friday
1 st Hr. 7:45-8:40 2 nd Hr. 8:45-9:40 3 rd Hr. 9:45-10:40 4 th Hr. 10:45-11:40 5 th Hr. 11:45-12:35 Lunch 12:35-1:10 7 th Hr. 1:15-2:10 8 th Hr. 2:15-3:10	1 st Hr. 7:45-8:20 2 nd Hr. 8:25-9:00 3 rd Hr. 9:05-9:40 4 th Hr. 9:45-10:20 5 th Hr. 10:25-11:00 7 th Hr. 11:05-11:35 8 th Hr. 11:40- 12:15	Class 8:15-8:50 Class 8:55-9:30 Class 9:35-10:10 Class 10:15-10:50 Class 10:55-11:30

Grading

A percentage grading policy has been adopted by TUSD #4 Governing Board. The following scale is used:

Grading Policy
A=90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F=59% and below

Promotion to the Next Grade Level

Students are eligible for promotion to the next grade level based on meeting the following criteria as outlined:

- Student must earn a minimum of a **60% average** as their Final Grade in the following courses.
 - ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies

8th Grade Promotion Parade

Promotion will be held on the last day of school. Each student **MUST** be in good standing with teachers and the office to participate. This includes:

- grades
- fees
- discipline (less than 50 points)
- any other situational events

All students will purchase a matching class t-shirt to be worn on the Promotion Day.

Parents will be notified when their student's progress is deficient:

In **November**, parents of students who may be in jeopardy of retention will be notified. A plan will be devised to help students be successful. Another notification will be sent in **February** for plan modification and progress.

In **April** final decisions for retention or promotion will be determined by the team.

Parents will be notified of their student's grades and progress in deficient classes. If a student fails to meet the standards in a core subject (Math, Science, Social Studies, English) the team will determine if retention or summer school is necessary before a promotion certificate is awarded.

8th grade students wishing to participate in the promotion parade should meet the requirements by the last full week of the school year. **Administration has the final say in a student's participation in the promotion parade. Behavior and attendance can be reasons for loss of privilege of the promotion parade.**

RE: Friday

Students will be invited to campus by appointment. The appointment will be determined on the student's academic progress during each week. Standard Mastery is the focus for all students. Other situations may occur for students to be on campus for Friday activities and will be communicated through email, phone, or other district methods of communication. ALL activities will be under the direction of the inviting teacher. Students below proficiency on the AASA are invited to some RE Fridays.

State Testing-AASA and AzSCI

AASA is the statewide achievement test of Arizona students in Grades 3-8. **ALL** Arizona public school students grades 3-8 will take the grade level assessment in English Language Arts and Math. Students with scores below proficiency are invited to participate in assigned RE Fridays.

The AzSCI assessment is given to students at **Thatcher Middle School** during Grade 8.

Civics Test (8th Grade only)

The Arizona Civics Test is made up of 100 multiple choice questions and is based on the Civics portion of the Naturalization Test published by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. This test is given in 8th grade Social Studies class.

No Pass/No Play

Students participating in extracurricular activities will be checked for eligibility at one-week intervals.

Students with grades **below a 70%** will result in not being allowed to compete the following week (Monday through Monday). Students who are declared ineligible will become ineligible on the following Monday. A student will be required to earn a grade of 70% in every course in which they're enrolled to participate.

An "incomplete" will not be considered a passing grade. Ineligibility brought about by an incomplete grade shall be eliminated at the time the incomplete grade becomes a passing grade. Students staffed into Special Education will be graded according to their Individual Education Plan and will be required to pass all classes in which they are enrolled.

Clubs/Teams

Thatcher Middle School is proud to offer different extra-curricular activities for students. The following clubs, organizations, or teams are available. Some programs have specific requirements such as try-outs and/or fees. Please speak to the advisor or coach for more information.

Clubs, Organizations, and Teams
Knowledge Bowl
Robotics Team
Student Council
National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)
Cross Country
Football
Volleyball
Basketball
Baseball
Soccer
Softball

Wrestling
Track

Fees

All fees are due to the office ***before the first game, meet, or activity*** and are ***non-refundable***.

Students do not have to pay before they attend a practice.

Fees may be paid to the TMS office or through the TMS website via **My School Bucks**.

Checks are not accepted.

Course fees are due within the first 10 business days of the school year or enrollment date.

Course/Club/Elective and other fees	Amount
8th Grade Promotion T-Shirt (required)	\$15.00
Art	\$40.00
Band	\$40.00
Choir (course)	\$40.00
Choir T-Shirt (required)	\$15.00
Orchestra	\$40.00
Percussion	\$45.00
Robotics (course)	\$40.00
Theater	\$40.00
NJHS annual dues	\$25.00
Sports/Club Fees (per sport/club)	\$60.00 per
Student Activity Card	\$35.00
Yearbook (keepsake)	\$40.00

School Policies

Code of Conduct

Thatcher Middle School expects exemplary conduct from its students. Positive student behavior is based upon recognizing the inherent dignity of every human being.

Students learn effectively in an environment in which the expectations of conduct are clear and the consequences of unacceptable behaviors are defined. This **Code of Conduct** applies to any student who is on school property, in attendance at a school or any school sponsored activity (including extra-curricular, sports events, and Eagle's Roost etc.). Therefore, it is essential to examine **Thatcher Middle School Student Guidelines and Expectations**.

Academic Dishonesty

It is the fundamental belief at Thatcher Middle School that any work presented by students will be their own. Academic dishonesty, in any form, is inconsistent with the school's philosophy and will not be tolerated.

Cheating on a quiz, test, project, homework, or examination includes any case of assistance sought, received, or offered without prior notification of the teacher. It also includes the possession of an unauthorized test and/or teacher materials that would give the student an unfair advantage.

Plagiarism is defined as borrowing someone else's words, ideas, or facts and passing them off as one's own. Failure to credit the source of those ideas, words, or facts properly constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Controlled Substances

Thatcher Middle School prohibits the possession, use, dispensing, selling, and/or giving of any alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vape/e-cig, and/or weapons. If it is established that a student has been transmitting, selling, using, or has in possession any alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vape/e-cig, and/or weapons the following procedure will be followed.

The principal will notify the parent and disciplinary action will be taken. A written report will then be sent to the Superintendent and the **Thatcher Police Department** will be notified. If, after review by the Principal and Superintendent, a long-term suspension or expulsion hearing is needed, a certified letter will be delivered to the parent describing the charges and the time, place, and date of the hearing. The administration views these actions as very serious, by nature, and recognizes that the student's removal by no means solves their problem. Any student in violation of this policy will be removed from extracurricular activities immediately until the Disciplinary Counsel has determined consequences. Disciplinary Counsel will consist of but not limited to a coach and administrator.

Dress Code

At **Thatcher Middle School**, we respect the right of students to express their individuality; however, we also respect the right of all students to receive an education free from unnecessary distractions and disruptions. Because of this fundamental right, we expect students to express themselves in a way that highlights their uniqueness, yet

respects the rights of others to unhindered learning. This is one reason why an effective dress code, and enforcement of that code, is necessary.

Parents are strongly urged to pay particular attention to the cleanliness, modesty, and appropriateness of their child's school attire. The school requires that students dress in such a way as to not distract or disrupt the educational process. The standards listed under this policy will apply equally to all extracurricular activities. The principal will make the final determination as to whether a student's dress or appearance is acceptable. The principal has the authority to allow items for special occasions or special circumstances.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop and enforce school regulations prohibiting student dress or grooming practices that:

- Present a hazard to the health or safety of the student or to others in the school.
- Materially interfere with school work, create disorder, or disrupt the educational program.
- Cause excessive wear or damage to school property.
- Prevent students from achieving their educational objectives.
- Represent membership in a gang.

Obscene language or symbols, or symbols of sex, drugs, or alcohol on clothing are expressly prohibited. Policy: JICA

ASBA Policy: Student Dress -- (policy jica-r)

It is required that students wear clothes to school that are appropriate for the school setting. The school requires that students do not wear costumes or dress in such a way as to detract, or disrupt school. **TUSD #4** expects students to dress in a manner that, in addition to the following guidelines, takes into consideration the educational environment, safety, health, and welfare of self and others.

1. *Any gang apparel, jewelry, hat, or hair ornaments that suggest gang affiliation are strictly forbidden and will be confiscated. Belts and chains are not to hang more than six (6) inches from the waist.*
2. *Clothing, jewelry, or any other items suggesting identification with the drug culture, having lewd, vulgar, or suggestive statements or pictures, or anything with racist slurs are prohibited.*
3. *Shorts and skirts are permitted as long as they are no more than five (5) inches above the middle of the knee and the waistline is worn at the proper place. Spandex shorts are not allowed - 5-inch rule applies.*
4. *Spaghetti straps, tank tops, see-through blouses, short tops, bare midriffs, muscle shirts, and shirts without proper undergarments or designed to be worn as undergarments that are being worn improperly are prohibited.*

Low, revealing necklines are not appropriate attire for school. Pants/Jean with excessive holes, shreds, rips or tears five inches above the knee are NOT to be worn. Yoga pants, stretch pants, and leggings may be worn as long as there are no see-through areas in the garment. Shoes are to be worn at all times.

- 5. Hats, caps, or any headwear may be worn outside the building. Hats should be removed when entering the building; this includes hoodies. Teachers will have discretion in classrooms. If a hat is confiscated, the TMS discipline points system will be followed. Any exceptions to this rule will be approved in advance by the administration. Ears must always be visible.*
- 6. Clothing is to be worn so as not to distract from the learning atmosphere of the school setting. Sagging, with the crotch of the pants near the knees and the waistline across the middle of the buttocks, is not permitted. Pants are to be worn at the waistline (top of the hips). Pants that are excessively baggy and have the back pockets at the back of the thigh are not acceptable.*
- 7. Sunglasses are not permitted inside the building they are for outside use only. Exceptions to this rule will be cleared on special occasions by the administration and the student council.*
- 8. The principal or assistant principal shall have the final say if a student dresses inappropriately. (see note)*

Note. Students who violate the dress code may be subject to confiscation of the item, warned on the first offense, and sent home to change with an unexcused absence. Repeated violations may result in loss of privilege to wear shorts, or suspension, depending upon the circumstances involved. (A repeated violation occurs on the second offense.) All students who participate in school extra-curricular activities may be expected to follow a stricter dress code. Please contact the coach of that activity. Students who consistently violate rules in the form of discipline referrals and excessive tardies and absences, may lose the opportunity to attend extra-curricular activities and functions.

Maintaining an Orderly Campus

Students may not be in the gym or classrooms without a teacher present. No bicycles, skateboards, Heely's, scooters or rollerblades or the like, can be used on campus, even when school is not in session. Bikes, scooters, and skateboards can be walked on campus and promptly locked in designated racks. Collecting money on campus for any purpose, other than approved fund-raisers, is not allowed. No food or beverages are allowed inside of the school building without principal approval. Chewing gum on

campus is not permitted. Littering on campus will result in community service assignments.

Bus Policy

Students who are bused to school must conduct themselves properly. If problems occur, the bus driver will file an **Incident Report**. If this problem is not corrected the privilege of riding the bus will be suspended and a parent will be responsible for the transportation of the student. Bus misconduct will not be tolerated

Responsibility and Respect

Students are expected to demonstrate courteous behavior towards all individuals in the school environment. This includes fellow students, classroom teachers, aides and assistants, substitute teachers, office personnel, guest speakers, and volunteers. Students reported for misconduct will receive disciplinary action (Refer to Foundation of Respect in Student Handbook).

The use of respectful and appropriate language is expected of all students at Thatcher Middle School. This includes profanity, derogatory language, harmful slurs, obscene hand gestures, etc.

■ PEER CONTACT

- ✓ **Thatcher Middle School** is aware of the developmental progression of students wanting to be in close and personal relationships with each other. However, this is an academic setting and public displays of affection (***holding hands, hugging, kissing, etc.***) are NOT acceptable. Students involved in this type of behavior will receive disciplinary action. (*Refer to Foundation of Respect in Student Handbook*).

Property Rights

Stealing and vandalism of any form, including unauthorized “borrowing” of another’s belongings, removal of sporting equipment from the gym, removal of anything from the classroom without the teacher’s consent, or the removal of books from the library without signing them out is not permitted.

Defacement of school or personal property will require restitution as well as written apologies and disciplinary consequences. This includes destroying or writing on desks, tables, walls, lockers, chairs, yearbooks, and campaign posters. “Upon complaint of the Governing Board, the parents or guardian of the student who has injured school property shall be liable for all damages caused by their children or wards.” (ARS 15-842)

Lying to a teacher, another adult, or the principal to avoid punishment for wrongdoing is a serious offense. Forging a parent’s signature is a serious offense and will carry

disciplinary action. Intentional disruption of school activities will not be allowed. Disorderly conduct of any kind is prohibited. Gambling is prohibited. Using on-line computer services to acquire and/or view sexually explicit material is a serious offense.

Personal Rights of Others

■ **HARASSMENT, BULLYING, INTIMIDATION AND HAZING**

- ✓ **Harassment, bullying and hazing** are prohibited at school, in school vehicles, at school bus stops, during school-sponsored activities and while students are traveling to or from school. Harassment means any abusive conduct that is directed at one or more students because of the student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity or expression), disability or age, and that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or opportunities offered by the school. It includes, but not limited to, retaliation, intimidation and sexual harassment.
- ✓ Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment. Bullying means any aggressive, intentional behavior carried out by a person or group repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself. It may be verbal, physical or relational; and it requires an observed or perceived imbalance of power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information or popularity – between the bully and victim.
- ✓ **Bullying includes cyberbullying**, which means any act of bullying committed by use of electronic technology or communication devices, including social networking and other internet communications, that occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored event; substantially interferes with a student's education; threatens the overall educational environment; or substantially disrupts the operation of a school. Hazing means forcing a student to risk or suffer physical or mental harm or degradation to join, participate in or remain in a school-affiliated organization or activity.
- ✓ Students who believe they have been harassed, bullied or hazed should report the behavior to a teacher, school counselor, office personnel, health assistant or school administrator. All school employees must report such incidents. All reports are investigated and confidential. Students who engage in harassment, bullying or hazing are subject to discipline.

■ **VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR**

Thatcher Unified School District #4 recognizes there are certain behaviors that, if tolerated, would compromise the learning environment to which the students and staff of the district are entitled.

These behaviors, categorized as violent or aggressive, will not be tolerated. Students exhibiting violent or aggressive behavior or warning signs of future violent or aggressive behavior will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, and/or expulsion in accordance with board policy concerning student suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary interventions. As appropriate and in accordance with applicable law and Board policy, students may also be referred to law enforcement authorities.

It is at the discretion of TUSD #4, that when appropriate, the student may receive appropriate intervention designed to address the problem behavior. Students must immediately report questionable behavior or potentially violent situations to an administrator, office personnel, teacher or school counselor. An act of violence and aggression is any expression, direct or indirect, verbal or behavioral, of intent to inflict harm, injury, or damage to persons or property. A threat of violence and aggression carries implied notions of risk of violence and a probability of harm or injury.

Hands-Off Policy

It is the policy of **Thatcher Middle School** to strictly enforce a hands-off policy. Students are not to push, shove, trip, slap, or otherwise strike another student either in play or anger.

- A discipline referral may be written for a **Violation of the Hands-Off Policy** when a student has feigned or actually made physical contact as previously defined. Consequences for violations of the Hands-Off Policy shall be:
- A discipline referral may be written for **Physical Assault** when a student violates the Hands-Off Policy and there is intent to cause physical harm or injury and/or strike with anger or malice. **Police may be contacted for any physical assault incident.** Consequences for physical assault shall be:
- A discipline referral may be written for **Fighting** when two or more students have jointly violated the Hands-Off Policy and there is intent to cause physical harm or injury and/or strike with anger or malice. **Police may be contacted for any fighting incident.**
- A discipline referral may be written for **Incitement** when a student has made threats of physical harm or injury, harassed or intimidated another student, acted or promised to act as “back-up” to a fight, and/or promoted or supported a fight between other students through verbal or physical actions which may include congregating at the scene of a fight and/or recording a fight.

School Representation

All students involved with extracurricular activities assume the responsibility to conduct themselves properly while participating. This is especially important when traveling to “away” contests. Proper conduct becomes the responsibility of each person while on the bus, at the game, and while in commercial businesses. If the conduct of the student brings a bad name upon them, the team, or the school they will have disciplinary action invoked and possible termination from extracurricular activities. (see athletic handbook for more information)

Performance Etiquette

These guidelines are provided to help create an atmosphere conducive to the enjoyment of all those attending fine arts performances:

- Quiet conversation is permissible **ONLY** before the start of a performance.
- Talking, whispering and other distractions are **NOT** appropriate during a performance.
- Remain seated during the entire performance or until you are dismissed.
- Applause is appropriate and welcome.
- Please leave all food outside.
- Any person not in compliance will be asked to leave.

Assemblies

An indication of the cultural level of a school is the conduct of students at an assembly. Each student is responsible for the impression made by the school as a whole. Unacceptable conduct would include whistling, boisterousness, and talking during the program. Students who choose to participate inappropriately at assemblies will lose the privilege of attending.

Student Policies

Attendance

Consistent with state law, **Thatcher Middle School** holds to the philosophy that parents are responsible for the attendance of their children. Parents have the right to have their child out of school for any reason deemed important, but in exercising that right, they assume the responsibility for the loss of any academic material presented during the absence, and may be responsible for the loss of credit, if absences are excessive. Parents cannot expect the school to educate students, who are not physically in attendance. The school reserves the right to set limits on the number of absences a student may have, beyond which course credit cannot be justified.

All students must be signed out, in the Office, before leaving campus during the school day. If a parent desires to have their student released to another person not listed in the student's file, it must be approved by the principal.

Arrival and Departure

Unless the student has arranged to meet with a teacher, no student should arrive at school before **7:30 AM**. Limited supervision is in place from 7:15-7:30. Students are to leave the school grounds immediately at the end of the day or school sponsored activity. Students from other schools are not permitted to wait outside the middle school.

Absence from School

Each time a student is absent, a parent must notify the school. If unable to call or use the parent app, a note must be sent with the student upon their return to school. The school may call and check on students any time deemed necessary. Excessive absences without good reason may warrant the school to report to the truancy office to investigate the problem. More than two class period absences will result in an all-day absence. A student participating in extracurricular activities must be in attendance on the day of the activity unless participating in a school-related activity or absent, with prior approval of the office, for funeral, medical, dental, or other necessary appointments. Doctor excuses must be brought to the office after appointment. If approval is not obtained, the student will not be allowed to participate. This includes sports events, sports practices, dances, music performances, etc. Students who have been absent are to go to the office between 7:40 and 7:45 to turn in appointment verification.

- **Excused Absence:** Those caused by reasons such as a funeral, family emergency, illness, and doctor or dentist appointments, accompanied with a note. Each of these absences should be followed by an official note or phone call from a parent. Doctor's notes must be on an official office letterhead and turned into the office within 2 school days.
- **Unexcused Absence:** Those absences in which the student and parent had a choice. Examples are shopping, pleasure trips, vacations, hunting, etc.
- **Thatcher Middle School Absence Policy:** If absences become excessive, greater than 14 all day absences, the student may be referred to a court of jurisdiction for further prosecution of the school attendance law concerning habitual truancy.

Homework

It is the philosophy of **Thatcher Middle School** that students should be given homework. Students should manage their time to see that all homework assignments are completed on time. Parents can view grades via Parent Vue to check student

grades (contact office for info), when an assignment is missing. Teachers and parents are encouraged to work together to make sure that all students turn in all of their assignments.

If requesting homework because of illness, the work is expected to be completed when the student returns to school. If not requested, the student will receive one day for each day absent to complete the work.

Tardy Policy

If students are not in their assigned classroom when the bell rings, they are considered tardy. If a student is more than 10 minutes tardy, it is considered an absence. The attendance of students plays an important role in the level of success they will experience in the educational process. We appreciate the effort that our students and parents make daily in regard to attendance. The tardy policy starts over each semester. The consequences for being tardy are:

<u>Tardy Number</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
1 — 4	Warning
5	Call home
6-9	In school lunch detention per tardy and discipline points (15)
10	Discipline points (20) and in 1 day of ISS
12	Discipline points (25), 2 days ISS, attendance plan

Bathroom/ Hall Passes

Each quarter students receive a bathroom pass.

Students are to be in class each hour and are not allowed in the halls during class time unless they have a “hall pass” from their teacher. Students who are out of class without a “hall pass” may be subject to disciplinary action.

Lunch Time Rules

During lunch, students are to stay away from all classroom areas west and north of the science/woods building. All games and activities that occur during lunch must be safe. “Wall Ball” and any similar games are prohibited. Students need to stay in safe, supervised areas, which includes the cafeteria, courtyard and the main building of **Thatcher Middle School**.

If a student eats in the cafeteria they are to eat and then return to campus. If a student eats off-campus they are to eat their food and return to campus promptly unless accompanied by a parent/guardian. No one will be allowed to “hangout” outside of the

gates during their lunch period. Students will be expected to be inside the gates during the lunch period. Parents must contact students through the office during lunch.

Students whose parent/guardians have given permission to eat off campus are exercising an exception to the closed-campus policy. This exception **WILL** be revoked if they behave inappropriately or if they litter the campus.

Cafeteria

We encourage all students to use the cafeteria. Breakfast and a hot lunch can be purchased at a reasonable rate. Courteous behavior and cleanliness are required in the cafeteria. Parents may pay any amount toward the student's lunch account. Free and reduced lunch applications are available online at thatcherud.org. Parents should be aware the cafeteria is required by law to provide nutritionally balanced meals.

At no time are students allowed to take food outside the cafeteria.

Closed Campus

Thatcher Middle School students will observe a **CLOSED CAMPUS POLICY**. During school hours all students will remain on campus. If a student is leaving campus for any reason a parent must come to the office and check the student out and check the student back in at the office upon return. Students who do not follow one of the listed exceptions and are found to be off campus will be subject to disciplinary action. Due to this policy, parents assume full liability and responsibility for their students who leave campus during lunch.

The only exceptions:

- If a student resides within the identified area, they may eat lunch at home. A completed form must be on file in the office. Students must sign out and back in the office. Students serving lunch detention for lunch tardies will no longer have off campus privilege for the semester.
- If a student eats lunch off-campus, a completed form must be on file in the office.

Electronic Devices

The use of any electronic device in a manner that detracts from the educational process of **Thatcher Middle School** is prohibited. Student use of electronic devices (including but not limited to cell phones, Smart watches, earbuds, electronic games, etc.) during class time is prohibited, unless assigned by a teacher as part of an educational objective. Teachers have the right to ask for any device that is disruptive to the classroom environment or used inappropriately in any way.

Electronic devices will not be allowed during school hours. Do not use devices between classes in hallways or outside. Devices should remain in their backpack from the time a student enters campus until they leave campus for the day. If a

student is part of an after-hours program and needs to call for a ride the electronic device may be used.

■ **CELL PHONES**

Cell phones are not to be seen or heard during school hours. All student cell phones should remain in backpacks while at school. There is a phone in the office for students to call home. If a parent has a message for a student, please contact the office.

- ✓ **1st offense: warning and phone confiscated with points - see discipline chart**
- ✓ **2nd offense: phone confiscated and returned end of school day with points - parent contact**
- ✓ **3rd offense: phone confiscated with points and parent must pick up - with behavioral plan in place**

Any incidents after will be considered insubordination and subject to further disciplinary action. Phones confiscated can be picked up at the end of the school day and not before.

Students who participate in after school events and need to contact for rides after activities can use cell phones for contact.

Students need to be cautious of use of electronic devices that may impose on the privacy rights of others; this includes but is not limited to, taking photos to be posted on social media or making comments on social media. Use of social media that takes the form of social bullying will be dealt with under appropriate policies and in conjunction with law enforcement.

Any student using an electronic device on campus in a derogatory way will forfeit that cell phone to the administration for 5 school days. If a student or parent refuses to forfeit the cell phone or electronic device the student will be suspended for 5 school days. More serious discipline will follow on the second offense under defiance of authority.

These devices can be a distraction to students and should not be out unless they are part of a class presentation or project to be used under the supervision and direction of school personnel. The school will not be held liable for any lost or stolen electronic devices. **The school reserves the right to confiscate these devices.** Any student using an electronic device inappropriately or during class time without teacher/staff consent will forfeit that device and a parent conference will take place. This includes but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, earbuds and/or any other electronic communication devices. More serious discipline will follow on the second offense under defiance of authority.

■ NUISANCE ITEMS

Items not directly associated with the educational setting (i.e., cell phones, earbuds, electronic games, devices, toys, cameras, skateboards, scooters, yo-yos, rubber bands, etc.) are not allowed at school. They become a serious problem when they are stolen or lost. Students found in possession of such items will have the items confiscated and may be subject to disciplinary action. Confiscated items may be returned to the student's parents.

Personal Items

All articles and valuables are brought to school at the owner's risk. If you bring valuables to school, give them to a teacher or place them in the office. Please be sure that all coats, musical instruments, and other personal items are marked appropriately. Misplaced items can then be returned to their proper owners.

Bicycles, Scooters and/or Skateboards

Thatcher Middle School cannot assume responsibility for damage or theft of bicycles/scooters/skateboards. Students who ride to school should lock them securely in the bike racks. Any theft or damage should be reported immediately to the **Thatcher Police Department as well as the office.**

Student Services

In-School Suspension

A classroom designed to assist students during the school day who may require disciplinary action but are not sent home. The In-School Suspension (ISS) classroom is supervised by a Thatcher Middle School ISS staff member and is fully monitored for safety and security purposes.

Library

The library has an outstanding supply of books, magazines, reference materials, and technology. Materials can be checked out for a period of two weeks. Reference materials cannot be checked out from the library. Students must either be with their teacher or have a hall pass to use the library during class time.

Fines will be assessed for late returns.

Lost and Found

Thatcher Middle School will not be responsible for any personal items lost or stolen on school grounds or school related activities. Lost items should be reported as soon as possible to the office. Students are expected to bring any valuable items found immediately to the office.

Nurse/Illness

Students enrolled at **Thatcher Middle School** have the ability to have access to a nurse if injured or ill while on campus.

- **Accidents & Injuries**

All accidents and injuries occurring at school must be reported immediately to proper authority. An incident report will be completed and filed in the office. Failure to do this may cause “non-coverage” of some insurance policies.

- **Medication**

If it becomes necessary for a student to take any form of medication at school, a medication form must be on file in the office. All medications will be kept and dispensed from the Office. **STUDENTS ARE NOT TO SELF-MEDICATE.**

School Counseling

School counseling services are offered at Thatcher Middle School and available to all students by a licensed (Arizona) School Counselor. The purpose of the school counseling program is to provide services to encourage your student to be academically successful. School Counseling promotes academic achievement, career and college readiness, and personal/social development of every student.

School Resource Officer

Thatcher Unified School District #4 has access to a school resource officer to assist our schools. The resource officer provides information to our school community through training and information regarding safety and security and is available to every campus.

Other Important Information

Equipment

Any student issued school owned equipment is solely responsible for the return of that equipment, in good working condition. When dealing with athletic equipment, a student will not be allowed to participate in another sport until the equipment is returned. Any school owned equipment that is damaged, broken or lost will become the responsibility of the student to pay replacement costs. **School issued equipment is NOT to be worn outside of team practice or competition.**

Extracurricular Activities

Students who participate in interscholastic athletics will be governed by the Eastern Arizona Junior High Athletic Association (EAJHA). Student athletes must be in school on the day of an event or they will be ineligible for the event. Students must complete

the following items before they will be allowed to participate on any **Thatcher Middle School** athletic team:

- It is the responsibility of the athlete's parent/guardian to upload an official physical examination by a licensed physician to **Final Forms (refer to TMS Athletic Handbook for more information)**.
In addition, an updated health form must be completed each year on or after April 1st and turned in with the appropriate signatures.
- Concussion form must accompany physical form.
- Written permission slips, signed by a parent, are on file in the office.
- School insurance or a written insurance waiver is on file in the office.

PE Clothing & Lockers

The school is requesting that all students in PE wear:

- Athletic pants or shorts
T-shirt
- Tennis shoes with laces

Students will be issued locks to be used in PE only. **BE SURE TO LOCK THE PE LOCKER AT ALL TIMES.** Do not tamper with another student's locker or lock. The school is not responsible for stolen or lost items.

If lock is lost a **\$10.00 fee** will be charged for a replacement.

Student Incentive Programs

- **Student of the Month:** At the end of each month, teachers will nominate students (1) from each grade that best exemplified these standards:
 - ✓ Consistent attendance
 - ✓ No unexcused tardies
 - ✓ Turned in all homework
 - ✓ Maintained a grade of 90% or higher
 - ✓ No discipline problems
- **Eagle of the Week:** At the end of each week, teachers will nominate a student from the school that best exemplified these standards:
 - ✓ Prepared for class
 - ✓ Positive participation
 - ✓ Gave best effort
 - ✓ Made academic, social, or behavior improvement
- **Yearbook signing:** On the last day of the school year, students who have paid for a TMS Yearbook will have the opportunity to participate in the Yearbook Signing Day. **Yearbooks are NOT available for purchase on this day.** The purchase of a yearbook must be completed by a date set by TMS Administration.

- **Academic Excellence (AE) Days:** AE days are designed for TMS to participate in school assemblies which may include student talent shows, guest speakers, or school spirit days. These days are held at least once a quarter during the school day with an adjustment made to the bell schedule.

School Dances/Activities

School activities will be held on a scheduled basis. All school rules are in effect. In addition, the following rules will be enforced:

- Activities will be planned in advance and calendared with dates and times of each event.
- Students with discipline points given the week of activity will not be eligible to attend the school activity.
- Students with 50 or more discipline points will not be eligible to participate.
- Students absent during the school day may not participate in the school activity.
- ***Parents need to pick-up their child promptly at the end of the activity.***
- If a student leaves early, they will not be allowed to re-enter.
- There will be no loitering on the grounds outside.
- Inappropriate conduct or dancing will not be tolerated.
- Dances/Activities are for TMS Students only. Visitors will not be allowed.
- Dress standards are the same as those used for normal school attendance.

Student Council

Student Council serves as a training experience for both leaders and followers, gives students a share in the management of the school, develops high ideals of personal conduct, acts as a clearing house for student activities, seeks to interest students in school affairs and helps solve problems that may arise. Members of Student Council are representatives of the school and as such are held to a higher level of responsibility.

School Insurance

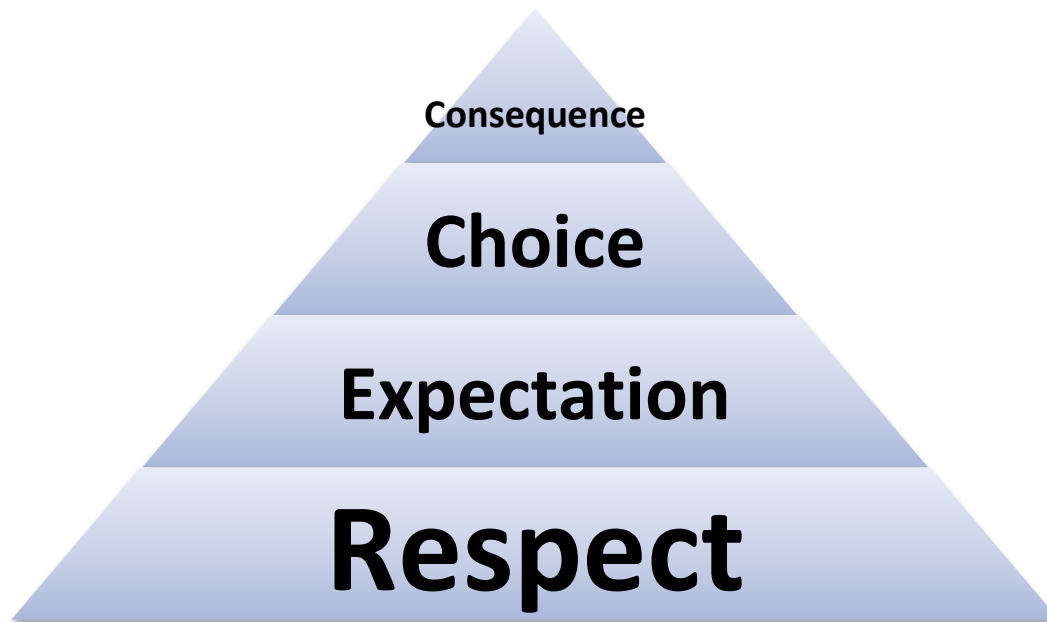
Parents have the option of purchasing low-cost insurance from a school-authorized carrier, or to maintain insurance from some other source. The insurance coverage and processing all claims are solely between the insurance company and parents. The school maintains no health coverage for its students. Questions about insurance can be answered at the TMS school office.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

All visitors are to report to the **Thatcher Middle School** office upon entering the building. Anyone wishing to spend time visiting the school must pick up a visitor's pass at the office. Students may not bring their friends to attend school with them.

Parents are welcome to spend time in classrooms at any time with permission from TMS Administration. **Thatcher Middle School** requires all visitors abide by all school policies.

FOUNDATION OF RESPECT



It is expected that all students, teachers, staff members, and Thatcher Middle School associates will embrace, internalize and practice the universal principle of **RESPECT**.

RESPECT will drive all decisions and behaviors.

RESPECT for self, **RESPECT** for others, **RESPECT** for community, **RESPECT** for country, and **RESPECT** for school.

Each teacher, staff member, student, and parent will embrace high **EXPECTATIONS** for themselves and those with whom they work and serve. We truly believe all students can achieve and progress leading to a happier and more fulfilling future.

Through research and evidence, we concede that manipulation, coercion, anger, and humiliation does not motivate students to greatness. Belief in oneself, excellent teachers, a foundation of consistently reinforced corrective **CONSEQUENCES**, and the overarching ability to **CHOOSE** will improve motivation, achievement, and innovation.

STUDENTS CHOOSE THEIR ACTIONS. THEY DO NOT CHOOSE THEIR CONSEQUENCES!

To help students increase their capacity for success the following structure will be followed by all students and staff at Thatcher Middle School:

Each student engaged in one of the following unwanted behaviors will be sent to the office to speak with the principal or designated authority. The principal and student will discuss the violation of the foundational principle of **RESPECT**. They will discuss corrective behaviors and possible interventions. The student will then earn Discipline Points based on the chart below as a consequence structured to change future behavior. Each column of points increases with each repeated behavior. **Should a student be engaged in multiple violations throughout an incident, the student may receive accumulated points for each violation.**

Once a student accumulates 100 discipline points during one semester, they will be suspended off school for 9 days, and they will have the following options:

- Be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for long-term suspension from school.
- Be referred to the Governing Board for possible expulsion from Thatcher Unified School District.
- Withdraw from Thatcher Middle School.

Discipline Points System at Thatcher Middle School

<u>Infraction</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
<u>Category 1</u>			
Skateboards, Scooters, Rollerblades or like	5	10	15
Disrespect for School Property, Littering	5	10	15
Violation of Food and Drink Rule	5	10	15
<u>Category 2</u>			
Dress Code Violation	10	15	20
Horseplay/Injury Prone	10	15	20
Inappropriate Language	10	15	20
Minor Public Display of Affection	10	15	20
Cell Phone/Electronic Device/Smart Watch (A.R.S.15-120.05)	10	15	20
Disruptive Object	10	15	20
<u>Category 3</u>			
6-9 unexcused tardies-15 points total (1 day lunch detention per tardy)		15	
Disruptive Behavior	15	20	30
Profanity, Vulgarity, & Obscene Gestures	15	20	30
Disorderly and Unsafe Conduct	15	20	30
Defacing School Property (With Reparations)	15	20	30
General Bus Disruption	15	20	30
Failure to Comply with a Reasonable Request	15	20	30
Out of Class without Permission	15	20	30
Fighting (Defender)	15	20	30
Incitement	15	20	30
<u>Category 4</u>			
10 unexcused tardies (1 day ISS)	20		
Cheating, including AI (Plus Mandatory Zero for Assignment)	20	25	35
Defiance, Disrespect, Insubordination	20	25	35

Inappropriate Use of Computers	20	25	35
Profanity/Vulgarity/Obscenities Directed at Staff or Students	20	25	35
Possession of a Pocket Knife	20	25	35
Possession of Dangerous Items	20	25	35

Category 5

12 unexcused tardies (2 days ISS and attendance plan)	25		
Theft	25	30	35
Vandalism/Destruction of School Property	25	30	35
On Campus without Permission	25	30	35
Riding or operating vehicle on campus	25	30	35
Truancy/Ditching	25	30	35

Category 6

Use/Sharing of Pornographic Material/Images	50	55	60
Fighting (Mutual)	50	55	60
Fighting (Aggressor)	50	55	60
Harassment, Bullying, Cyberbullying	50	55	60
Discriminatory Harassment/Hate Speech	50	55	60
Vaping, E-cigarettes, Chemical Inhalation Devices, Tobacco	50	55	60
Threats, Verbal Abuse, or Written Abuse	50	55	60
Public Display of Affection (Sexual Contact/Groping)	50	55	60

Category 7

Assault of a Student			75
False Fire Alarm/911 Call			75
Under the Influence of a Controlled Substance			75
Alcohol Violation			75
Indecent Exposure			75
Operating a Vehicle on Campus in a Reckless and Dangerous Manner			75
Sexual Harassment			75

Intentional battery of a student	75
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Category 8

Bomb Threat	100
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Severe Vandalism/Destruction of school property	100
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Possession of a Controlled Substance or Drug Paraphernalia	100
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Possession of an Explosive	100
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Assault of a District Employee	100
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Possession of a Weapon, Dangerous Device or a Firearm	100
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Arson	100
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Aggravated Assault of a Student	100
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NOTE:

All Category 2-4 infractions may include minimum 1 day in school suspension in addition to points. Second and third offenses may include out of school suspension and in school suspension.

All Category 5 infractions may include minimum 1 day out of school suspension in addition to points.

All Category 6 infractions may include minimum 3 days out of school suspension in addition to points.

All Category 7 infractions may include minimum 5 days out of school suspension in addition to points.

All Category 8 infractions may include minimum 9 day out of school suspension in addition to points.

PARENTS

Parents will be notified when their student has been referred to the office for a handbook infraction. A parent conference may be scheduled when their student has a total of 50 points and the student may be placed on a behavior contract.

Students having a semester total of 50 points or 12 cumulative tardies will NOT be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities including the 8th grade Promotion Parade. This includes athletics, music programs, school sponsored trips and attendance at school activities/dances. Students will not be allowed to practice or travel with the team while placed in ISS or OSS.

BEHAVIOR CONTRACT OR PLAN

Student discipline may be modified by the administration by creating a behavior contract agreed upon by the student and parents. This may include enrollment in a diversion program that will be prescribed and assigned to students for various handbook infractions. A student may have a reduction of points one time for completing a prescribed diversion opportunity. If a student commits the infraction again, discipline points will be assessed without an opportunity for reduction.

POINTS OF CLARIFICATION

All procedures will be in accordance with Thatcher Unified School District Board Policy. Any act that violates the law or is not specifically covered in these policies will be dealt with by the administration. Any extreme violations, in any category, will be dealt with more severely than the policy prescribes. Police will be notified if an infraction is also a legal matter.

Positive Behavior Incentives

Throughout each year varying positive consequences for both outstanding and improved behaviors will be developed and utilized by teachers, administrators, and student leaders.

In addition to these positive consequences, students may remove discipline points during each semester by doing the following:

COMMUNITY SERVICE: A student may remove discipline points one time per semester by serving community service hours after school or during Friday School.

Appeals to the process outlined in this section are made through the Superintendent.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT (LIST IS NOT ALL INCLUSIVE)

Behavioral Contract: The student is placed on a contract that lists the disciplinary consequences that will be used for future behavior problems. This contract is signed by the principal, student, and parent.

Counseling: The student will be referred, with parent approval, to a Guidance Counselor.

Expulsion: The student will be referred to the Thatcher Unified School District Governing Board for permanent removal from the school environment.

In-School Suspension (ISS): The student is suspended from one or more classes, but remains at school during these class periods. Class assignments will be sent to the office for the student to complete.

Long-Term Suspension: The student will be referred to the Superintendent for removal from the school environment for a period of time longer than ten (10) school days.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS): The student will be removed from the school environment for a period not to exceed nine (9) school days. During out-of-school suspensions, the student is not allowed on campus or at any school related function.

Parent Conference: A conference conducted between the student, their parent and appropriate school personnel. This conference will be documented.

Parent Notification: Parents are notified by telephone, e-mail, personal contact, or letter regarding disciplinary infractions on a timely basis.

Removal from Extracurricular Activities: The student is informed by the principal that they will not be permitted to participate in athletics, band, and/or school sponsored activities.

Required Parent Conference (RPC): The student will be suspended until a parent or guardian is able to meet with the principal.

Restitution: The student is informed that they are liable for replacement, repair, or monetary reimbursement for the damage to property.

Student Conference: A formal conference held between the student and one or more school official. During this conference the student will discuss and acknowledge the behavior that led to the disciplinary action. This conference will be documented.

Work Detail: The student will be given a work assignment (sweeping sidewalks, picking up trash, raking, etc.) in place of suspension, or as a disciplinary consequence.