

# Fannin County Middle School

## Student/Parent Handbook

The Fannin County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, creed, or disability in admission to its programs, services, and activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals, or in any aspect of their operations to also include but not be limited to additions, modifications, or alterations to the physical plan of any school facility. For additional information or referral to the appropriate system coordinator, contact the system superintendent's office at 2290 East First Street, Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513 or 706-632-3771.

### **FCMS Mission**

Our mission is to provide students with an education that prepares them to be successful and meet future challenges.

### **Title I Funding Notification**

Money is provided by the federal government to support student academic achievement. Fannin County Middle School (FCMS) is currently a school-wide Title I school and must specify how Title I funds are to be spent. At FCMS, Title I funds are used to support student achievement through supplemental reading, writing, and math materials as well as computer technology which may be purchased to promote differentiated instruction for Title I students.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook have been carefully prepared so that they will help you to be successful at Fannin County Middle School. It is our aim to help you develop and accept the responsibilities and obligations of your education in order that you may become a good citizen in the world of tomorrow. We also hope that you will learn to use this day planner effectively. Time management is a critical skill for success as a student and eventually as a professional in the workplace. Organize your days and weeks to stay on course, take advantage of all the school and community has to offer, and enjoy the experience. We hope you will set your goals high, participate in school activities, and always do your very best in everything you attempt.

## **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **ACCREDITATION**

Fannin County Middle School is accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission and is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/AdvanceED.

### **ASBESTOS STATEMENT**

This is to certify that the Fannin County School System has fully complied with Federal Regulation HOCFR 763 – Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). An EPA certified inspector has inspected all school buildings for asbestos. A Management Plan for each school is on file in the Principal's office. The Management Plan is available to the public during regular business hours. Copies may be obtained for a fee of \$.10 per page.

### **ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In order to provide a positive experience for the students of Fannin County Middle School, the following objectives will be our focus:

- To strive for excellence that will lead to competitive programs within the boundaries of good sportsmanship and moral behavior of the coach/sponsor and student participants.

- To provide students with opportunities and exposure to new experiences with extracurricular activities.
- To ensure the growth and development that will raise the number of participants; increase participation and enable our programs to continuously improve.
- To provide opportunities that will allow the programs to serve as a setting where students may learn to cope with problems and handle situations that may arise in a real world setting.

### Student Responsibilities

Expectations:

- Have a current physical on file before tryouts or any practices.
- Have a school approved accident insurance policy or family insurance policy on file before participating.
- Complete all necessary paperwork at the start of the season; including concussion, medical release, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat policy.
- Attend all organized practices, unless excused.
- Take proper care of equipment.
- Treat your teammates, officials, and your opponents with dignity, respect, and good sportsmanship.

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege extended to the students by the Board of Education. Students of Fannin County Middle School are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner as to meet the highest standards at all times.

The Code of Conduct is designed to establish high expectations and standards for all participating students and goes into effect on the first day a student joins a FCSS athletic team, or any other competitive group or extracurricular program. The Code remains in effect for the entire school year.

All school rules apply immediately before, during and immediately after an extracurricular event. In order to be eligible to participate in practices or competitions, students must be in attendance for at least half of the school day. If a student receives ISS or OSS, they will not be allowed to take part in games or competitions until their consequences are completed.

Students must maintain academic eligibility in order to participate in extracurricular activities. A student must have received a semester average of 70 or higher in 5 out of 7 classes the semester prior to the activity in which they are to participate. Participation in extracurricular events including cuts and playing time are at the coaches/sponsors discretion.

### **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES**

Other than a willingness to learn, good attendance is the most important factor to success in school. Parents are urged to see to it that students attend school every day and are on time. **School starts at 8:00 a.m. Students who arrive to class after the 8:00 a.m. bell will be considered tardy.** Excessive absences will jeopardize academic success and undermine the development of the appropriate self-discipline so necessary for future success in all aspects of life. Student success in school is directly tied to attendance. Responsibility for attending class lies with the student.

#### **Absences**

The school recognizes there are times when a student must be absent for reasons that are beyond the control of the student and the parent. Absences of this nature will be excused in accordance with state attendance laws. According to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, lawful absences are: (1) personal illness (2) serious illness or death in the immediate family (3) recognized religious holidays (4) absences mandated by governmental agency (i.e. summons for court) (5) Acts of God (6) a student whose parent is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five school days per school year (7) serving as a Page for the General Assembly. All other absences are considered unexcused.

When it is necessary for a student to be absent from school, the student should bring a note in the parent's handwriting explaining the absence on the day he/she returns to school. If a trip to a medical facility was made, a written excuse is required from the medical office immediately upon the student's return to school. In case of an extended illness from school, the school should be notified as soon as possible.

After each absence, upon returning to school, students are to report to the office for admittance to class. A note from a parent or doctor must be presented to the official in the office for admittance to class. Parents and guardians may email notes to [fcmsnotes@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:fcmsnotes@fannin.k12.ga.us) in lieu of sending in a written note. If a note or email for being absent is not presented on the first day back, the admittance will be considered unexcused. The student will have three (3) days in which to bring a note to remove the unexcused absence.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain make up assignments from the teachers and turn in all work within five (5) school days. After five days, all missed assignments will receive a "0".

### **Early Dismissal**

Occasionally, it may be necessary for a student to leave school before the end of the school day. If this is the case, a student's parent/guardian should send a note to the office. This note should be turned in by 8:00 a.m. so the student's name can be placed on the early dismissal list. A parent/guardian must sign a release sheet in the main office when the student is picked up.

If a student is ill during the school day, the teacher will give the student permission to go to the nurse.

### **Tardy**

If a student arrives to class after the 8:00 a.m. bell, he/she must report to the office. A student who is not in class and did not clear the absence with the office or a teacher is considered cutting class and will be disciplined for a class cut.

## **CAFETERIA INFORMATION**

The school provides food services for students and teachers in the cafeteria. There are three lunch periods with a third of the student body assigned to each one. Lunches may be purchased or the student may bring lunch from home. **Lunch prices for the 2022-2023 school year are to be determined at a later date.**

**Prepayment for lunches is encouraged. Students may present cash or checks to cashiers at breakfast or lunch. Please place your student's payment in an envelope with the student's name and lunch number. Parents may also pay online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) To complete this process, parents will need to know the student identification for their child. It begins with 655 and contains 9 to 11 digits.**

Students are allowed to charge meals. Any balance on the student's meal account at the end of the school year will remain current on a student's account until paid. The balance will carry over into the next school year. If a student moves to a new school or new grade level unpaid meal charges will remain on the students meal account. Applications for Free or Reduced-price meals are sent home on the first day of school and as requested anytime during the school year. Please remember that if the student qualified for free or reduced meals last year, **you still must complete a new application within the first 30 days of the new school year.** **During the school year, if your family has a change in income or family size, you may submit a new Free or Reduced Meal Application to the office.** If you have any questions, please contact the School Nutrition Director, Martha Williams, at Fannin County Board of Education, 706-258-2619 or Teresa Ray, Fannin County Middle School Nutrition, 706-632-6100.

## **CLUBS**

*The following clubs are active at FCMS:*

Future Farmers of America (FFA)

Technology Student Association (TSA)

Reading Bowl

Yearbook Staff

NOTE: If you have an objection to your student participating in any of the clubs at FCMS you must provide the principal's office with a written notice. Please remember to date your letter, include your student's full name, the name of the club(s) for which you do not want your student to participate, and your signature.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal Law, requires that the Fannin County School District obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education record unless a certain exception is met. One exception is Directory Information. Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. The primary purpose of Directory Information is to allow the Fannin County School System to include student information in certain school publications or school-related activities such as:

- Yearbooks
- Honor Roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Athletic and other extracurricular programs
- Class ring manufacturing companies
- Military recruiters

The Fannin County School District has designated the following information as "Directory Information:

- Student's name, address and telephone number;
- Student's date and place of birth;
- Student's e-mail address;
- Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
- Dates of attendance at schools within the district;
- Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the district's schools;
- Photograph; and
- Grade level

You have the right to limit or refuse the disclosure of "Directory Information". If you do not want the Fannin County School District to disclose any or all the above information as directory information, you must notify the principal of the school the student attends in writing within 10 days of receipt of this notice/handbook to opt out of having your child's information included as Directory Information. The written notice must: (1) include the name of the student; (2) include a statement that the parent/guardian or eligible student is opting out of the disclosure of Directory Information under FERPA; and (3) be signed and dated by the parent, guardian, or eligible student (a student age 18 or older). Please note that your written notice will be effective for the current year only and must be renewed on an annual basis should you wish to continue to opt out of the release of Directory Information.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY**

Fannin County students will be permitted to carry personal electronic devices in Fannin County Schools under the following conditions only (Policy JCDAF):

During the instructional day personal electronic devices should remain on silent or may be used only at the discretion of administration or designee.

Students using electronic devices must abide by the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Students are prohibited from using electronic devices on school buses in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's safe operation of the school bus.

Any use of electronic devices during the instructional school day without permission of the administrative staff shall be considered a disciplinary violation and will be subject to disciplinary action as specified in the student code of conduct.

### **ESSA RIGHT TO KNOW**

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents may request the following information:

- 1) Whether the student's teacher:

- Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction
- Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

2) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

### **GIFTED**

The Fannin County Board of Education recognizes the need to provide gifted education services to students who have the potential for exceptional academic achievement in Grades K – 12. The Gifted Education Program is designed to provide an enriching and challenging alternative to the regular curriculum program. Students in Grades 6-8 are provided gifted instruction through the advanced content model. These students are given instruction for a minimum of five segments per week by a certified teacher with a gifted endorsement. Students are referred for consideration for the gifted program by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities. Identification and eventual placement decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. In order to qualify for placement, students must meet three of the four components established by the State Board of Education. These include: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. On the mental abilities measure students in grades 3 – 12 must score in the 96 percentile. If a student does not qualify for gifted placement, they cannot be tested again for two school years.

### **GUIDANCE**

Students are encouraged to visit with the counselor for personal guidance and for information on grades, study help, and testing programs. A student is encouraged to visit the counselor whenever he/she needs to talk with the counselor. Students may request an appointment and will be given a specific time and a pass to leave class. Parents, teachers, and administrators may ask the counselor to meet with a student. The counselor is available to discuss any home, school, or social concerns.

### **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

The McKinney Vento Act requires homeless liaisons to provide public notice of the education rights of homeless students disseminated in places where homeless students receive services under the Act, such as in homeless shelters. If you have any questions or concerns regarding student homelessness, please contact FCSS Homeless Liaison, Tara Cantrell, at 706-632-6100.

### **HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND**

If a student has a medical condition that prohibits him/her from attending school for 10 days or more, the student may be eligible for homebound services. Contact FCMS for the forms to begin these services. Be sure to let the school know if the student is receiving special education services. The State Board of Education and the Fannin County Board of Education cannot provide homebound instruction for students who are pregnant; therefore, students who are pregnant are not eligible for homebound services. There must be a medical condition other than pregnancy that qualifies a student for homebound services.

### **IMMUNIZATION RECORDS & MEDICATION**

It is mandatory that each child have an adequate, updated Georgia certificate of immunization on file in the school office. These certificates may be obtained from the local health department or your family physician. First time Georgia residents have 30 calendar days to comply with these regulations. **Failure to comply with this STATE law may lead to suspension from school.** Parents wishing to exempt their child(ren) from this law due to religious convictions must obtain the appropriate forms from the local health department and present the school with a copy. All students entering a Georgia school for the first time must also present records of proper eye, ear, and dental exams from the local health department (DHR Form 3300) within 120 days of entering school.

All medications must be brought to the office of the school in the original pharmaceutical containers, clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the time of the dose. (The pharmacy

will provide a small labeled container if asked.) **Medications that have not been pre-approved cannot be transported by students on the bus.**

Over the counter drugs may be administered with written parental permission. The medication must be in its original container and be marked with a note containing the child's name and instructions as to how and when the medication must be given. Medication dosage may not exceed recommended amount without a physician's order. Should you have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call the school nurse at the school office.

Information regarding medication procedures is sent with this book at the beginning of the year. For more information contact the school office at 706-632-6100.

### **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)**

Under the IDEA, school districts must give parents of a child with disabilities a copy of their parental rights one time a year. Also, a copy of their rights must also be given to parents upon initial referral or parental request for an evaluation, upon filing a request for a due process hearing, and upon request of a parent. A school district may post a copy of the procedural safeguards on its website.

### **LEARNING COMMONS**

The learning commons' purpose is to serve the students and teachers at FCMS. It provides a wide collection of books, audiovisual materials, and is considered the hub for academic progress. Students will be allowed to go to the learning commons as needed with permission and a teacher signature in their agenda. Learning commons personnel can assist students in locating and using learning commons materials. **Students must pay for any material damaged, lost, or not returned.**

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found items should be reported to and/or turned in to the designated area. Students needing to check for turned in lost items should search the designated area, after getting permission to go to the school office with a signed student agenda. Periodically, lost and found items are donated to charity.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain make up assignments from the teachers and turn in all work within five (5) school days. After five days, all missed assignments will receive a "0". Make-up work requests should be honored within 24 hours unless there are extenuating circumstances. There is no minimum number of days a student must miss before being eligible to pick up make-up work.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

It is the policy of Fannin County School System to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, creed or disability in admission to its programs, services, and activities in access to them, in treatment of individuals or in any aspect of their operations to also include but not be limited to additions, modifications, or alterations to the physical plan of any school facility.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to the growth and success of children at FCMS, and we encourage this interaction. We have parent/teacher conference days built into our school calendar; however, you are welcome to contact your child's teacher via phone or e-mail to schedule a conference any time throughout the year. You may also contact Katie Seabolt, parent involvement coordinator ([kseabolt@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:kseabolt@fannin.k12.ga.us)) or Shandra English, school counselor ([senglish@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:senglish@fannin.k12.ga.us)) or Trudy Smith, school counselor ([tsmith@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:tsmith@fannin.k12.ga.us))

### **PARENT RESOURCE CENTER**

The Parent Resource Center is located ~~across from the counselor's office on the main hallway~~ in the conference room and remains open from 8:00-3:30 Monday-Friday. We have books, laptops, and other resources for you to use to help increase student achievement.

## **PARENT/ELIGIBLE STUDENT DATA PRIVACY COMPLAINT POLICY**

It is the policy of the Board of Education that the School District ("District") shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act, which are designed to ensure that education records and student data are kept confidential and secure from unauthorized access and disclosure.

For the purposes of this policy, a "parent" is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. An "eligible student" is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Any parent or eligible student ("Complainant") may file a complaint with the District if that individual believes or alleges that a possible violation of rights under the above laws has occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received by the District.

### **Complaints shall be handled in accordance with the following procedures:**

All complaints shall be directed to the Superintendent's Designee:  
FCSS Director of Instructional Technology  
2290 E First Street  
Blue Ridge, GA 30513  
706-258-2791  
[technologyhub@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:technologyhub@fannin.k12.ga.us)

Upon the receipt of a request from a Complainant, a compliant form will be provided within 3 business days, which is also available on the District's website.

A written response shall be provided to the Complainant within 10 business days of the Designee's receipt of the completed complaint form.

The Complainant may file an appeal with the Superintendent within 10 business days of receipt of the Designee's response.

The Superintendent shall provide a written response to the Complainant within 10 business days of receipt of the appeal.

The Complainant may file an appeal to the Board of Education within 10 business days of receipt of the Superintendent's response.

The Board of Education shall render a final decision within 10 business days of receipt of an appeal.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS UNDER FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS PRIVACY ACT**

### **For Elementary and Secondary Schools**

A. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Fannin County School System receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Fannin County School System to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202

B. The Georgia Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act afford parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") the right to file a complaint with their local school system regarding a possible violation of rights under O.C.G.A. 20-2-667 or under other federal or state student data privacy and security laws.

Fannin County School System

Heather Finley, Director of Instructional Technology

2290 E First Street

Blue Ridge, GA 30513

706-258-2791

[hfinley@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:hfinley@fannin.k12.ga.us)

C. FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

1. To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) –(a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))
2. To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure Model Annual Notification is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))
3. To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
4. In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))
5. To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))
6. To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))
7. To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))
8. To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))
9. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))
10. To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10))
11. Information the school has designated as "directory information" under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11))

### **PROGRESS REPORTS & REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine weeks. Progress reports are available at mid-term to alert parents of any potential problems. Parents may access student grades at any time on the Internet through Infinite Campus. Contact the school office for information on how to set up your Parent Portal password.

### **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**



Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires the Fannin County School District to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas (“protected information surveys”):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parents
2. Mental or psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family
3. Sex behavior and attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parents
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes (“marketing surveys”), and certain physical exams and screenings. Following is a schedule of activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the upcoming school year. This list is not exhaustive, and for surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, the Fannin County School District will provide parents, within a reasonable period of time prior to the administration of the surveys and activities, notification of the surveys and activities and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out, as well as an opportunity to review the surveys. (Please note that this notice and consent/opt-out transfers from parents to any student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.)

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey, please submit a request to your child’s principal. He or she will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and /or instructional materials before the survey or instruction is administered to a student.

#### **Planned Annual Surveys:**

**Georgia Student Health 2.0 Survey Consent:** If you do not wish for your child to participate in this survey, please send a letter stating that you do not want your student to participate with your signature and phone number by September 30, 2022.

#### **REPORTING OF ACTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her school.

It is the policy of Fannin County Middle School to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the staff to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students or school employees through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a member of the school staff to a student or when by any student to another student or system employee constitutes sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal harassment or abuse such as sexually oriented kidding, teasing, and jokes
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications
- Unwelcome touching such as pinching, patting, or brushing against
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one’s grades, job, etc.

## **RETENTION AND PROMOTION**

Promotion and retention decisions at all levels will be made based on student grades, attendance, and achievement as measured by various assessments which may include but are not limited to the Georgia Milestones Assessments.

Retention decisions will be a joint decision made by teachers, parents/guardians, and school administrator(s). Appeals for promotion, retention, and/or grade placement decisions can be made in writing to the Superintendent of the School System within 30 calendar days of the decision.

Retention for athletic/competitive purposes is prohibited. This will also result in ineligibility in high school per GHSA by-laws.

## **SEMESTER REMEDIATION DAYS**

All students with a final average of 75% or less in academic classes at the end of the 1st and 2nd semesters will be required to attend a session to improve their average and mastery level of the standards taught during the semester.

- Those sessions will focus on remediation of standards that were not mastered by each individual student during the school year.
- Grades for Remediation sessions will count toward an increase in student average of up to 10%.

## **SCHOOL NURSE INFORMATION**

If your child has a fever (100 or higher), then your child must stay at home until there is no fever without using fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.

If your child is vomiting or having diarrhea, then your child must stay at home until he or she is symptom free without using medications for 24 hours.

## **STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

From time to time, if conditions arise within the school or school system that need improvement, parents and students have the right to appropriately express concerns. These concerns shall be resolved in an orderly process and addressed first at the particular level of concern that is directly with the person involved (i.e., classroom teacher, principal, etc.) without fear of retaliation for such reports. Complaints and grievances shall be approached in the following manner:

1. The opportunity shall be provided any student or his/her parents to first discuss with his/her teacher a decision or situation which he/she considers unjust or unfair;
2. If the matter remains unresolved after discussing it with the teacher involved, the student or his/her parents, or the teacher, may then bring the matter to the Principal's attention for his/her consideration. Official grievances to the Principal may be made in writing.
3. If the matter remains unresolved after discussing it with the Principal, it may then be brought to the Superintendent or a designee for his/her consideration.
4. Complaints that remain unresolved following any action of the Superintendent may then be referred to the Fannin County Board of Education.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

Each student is expected to observe a code of personal conduct, dress, and appearance that in no way interferes with or disrupts the educational opportunities of others. Students are expected to be neat and clean in their appearance at school. Middle school students will be expected to comply with the following clothing standards:

- Excessively baggy clothes, such as pants, shirts, and coats (including trench coats) are unacceptable. All clothes must be sized appropriately.
- All shorts, pants, and skirts must be worn at a natural waistline.
- Clothing with advertisements for illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco is prohibited.

- Clothing with derogatory, terroristic, insulting, sexual, violent or insinuating messages is prohibited including clothing related to gang activity.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Pajamas are not permitted.
- Hats, bandanas, sunglasses or other head coverings are not permitted.
- Jewelry and / or accessories including piercings, chokers, and / or chains that pose a safety concern are prohibited.
- Students must be completely covered (no exposed skin) from the area of mid-thigh to their chest line observed when the student is standing in an upright position and holding his/her arms out to the side parallel to the ground. Distressed clothing, clothing with holes or sheer lace must meet the standard for (no exposed skin) as defined above.
- Bare midriffs or midriffs that show when a student engages in natural movement is prohibited. Natural movement is defined as movement that occurs while the student participates in typical activities at school not including PE, sports and / or outdoor activities.
- Sleeveless tops must have an appropriate arm opening that fits around the arm. Shoulder straps must be two inches or more in width.

School administration has the authority to determine inappropriate dress not considered by the above-mentioned guidelines. Penalty for violation of the dress code may include the following: warning, change or remove item, parental conference, in-school or out-of-school suspension.

#### **STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL**

**Enrollment:** A parent or guardian must accompany any student wishing to enroll at FCMS. The parent or guardian should check in at the school office and obtain the necessary forms for enrollment. A student who is currently under suspension or expulsion from another school system will not be enrolled. Any student returning from an outside disciplinary facility, i.e. YDC, Boot Camp, Psycho-education or an assigned alternative setting, must attend a conference meeting with the school administration and/or IEP committee before returning to classes.

**Withdrawal:** Students who are withdrawing from school must (1) provide written parental/guardian permission, (2) complete an official Withdrawal Form obtained from the school office, (3) account for and/or pay for all textbooks and library books, and (4) pay any other monies or fines owed by the student.

#### **STUDENT INSURANCE**

Student accident insurance is available at the beginning of the school year for a nominal fee. Two plans are available. One is for accidents at school; the other covers students on a 24-hr. basis. Any student trying out or participating in football, basketball, cheerleading or any other interscholastic sports must obtain athletic insurance through the school at the student's expense or show proof of other insurance. Accidents occurring on school grounds, athletic practices, or at any athletic event sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the person in charge and to the school office as soon as possible.

#### **STUDENT SERVICES**

Fannin County Board of Education, in compliance with public law 94-142, provides all services for exceptional children. These are: speech, hearing impaired, gifted, behavior disorders, learning disabilities, psychological services, and all physical and mental handicaps.

#### **TEXTBOOKS, LOCKERS AND OTHER SCHOOL PROPERTY-SEARCH & SEIZURE**

Textbooks and lockers issued to students are the property of Fannin County Board of Education. Textbooks should be used with care and returned in good condition. Students are responsible for and must pay replacement cost for textbooks, Chromebooks, and library books that are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond use. Each student is assigned a locker by his/her homeroom teacher. Students are responsible for the contents of their locker and are expected to keep it in an orderly fashion. ***School officials may inspect the contents of backpacks, lockers or other personal***

**property at any time.** Students may not write, mark, or use tape in or on lockers. Locks are not permitted on hall lockers. Locks for gym lockers will be provided to students.

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, and furniture supplied by the school. Students who disfigure property, or do damage to school property or equipment, or the property of others will be required to pay for the damage done to replace the item.

### **VISITORS**

All parents and visitors must enter the school through the main entrance. If parents would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, they should first contact the teacher by email or telephone or contact Katie Seabolt, parent involvement coordinator ([kseabolt@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:kseabolt@fannin.k12.ga.us)). Students are prohibited from having visitors at school.

### **504**

Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant’s failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system’s central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

## **III. STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of each student to manage his or her behavior and conduct himself or herself in a cooperative, courteous, and respectful manner in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. FCMS students are expected to follow all school rules and show respect for the property of the school and others. FCMS students are to have paper, pencil, books and other tools for learning with them each day.

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Discipline is the primary responsibility of the parents. It is the parent’s obligation, by teaching and example, to develop in the student good behavior habits as well as proper attitudes toward the school and others rights. To ensure success, parents should communicate with school personnel concerning their child’s behavioral progress on a regular basis.

### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the school’s responsibility to provide learning experiences free from distractions and misbehavior. Administrators, teachers, and other FCMS employees will serve as positive role models for students.

### **SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN**

FCMS has a Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) based school-wide discipline plan. This plan encourages students to:

**Be Respectful:** Recognizing the worth and importance of self and others

**Be Responsible:** Being dependable, trustworthy, and taking ownership for one’s own actions

**Be Safe:** Doing things that are physically and emotionally safe for self and others

Students are taught how to meet these expectations in various school settings. Students are rewarded with REBEL passes which may be used for extended breaks, prize drawings, and PBIS sponsored field trips. Teachers use a

Tracking Form to communicate effectively with parents. Student tracking forms are electronic and can be viewed through a student's Google Classroom account. The online tracking form will be used to determine eligibility for Reward Days and PBIS sponsored field trips. Parents are encouraged to check their student's Tracking Form and communicate with teachers as concerns arise.

The school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations, and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function, or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On school buses and at school bus stops.

Students may be disciplined for conduct off campus which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

A student on his/her way to or from school, while being provided school system transportation, attending any school function or activity, (or any school related activity), or at any school event held away from the school, under the jurisdiction of school authorities is subject to rules and regulations as stated in the Fannin County Schools' Student Code of Conduct.

Students serving out of school suspension will receive zeros for all graded daily work missed while serving out of school suspension. **Students receiving a day or more of time out, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension will be placed in detention for their grade level's next Reward Day.**

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

### **SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITY**

FCSS has adopted the Mindset Program in order to facilitate insight, raise awareness, enhance skills and certify response teams in preventing and managing aggressive behavior. FCSS uses physical restraint only in circumstances where the student is harming themselves, harming others, or there is imminent danger. If a student has to be restrained under the preceding circumstances, a written report will be given to the parent/guardian within one school day.

### **AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures. **A complete copy of the Fannin County School System Student Code of Conduct is sent home on the first day of school or the first day of enrollment.**

The principal retains the right and privilege to issue penalties for acts of discipline not specifically stated herein and to alter any penalties as he or she considers necessary. The principal also reserves the right to amend any provision in this Handbook that he or she determines to be in the best interest of the educational process.

Some of the **behaviors** that are unacceptable and will result in disciplinary consequences include:

1. fighting or encouraging others to fight
2. bullying others

3. possession of or evidence of use of intoxicating substances such as drugs, inhalants, or alcohol
4. possession of or use of a weapon or potentially dangerous object
5. theft
6. horseplay or running in the hallways
7. inappropriate bodily contact or wrestling
8. embracing or kissing-physical relationships are limited to hand holding outside the building
9. profanity
10. obscene language or gestures
11. cheating
12. trading, buying or selling of any item
13. cutting class
14. leaving class, school or area without permission
15. unexcused tardiness to class
16. forged note in any form
17. any form of disruptive behavior
18. physical or verbal abuse, or any form of disrespect toward a school employee
19. verbal abuse or threats to impose physical harm to any student, school personnel or visitor
20. insubordination: unwilling to submit to authority
21. damaging, defacing, or destroying property
22. sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct
23. refusal to accept discipline
24. remaining after school without authorization
25. other infractions that may interfere with the learning environment of the school or the safety of others
26. Inappropriate use of technology

\*Disciplinary actions for these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: warning, loss of privileges, time-out, removal from class or activity, parent conference, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, suspension from the school bus, referral to law enforcement or juvenile court officials, placement in an alternative education program, and/or loss of after school activities (games, dances, etc.).

### **AUTOMATIC SUSPENSIONS (IN SCHOOL OR OUT OF SCHOOL)**

All pupils are required to remain at school at all times during the school hours unless permission to leave is granted by the principal. In the event that a student deliberately leaves school without permission of the principal or school official, he/she will be automatically suspended. Possession of or use of alcohol, drugs, smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or smoking paraphernalia which includes, but is not limited to pipes, matches, lighters, rolling papers, electronic cigarettes, vapor cigarettes, etc. while attending school or at any school sponsored or related activity or while under the jurisdiction of school authorities will result in suspension. Students in possession of a firearm, incendiary device, or other dangerous weapon; or if the student is involved in an assault using a hazardous object will result in suspension and referral to law enforcement.

Fighting will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as follows:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> offense: | 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade- 3-5 day suspension ISS or OSS                              |
|                          | 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grades- 5-7 day suspension ISS or OSS           |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: | 5-10 day suspension ISS or OSS  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: | 5-10 days OSS, referral to law enforcement, and referral to disciplinary tribunal |

Participants in a fight may include those persons who helped start the fight even though they were not physically involved in the action.

### **BULLYING**

The Fannin County Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited.

Any student, parent, guardian, or school employee is encouraged to report or otherwise provide information, either anonymously or in the person's name, concerning bullying activity. Any report will be appropriately investigated by the administration of Fannin County Middle School to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented, and what other steps should be taken. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will also be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with school procedures. Acts of bullying shall be punished in accordance with the Fannin County School System Code of Conduct and by a range of consequences through the school's progressive discipline process. However, upon a finding by a disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

**Consequences for First and Second Offenses:** The first time it is determined by the school administration that a student has been involved in bullying behavior the student determined to be involved in inappropriate activity shall sign an "Anti-Bullying Contract". Students found to be in violation of this policy for the first or second time in a school year shall be dealt with by the school administration. School administrators will notify the parent or guardian of the student as stated above and administer the appropriate consequences which may include, but are not limited to verbal warning, reprimand, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, alternative school placement, or a disciplinary tribunal. In addition to any appropriate discipline imposed, the student shall receive counseling from the school counselor that is related to inappropriateness of the observed behavior.

**Third and Successive Offenses:** Students found in violation of the policy for the third time in a school year shall be brought before a disciplinary tribunal. Administrative disciplinary recommendation shall include but is not limited to alternative school placement for not less than one complete semester or recommendation of expulsion to the Board of Education.

### **BUS BEHAVIOR**

During transportation to and from school, it is the responsibility of each student to conduct him or herself in a manner which shows respect for the safety of themselves as well as others. Bus transportation is a privilege extended to FCMS students. All students who ride FCSS buses do so under the authority of their bus driver. Students may be removed from FCSS buses at any time for disruptive and/or unsatisfactory conduct. Students who wish to ride a bus other than the one to which they are assigned must have written permission from their parent/guardian. This note must be stamped in the FCMS office ***prior to*** 1:00 p.m.

All students who ride Fannin County School System buses are expected to:

1. Comply with the Student Code of Conduct, including the guidelines for student behavior in this Handbook.
2. Help keep the bus clean.
3. Behave in a courteous manner.
4. Cooperate with the bus driver.
5. Stay seated.
6. Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus.
7. Sit in assigned seat if directed to do so by the driver.
8. Refrain from inappropriately touching other students or acts of violence or harm to others.
9. Refrain from throwing anything. (Automatic 3 Day Suspension for 1<sup>st</sup> Offense)
10. Keep all personal items out of the aisle.

Students who are found to have engaged in physical acts of violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6 shall be subject to the penalties set forth in that Code Section.

**In accordance to Board Policy, EDCB/JCDAD, failure to follow the bus rules will result in negative consequences as outlined below:**

- 1st Offense:** Administrative conference with student, with possibility of additional consequences.  
**2nd Offense:** 1-3 day bus suspension, with possibility of additional consequences.  
**3rd Offense:** 3-5 day bus suspension, with possibility of additional consequences.  
**4th Offense:** 5-10 day bus suspension, with possibility of additional consequences.  
**5th Offense:** 30 day bus suspension, with the possibility of referral to Disciplinary Tribunal.  
**6<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Suspension from riding any FCSS bus for the remainder of the academic year, referral to Disciplinary Tribunal.

**Please note: *Serious offenses may result in immediate bus suspension as well as in-school or out-of-school suspension. For example, throwing anything on the bus will result in a minimum 3 days of in-school suspension and 3 days of bus suspension.***

#### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

Student cell phone use is prohibited unless directed by school faculty or staff. Cellular devices should not be on or out during class unless directed by the teacher. Unauthorized use of a cellular device will result in the following:

First Offense: The device will be confiscated. The student may retrieve the device at the end of the school day from an administrator.

Second Offense: The device will be confiscated and the student's parent may retrieve the device from an administrator.

Additional Offenses will result in confiscation and loss of privileges indefinitely