

Thomson Middle School

Georgia's 1st Title I Whole School
STEM Certified Middle School.



A Title I Distinguished School



2023-2024

STUDENT HANDBOOK

301 Thomson Street
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Office 478-953-0489
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<http://tms.hcbe.net>



OUR MISSION

Our learning communities will practice *The Tiger Way* through powerful relationships, positive attitude, and best effort, reflecting that greatness is a process.

OUR VISION

To produce high school ready students.

OUR BELIEFS

The Tiger Way clearly defines the specific behaviors and results we want from each of our beliefs. The behaviors outlined are essential to how we engage students in the classroom and how we operate our school. Our goal is to create an educational environment where everyone consistently engages in behaviors that produce exceptional outcomes.

- **Powerful Relationships** -Teamwork and relationships make everything work

Achieving our mission requires teamwork and strong relationships in a collaborative environment. Collaboration requires a mindset of “we, not me.” Great things will happen when we work together and value relationships. Here are three key behaviors that will cultivate understanding and produce a welcoming school environment:

1. **Invest the time to listen and care**
2. **Recognize and understand differences**
3. **Communicate with purpose**

The outcome these behaviors accomplish is an improved understanding of each other and a great place to learn and work.

- **Attitude and Effort** - Be positive and give your best effort

Events happen around us beyond our control, we are always in control of our attitude, effort, and response. Effort does not need to be perfect or unbroken; it needs to be constant and unrelenting. Our attitude is contagious. Finding positive means to approach life and accept challenges will create improved opportunities. Here are three key behaviors that will help us develop into the best versions of ourselves:

1. **Be a positive influence**
2. **Focus on solutions**
3. **Do what is necessary**

The outcome these behaviors achieve is a step closer to becoming the best version of ourselves.

- **Greatness is a Process** - Take steps to grow; growth is what matters

The heart of our culture is a passion for growth; the growth of our students and the growth of our staff. We relentlessly pursue excellence every day. Our passion for growth is grounded in three behaviors:

1. **Be coachable**
2. **Recognize and celebrate excellence**
3. **Embrace Change**

The outcome we achieve by operating this way is that our students and staff are equipped with a growth mindset and skills preparing everyone for the future.

Thomson Middle School

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Dr. R. Scott Wynn, Principal
Dr. Jami M. Moore, Assistant Principal of Instruction
Fredrick Thomas, Assistant Principal of Discipline
Alicia Ezell, Counselor & 504 Coordinator
Loreal Jordan, Counselor
Dr. Mike Jackson, Media Specialist
Matt Simon, Athletic Director

OFFICE STAFF

Stephanie Brown Secretary
Nikki Sanders, Bookkeeper
Tereon Harvey, ATS Clerk
Alesia Chadwick, Family Engagement Coordinator

SUPPORT STAFF

Paisley Beach, Nutrition Manager
Roderick Rose, Lead Custodian

School Mascot: Tiger
School Colors: Blue, White, Orange

Dear Parents, Students, and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year at Thomson Middle School! As we embark on this new academic journey, I want to express my gratitude for entrusting me with the privilege of serving as the principal of the best middle school anywhere. I am eager to collaborate with you all in creating a safe and inspiring learning atmosphere that aligns with our vision statement: to produce high school-ready students.

This handbook aims to provide you with comprehensive information about our school's policies and procedures. I encourage both students and parents to familiarize yourselves with these guidelines, as they are crucial for the well-being of our school community and the safety of everyone within it. At Thomson Middle School, we believe that **greatness is a process**. We understand that making mistakes is a part of growth, and we will use every behavioral incident as an opportunity for positive learning and personal development. Our expectations for our students remain high, as we firmly believe that everyone is always in control of their **attitude and effort**. Should any situations arise that are not explicitly covered in the handbook, we will make decisions based on the best interests of our students.

Our commitment to building **powerful relationships** throughout the school is unwavering. We encourage students to take part in our wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular programs, including being the only Title I whole school STEM certified middle school in the state. These programs not only provide academic support but also foster camaraderie among our students, preparing them for a successful future beyond our walls.

As educators, we invest in our students today, knowing that they will continue to invest in the world tomorrow. Thomson Middle School continues to be a place where students can grow, excel, and create memories that will stay with them for years to come.

My family and I are proud to be part of this wonderful community, and I consider it an honor to work alongside dedicated students, staff, parents, and community members to provide a quality education in a safe environment. If you ever need any assistance or have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Together, we will continue to practice "The Tiger Way" and make Thomson Middle School the very best it can be!

Dr. R. Scott Wynn, Principal

Powerful Relationships – Attitude and Effort – Greatness is a Process

#PRAEGP

DETAILED ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TO AND FROM SCHOOL

STUDENT MORNING ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

Students who are car riders should be dropped off and picked up only in front of the gym unless other arrangements have been made through the office. Students should not be dropped off at the school and/or at the front doors of the school between 6:30 A.M. and 7:00 A.M. **Students that are dropped off before 7:00 A.M. will have to wait outside of the gym lobby until the school opens.** Students entering the front doors of the building should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Upon entering from car drop off or from the bus ramp, students will pick up breakfast and report to the cafeteria and/or to their first period. Students who wish to eat a hot breakfast must arrive before 7:20 A.M. All students must be in their first period by 7:30 or they are considered tardy. Students who are tardy must sign in at the front office.

STUDENT AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

All car riders are to be picked up in the designated parent pick up area. Students will not be allowed to exit the front of the building or walk around to the front of the building to be picked up by parents. If you do not wish to wait in the parent pick up line, you will have to park your vehicle and come to the designated parent pick up and make a request for your student. You must have your school provided parent pick up card when making your request. Any students present after 2:45 P.M. should be with their group, club, teacher, or they should wait for their ride in the front lobby. All students must be picked up no later than 3:20 unless they are attending a teacher-sponsored activity after school. Students left on campus after 3:30 P.M. who are not attending an official school activity, are unsupervised.

If you are picking up your student from school who usually rides a bus, it needs to be done before 2:00 p.m. For safety reasons, we cannot allow students to be taken off the bus or ride another bus without proper approved authorization. This also includes students who are car riders in the afternoon.

Silent dismissal system will be used to dismiss bus riders, car riders, and students who walk to school. Students will not be allowed to exit the front doors during the regular dismissal process.

ATTENDANCE:

Research shows that there is a direct correlation between student achievement and school attendance. It is, therefore, most important that students be in school unless there are legitimate reasons why they must be absent. No other absence from class will be considered excused. Students on field trips or officially sanctioned instructional trips organized by the school will be counted present.

TARDIES TO SCHOOL

Students are tardy if they are not in first period by 7:30 a.m. Student tardiness disrupts instruction and learning for the tardy student and for his/her classmates. Tardiness can also affect grades and establish bad habits and should be kept to a minimum.

- Students are to be in first period each morning before announcements at 7:30am.
- Students arriving after 7:30 must report to the office for a tardy slip.

- Excused tardies include: personal illness, medical/dental appointment, illness in the immediate family, death in the family, religious holiday, and court order.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR EXCESSIVE TARDINESS TO SCHOOL

- Excessive **unexcused tardies** will be handled with disciplinary actions following parent notification and /or conference. Possible consequences include but are not limited to the following:
 - Lunch Reflection
 - Learning Lunch
 - ISS
 - Tardy/Truancy Contract
 - Social Worker Referral

Parents should not plan prolonged vacations during the school year, as these absences will be considered unexcused. Additionally, students will miss class assignments, which may affect their grade.

CHANGING SCHOOLS/CHANGING STUDENT INFORMATION

Students moving to a new location outside of the Thomson Middle School attendance area must notify the main office at least one week in advance. The student should bring a note from a parent or guardian stating where he or she will be attending school. The student should be prepared to return all textbooks and school materials and, if applicable, pay any necessary fines for lost or damaged materials. A clearance sheet must be signed by each of the student's teachers and the media specialist and returned to the main office prior to leaving. If they are going to another school within the county, they must visit Central Registration in order to register. If you change address or phone numbers, or if you go on vacation and leave your student under the temporary care of someone other than his/her legal guardian, please notify the main office.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

The Medical Technician's office is located in Thomson's main office. It is important to inform the office of any special health matters concerning a student. In case of illness or injury, students must get a pass from a teacher to go to the nurse's office. The Med Tech or other office staff will determine whether a student needs to go home and contact the parent or guardian or a person listed on the student's Emergency Information Card. In case of a serious accident or injury on campus, the paramedics will be contacted to administer medical aid to students and parents or guardians will be notified immediately.

EARLY DISMISSALS OR RETURNING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Thomson Middle School is a closed campus throughout the entire school day. Students leaving for appointments must be checked out in the front office by a parent, guardian, or designee in the front office. Students returning from an appointment must first check in with the attendance office. *A student must be present at least half the school day to receive credit for attendance. The half-day mark is 11:00 a.m. A student is considered absent if he/she leaves before 11:00 a.m., or arrives after 11:00 a.m.*

No early dismissals will be allowed after 2:00 pm.

We will only release your student to persons listed in Infinite Campus. If you need to amend this information, please contact front office personnel. **A picture ID will be required in order to release a student.** During tornado warnings or active code yellow or code red situations, students will not be released until it is deemed safe to do so. Please see page 32 of the Middle School Handbook for more information.

LUNCH AND VISITATION

Lunch

Based on The **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**, students at Thomson Middle School will receive two well-prepared meals for breakfast and lunch free of charge. **Commercially prepared food cannot be taken to the cafeteria nor can persons outside of the school deliver it to a student on campus.** Breakfast is served from 7:00 am – 7:25 am.

*** Until further notice, parents or visitors will not be allowed to eat lunch at the school**

MAKE-UP WORK FOR LONG-TERM EXCUSED ABSENCES

After an **excused** absence of two days, the parent or guardian may request assignments missed during that time. Requests received in the main office by 8:00 A.M. will be available for pick up by 3:00 P.M. the same day. Parents are advised to phone to confirm that there is specific work to be picked up before coming to school. If there is work to be picked up, please be sure that it is picked up by 3:30 P.M.

The students must make up assignments for schoolwork missed during an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to find out about missed assignments from the teacher. The student must then make sure it is completed within the time allotted. If work that is missed cannot be made up, the teacher will decide a suitable alternative assignment. Students have a minimum of **FIVE** days to make up any missed work due to an excused absence. Make up work not submitted at the end of the allowed time may receive a grade of zero.

TRUANCY

The Board of Education of the Houston County School District recognizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to profit from the school program. To meet special needs of students with chronic school attendance and/or behavioral problems, the Houston County School District declares that habitual truants are willfully defying the valid authority of school administrators and shall be subject to disciplinary action. This action will include a truancy contract, and/or a court referral.

CAMPUS POLICIES

CLEAN CAMPUS

Take pride in your campus. The appearance of our school is important to all of us. It is the responsibility of each student to keep the campus clean.

GUIDANCE COUNSELING SERVICES

The Counseling Department at Thomson Middle School provides both academic and personal counseling for students in grades six through eight. Our counselors have an open-door policy for students, parents, and teachers. The department works in partnership with the school psychologist and other outside agencies. Students may be referred for guidance counseling by other students, parents, and teachers. Student Support Teams are conducted for students who are having academic or personal difficulties. For students who are in need of more in-depth counseling, the department can provide recommendations and community referrals to the parent of the student as needed.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARDS

Every student **MUST** have emergency information on file in the main office. If parents cannot be reached in emergency situations such as illness, injury or disaster, Thomson Middle School will notify the emergency contacts on the emergency card.

MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center is open every day of the school year from 7:10 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. The general collection of books may be checked out for a period of two weeks. Reference books, magazines, and reserve books may be checked-out after 2:00 P.M. and must be returned the following morning before first period. Students are charged fines for overdue books. The fines for the general collection are \$.10 per day. Fines for reference books, magazines, and reserve books are \$.25 per day. Fines for overdue books do not exceed \$5.00. When a book is lost, the student must pay for the book. The replacement cost of the book will be charged to the student. When a book is found, the student will receive a refund of the cost, less \$2.50 (for any overdue fines and processing of lost book). Refunds are made during the school year in which the book is lost. Fines and overdue notices are given to students by first period teachers on a regular basis. The student and/or parent is responsible for settling these financial obligations.

CELL PHONES

Use of personal telecommunications devices, including mobile telephones will not be permitted to display, turn on, or be used as a telecommunications device during the school day. If students bring devices to school, **they will place them in their lockers at the beginning of the school day and only retrieve them at dismissal time.**

LOST AND FOUND

Students must assume sole responsibility for loss or damage to any personal property left in classrooms, P.E. lockers, or on campus. Thomson Middle School will try to help protect personal possessions, but the school will not be responsible for lost or damaged personal property. Students are encouraged to check the lost and found located in the main office for missing items. If belongings are not recovered, immediately advise the office. The best way to assure items are returned is to have your name in permanent ink on all articles of clothing, notebooks, and other personal property. If you find something that does not belong to you, please turn it in. If you keep something you find, it is considered stolen. Students who have witnessed a theft or know a student is in possession of someone else's belongings should inform a teacher, counselor, or an administrator.

OFFICE

All students entering the office must have a pass from their teacher.

Thomson's office is an important place of business in which all are welcome. The office staff is happy to answer questions about school procedures or policies. Students coming to any office during class must have a pass or call slip. Parents are requested to refrain from attempting to deliver messages or personal items to students via the office staff. **Please note that all items will be delivered at the end of the day prior to dismissal.** The office is available for the following services.

1. To request a conference with the principal, assistant principals, or counselors.
2. To receive permission to use the phone.
3. To call home when ill.
4. To withdraw from school.
5. To get permission for early dismissal.

STUDENT SUPPLIES /TEXTBOOKS

Students need to have his/her notebook, paper, pencils, and pens at all times. All students need a notebook to organize their schoolwork. Covers are required on all textbooks. Students may purchase a book cover in the media center. Students are responsible for the condition of books assigned to them. Textbooks and materials must be returned at the end of the year or when withdrawing from school. Any student who damages textbooks, any other school materials, or fails to return these materials will be charged replacement costs. Fines and bills are paid in the media center. Unpaid fines may result in the withholding of report cards.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are part of the middle school experience for all students. Student academic standing and conduct determines participation in any activities and will be at the discretion of the administration. * ***Students who have been assigned to ISS/OSS multiple times will have their field trip privileges revoked. In addition, students who are failing will also forfeit their field trip privileges. Refunds minus the field trip deposit will be made to the students' parents that are not able to attend the trip due to discipline reasons.*** *

GRADING SYSTEM

At Thomson Middle School, we use a weighted grading system in all classes to determine averages. The specific weighted scale is determined within each content and grade and is listed below for all academic classes. Academic classes must take a minimum of 8 - 12 grades each nine weeks and PE/Connections must take a minimum of 10 grades each nine weeks. Students in grades 6-8 will receive numerical grades on their report cards. The grading scale listed below will be followed:

A.....90-100 B.....80-89 C.....70-79 F.....69 and below

	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Major Assignments	40 %	40%	40%
Minor Assignments	30%	30%	30%
Daily	25%	20%	15%
Final Exam	5%	10%	15%

STUDENT ACADEMIC AWARDS PROGRAM

At Thomson Middle, we believe that it is very important to celebrate the success of our students. In order to do so, we have implemented various recognition programs to be held throughout the year. Teachers, administrators, and outside agencies select award recipients. It is our intent to recognize every deserving student. We encourage parents to attend awards programs to share in the recognition of student accomplishments.

AFTER SCHOOL STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A number of after school activities will be planned for the enjoyment and social development of students. Thomson Middle School believes that these activities constitute an integral part of the total development of young people. These activities will include club projects, class projects, social events, athletic and other school related functions. Transportation must be provided by the parent/guardian. **Any student that is unable to be picked up within 30 minutes following any after school activity will be unable to attend the next after school event. (Principal's discretion will apply.)**

1. All school rules apply to school activities after regular school hours.
2. Guests from other schools must also follow TMS rules.
3. Once in the gym or on the field, students who leave and return must pay to get back in the event.
4. Attendance at an after-school activity should be for the enjoyment of the activity. Students will be required to leave without refund if their actions indicate other intentions or interests.
5. State standards specify that all athletic events during the school week must be over no later than 7:00 p.m. Students must be picked up promptly. Parents should arrive at 6:45 p.m. for pickup.
6. Special dances are held throughout the school year. **DANCES ARE FOR TMS STUDENTS ONLY.** Times will be announced prior to the event. Students should be picked up promptly.
7. Students must be counted present for the day in order to participate in any school activity.
8. **Students assigned ISS/OSS are not allowed at school functions and may not participate in extracurricular activities beginning on the day ISS/OSS is assigned.**

Note: Dress Code Policies are enforced at all school related functions unless other notice is given. Final decisions and judgments concerning appropriate dress are made at the discretion of the administration. Students who violate dress code will be asked to call their parents for a change of clothing; if parents cannot bring appropriate clothing, the student will be placed in the In-School Suspension (ISS) classroom for the day.

REMEMBER!!!

- ✓ **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IS VALUED AT TMS!** Students may receive a zero if caught cheating on any assignment, quiz or test. Further cheating violations will also result in disciplinary action.
- ✓ **NO FIGHTING at TMS!** To help resolve a conflict, contact a counselor, teacher, or administrator. Students who initiate or provoke other students to fight will receive disciplinary action and a possible fighting citation/fine from the Sheriff's Department.
- ✓ **NO BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR THREATENING CONDUCT** will be tolerated against school personnel, students, or school property (written and/or spoken).
- ✓ **NO RACIAL SLURS OR SYMBOLS, SEXUAL NAME-CALLING** or inappropriate sexual remarks of any kind.
- ✓ **NO PROFANITY or OBSCENITY** – written, spoken, or gestured!
- ✓ **NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.** A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any drug, intoxicant or any substance with the pretense of being a prohibited substance.
- ✓ **NO GANG-RELATED** drawings, signs, or activity (written and/or spoken) allowed at TMS.
- ✓ **NO INAPPROPRIATE GRAFFITI** (written or drawn) on notebooks, book bags, clothing, or your body. It's best to label personal items with your name only!

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities. Our school does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities.

NOTE: The administration, faculty and staff reserve the right to reprimand students when guidelines, rules and regulations are not followed. Giving false information to staff members will result in disciplinary action. The Houston County School System endeavors to provide a safe and secure environment for all students. *The Board authorizes reasonable searches of students and their possessions directed to that end by school officials. The Board authorizes random searches of board owned property such as lockers, desks and other such property that may be assigned to students.*

CLUBS and ORGANIZATIONS

Club	Sponsor(s)	Mission	Activities	Dues	Membership Requirements
Academic Bowl Team	Mrs. Parsons/Mrs. Shilling	Provide middle school students with the opportunity to increase and share their knowledge while representing Thomson Middle in the PAGE Academic Bowl.	Students will meet in the morning and/or afternoon to practice for PAGE Academic Bowl	\$15 (t-shirt)	Members will be recommended and selected after several rounds of academic contest. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
FCCLA	Mrs. Leigh Barrett	To promote personal growth and leadership through Family and Consumer Sciences.	STAR Events, Career Connection, Families First, Student Body, Knowledge Bowl, Fall Rally, Fall Leadership, State Leadership, and National Leadership Conference		Open to all middle school students, members. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
FCA	Ms. Kylie McHugh	Provide the opportunity for athletes/students to meet for prayer and devotional.		\$25 (t-shirt)	Open to all middle school students. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
MAC/ Yearbook /WTMS	Dr. Mike Jackson	Publish the school yearbook, provide support to fellow classmates in the media center.	Taking pictures of school events, shelving books, morning announcements	None	Open to all middle school students. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
STARBASE 2.0	Ms. Jessica Green	STARBASE Mentoring combines STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) activities with a relationship-rich, school-based environment to provide the missing link for at-risk youth making the transition from elementary to middle school.	Meet bi-weekly after School. Provide enrichment and engage students in STEM based activities	None	Open to all middle school students, application process. Members must display "The Tiger Way"

FFA	Mr. Kenneth Ford	FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.	Monthly meetings, participate in career development events, and Pig Showteam.		Open to all middle school students. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
Student Council	Ms. Romonica Turner	The student council serves to advise the administration of ideas for school improvement and provide service and support to the school and staff	Student council meets monthly, sponsors school events, and provides service projects for the school	\$20 (t-shirt)	Open to all middle school students, student council officers are elected by their peers. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
TNT (Top Notch Lady Tigers)	Mrs. Alicia Ezell	A girls' mentoring group that seeks to improve social skills, conflict resolution, team building and problem-solving skills for middle school aged at-risk students.	Monthly meetings, field trips, and community service	\$30 (t-shirt)	Membership approved by recommendation and application process. Members must Display "The Tiger Way"
Young Men of Thomson	Coach Acosta & Ms. Jordan	Providing young male students with opportunities to develop life and leadership skills.	Students will meet monthly during or after school to work on life and leadership skills.	\$40	Completed application or teacher referral. Members must Display "The Tiger Way"
Sources of Strength	Ms. Jordan & Peer Leaders	Providing TMS students and Faculty with support	Peer leaders will support our student body to prevent adverse outcomes by increasing well-being, help-seeking, resiliency, healthy coping, and belonging.	None	Completed application or teacher referral. Members must Display "The Tiger Way"
STEM Club	TBA	Empower students to become innovators and technologically proficient problem solvers	Monthly meetings and STEM Competitions	\$20	Open to all middle school students. Members must display "The Tiger Way"

NSBE	Ms. Terra McMillan	We envision a world in which all Black students can envision themselves as engineers. In this world, Blacks exceed parity in entering engineering fields, earning degrees, and succeeding professionally.	TBD	TBD	Open to all middle school students. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
Chess Club	Dr. Mike Jackson	To build critical thinking, develop integrity in competition, use new strategies in chess, and have fun	Meet for after school learn and play sessions.	None	Open to all middle school students. Members must display "The Tiger Way"
Art Club	Kayla Brazelton	Promote art in all its forms and provide students with the opportunity to increase and share their artistic knowledge and abilities	Meetings after school.	\$25 (t-shirt)	all middle school students, application process, members must Display "The Tiger Way"