

Student Handbook 2023-2024

Hernando Middle School

700 Dilworth Lane
Hernando, MS 38632
(662) 429-4154

Jerry Floate
Principal

Leanna Clark
Assistant Principal

Jennifer Hodges
Assistant Principal

Thomas Hurst
Assistant Principal

Lorrie Brazier
Counselor

Lelia Ferguson
Counselor

Paula Simpson
Counselor

Stephanie Wilkins
MSIS Clerk

Alison Lee
Librarian

Dawn Forsyth
Receptionist

Teresa Thompson
Cafeteria Manager

Melba Quesada
Attendance Clerk

Whitney Austein
SPED/MET Chair

BELL SCHEDULE 2023-2024

7th and 8th Schedule

Homeroom: 7:00-7:15

1st 7:15 – 8:03

2nd 8:06 – 8:54

Advisory/Break 8:56 – 9:06

3rd 9:09 – 9:58

4th 10:01 – 10:50

5th 10:53 – 12:13

1 st Lunch	10:15-10:40
2 nd Lunch	10:50 – 11:15
3 rd Lunch	11:18– 11:43
4 th Lunch	11:46-12:11

6th 12:13 – 1:05

7th 1:09 – 1:57

8th 2:00 – 2:50

6th Grade Schedule

Homeroom: 7:00-7:15

1st 7:15 – 8:05

2nd 8:08 – 8:54

Advisory/Break 8:56 – 9:06

3rd 9:09 – 9:58

4th 10:01 – 10:50

5th 10:53 – 11:43

6th 11:46-1:05

5th Lunch 12:13-12:38 (Science and Math)

4th Lunch 12:41-1:06 (ELA and Social St.)

7th 1:09 - 1:57

8th 2:00 - 2:50

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year. Each year of school is important, and as you begin your school year, the DeSoto County School District will strive to provide opportunities for you to develop academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. At the time of writing this handbook, these following policies were the most up to date. Please periodically check the district website for up-to-date board policies.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

Hernando Middle School is part of the DeSoto County School System, which is the largest school district in the State of Mississippi.

Every school in the district is accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education Commission on School Accreditation and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which is the highest accrediting agency.

VISITORS

All visitors must enter and exit through the school office. Visitors must follow the school dress code during visitations at HMS. Our school does not permit visitors into the classrooms during regular school hours without clearing your visit with the Principal.

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

The most current school board policies can be found at www.desotocountyschools.org . Please check periodically for updates, changes, and additions.

UPDATING THE SCHOOL

Please update the school when you **change your phone number, address, or place of employment**. We want to be able to contact you in case of an emergency. Please contact the HMS counselor's office to change any information.

School Hours: 7:15 A.M. – 2:50 P.M.

Parents – Please do not drop off your students before 6:45 A.M. and please have them **picked up by 3:00 P.M., as there will be no supervision before or after these times.**

***Hernando Middle School **does not** allow delivery of flowers or gifts to students, nor do we allow classroom parties or birthday parties in the cafeteria.

Asbestos Management Plans

The Desoto County School District has asbestos management plans for each school in accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. The management plan can be reviewed in the main office of the school. Any questions may be directed to Desoto County Board of Education, Jerry White at 662-429-5271.

ATTENDANCE/EXCUSED ABSENCES

The Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement is responsible for ensuring that all Mississippi students are afforded the opportunity to attend school and to enforce the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law §37-13-91 of the Mississippi Code 1972 Annotated. The law governs compulsory school attendance. It requires a parent, legal guardian or custodian who has legal control or charge of a child age six (6) to seventeen (17) to enroll him or her in an education program (i.e. public, private or home school). Student enrollment must occur except under the limited circumstances specified in subsection three (3) of §37-13-91 which includes, but are not limited to, sending the child to a state approved, nonpublic, or educating the child at home in an organized educational program. July 1, 2003, the law was amended to include the following: a child, five (5) years of age, who enrolls in public kindergarten, will have to abide by the same guidelines as outlined in the §37-13-91.

The instructional day is therefore defined as a school day in which pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled classroom instruction for not less than sixty-three (63%) of the required instructional time, as fixed by the local school board for each school in the school district. The school board will review and approve the instructional time for each school in the school district annually prior to the beginning of the school year.

Each of the following shall constitute an excused absence:

1. Illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
2. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, the State Board of Health, or an appropriate school official.
3. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, and stepsisters. **The absences must be approved by the principal or his/her designee.**
4. A medical or dental appointment documented with the proper excuse from the attending physician/dentist upon return to school.
5. Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
6. Observance of a religious event, **with prior approval** of the principal or his/her designee.
7. Attendance at an authorized school activity **with the prior approval** of the principal or his/her designee.
8. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel including vacations or other family travel, **with prior approval** of the principal or his/her designee.
9. An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the principal or his/her designee, that conditions are sufficient to warrant the child's non-attendance. However, no absences shall be excused by the principal or his/her designee, when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS (6-8)

- Seven (7) absences may be excused by a note from a parent/guardian.
- **Any** additional absence after the seven (7) excused by a parent/guardian **must** be excused by a note from a doctor or other documentation excusing said absence.
- Any documentation being given for excuse of absence (s) **must** be submitted to the principal or his/her designee within two (2) days of returning to school, unless granted an exception by the principal for extenuating circumstances.

- When a student has exceeded five (5) unexcused absences, the Desoto County Attendance Officer shall be notified in writing within two (2) days by the school principal or his/her designee.

Make-up Work Policy

When a student is absent from school (excused or unexcused), the number of days allowed to complete any required make-up work is commensurate with the number of days missed to a maximum of five (5) days. For example, if a student is absent from school for one (1) day, the student has one (1) day to complete the required make-up assignments. If the student is absent for five (5) days, he/she will have five (5) days to complete his/her make-up work. If the student is absent for twelve (12) days, the student has five (5) days to complete the missed work. The principal has the discretion to allow additional time or limit the number of required assignments in extreme situations.

GRADING POLICY

Students must demonstrate mastery of the content required for each grade. Content is determined by the objectives listed in the curriculum for DeSoto County Schools in major subject areas. All of the skills from the State of Mississippi Curriculum Structure are included. Each nine weeks' grade is computed by averaging grades for the nine weeks. The semester grade is computed by averaging the two nine-week grades (45 % each) with the semester examination grade (10 %). The yearly grade is computed by averaging the two semester grades. The grading policy for disabled students will be consistent with their current Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The grading policy for English Language Learners (ELL) will be consistent with English language proficiency.

Numerical grades may be converted to letter grades using the following scale:

A	90-100
B	80- 89
C	70- 79
D	65- 69
F	0- 64

No grade (NG) – Because of excessive absences/IEP stipulation

Exemption Policy

Students may be exempt from **final exams** if the following criteria are met:

1. The student has 95 or above semester average in the course.
2. The student has an 85 or above semester average and does not have more than 5 days/periods unexcused absences.
3. Student has not been assigned to an alternative Learning Center for more than 5 days, has not been suspended or placed in DCAC or JDC at any time during the semester. (August-December or January-May).
4. Excused absences will not impact course exemptions.

PROMOTION

Grade 6 – In order to be promoted in grade 6, a student must earn a minimum yearly average of 65 in Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social studies.

Grade 7 – In order to be promoted in grade 7, a student must earn a minimum yearly average of 65 in Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social studies.

Grade 8 – In order to be promoted in grade 8, a student must earn a minimum yearly average of 65 in Language Arts, Science, Math, and Social studies.

TRANSPORTATION

The DeSoto County School District Transportation Department operates as an extension of the school(s) and student conduct is governed accordingly. Students who do not conduct themselves properly are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the DeSoto County School District policies. Punishments may include but are not limited to suspension and expulsion from school or from the bus for misconduct on the bus.

BUS RULES

- Be waiting at your stop 5 minutes early.
- If you need to cross the street, wait for traffic to stop; driver will motion to you when it is safe to pass in front of the bus to load or unload.
- Obey the bus driver.
- No unauthorized items on bus. (No weapons, tobacco, combustibles, pets, large items, etc.)
- Be nice and courteous.
- Keep the bus clean.
- No profanity and no fighting.
- Keep hands and head inside of bus.
- Do not throw anything, anywhere.
- Stay in your seat. Driver may assign seats.
- No eating or drinking.
- Damage to bus interior may result in student paying for damage.
- Emergency door/windows may only be opened in case of emergency.
- Do not distract or bother the driver through loud talking or misbehavior.
- Report any problems you may have to the bus driver as soon as possible.
- School District and drivers are not responsible for articles left on the bus.
- Use or possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang writings, gang dress, or gang activity of any kind may result in expulsion from school.
- Students may not have friends ride home without prior approval by school administrator. This must be done in writing by parent of student wishing to ride and will be verified

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH BUS RULES:

Penalty will be principal's discretion depending on circumstances. Punishment may be up to and including daily or permanent suspension.

Car Use

No student is allowed to drive a vehicle to or from the school grounds.

Contraband Items

Electronic games, toys, playing cards, spinners, or any other items deemed unnecessary by administration are banned and will be confiscated.

Cellphones, Smart Watches, and Tablets

These devices are to be **powered off** and **out-of-sight** while school is in session. Students may use the office phone if they need to call home. Occasionally, teachers will allow students to use electronic devices during class, but they must have teacher permission.

Walking to School and from School

Students are discouraged to walk to and from school. There are no sidewalks or crossing guards. A bus is available to pick-up and drop off all HMS students. Students who are walking to HHS to catch a ride must wait under the front awning until busses have left the campus.

Private Cars

Parents are requested to pick up student in the designated area at the back of the school building. Please do not park in the bus-loading/unloading zone. Parents are to use visitor parking in the front parking lot.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, school closings will be announced on TV and radio. Parents can be notified of a school closure via email by signing up for the Emergency E-Alert System by going to www.desotocountyschools.org. Days missed due to weather will be rescheduled. School is in session 180 days.

Tobacco- Free School Property

The DeSoto County Board of Education bans the use of all tobacco products in all school buildings and property in the district and on all school vehicles by all persons at all times. Tobacco products are defined as any substance that contains tobacco, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes.

EMERGENCY DRILLS AND PROCEDURES

Hernando Middle School has a crisis management plan for emergency situations. All students should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the following:

Fire Drill and School Evacuation Plan

Students are to become familiar with the school evacuation plan, which is posted in each classroom. The signal to evacuate the school is a shrill tone and strobe lights in the hallway. When the bell rings, all students should be silent immediately and follow the directions and instructions of their teachers.

Tornado Drill

If there is a tornado alert or if a tornado drill is being conducted, there will be an emergency siren over the intercom. When reaching the designated shelter areas, students and teachers will be seated with their backs to the walls, knees drawn up, and head between their knees. Coats and jackets, when available, could be used to cover head, arms, and legs so as to reduce injuries from flying pieces of glass and other debris. They should stay in this position until the "All Clear" signal is issued verbally. Refer to and become familiar with the details of the emergency plans for your school.

Earthquake Drill

If there is an earthquake, no warning will be given. In the event of a drill, there will be an emergency announcement over the intercom. Students and staff are to take cover under their desk. Students and staff will exit the building when an announcement is made and follow all procedures for school evacuation.

DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CODE OF DISCIPLINE

FORWARD

The Uniform Discipline Code has been developed in consultation with students, parents, teachers, and administrators so they will know and understand that firm, fair and consistent discipline policies are to be maintained in all DeSoto County public schools. Use of this Code is intended to ensure a stable learning environment in an atmosphere which encourages academic excellence. It is expected that staff members, students and parents will work together to support and enforce the code regulations with equity and consistency for all students.

A copy of this Code shall be distributed to each student and the parents, legal guardian or custodian of each such student shall sign a statement verifying that they have been given notice of the Code.

INTRODUCTION

The uniform Discipline Code of the DeSoto County Schools provides a uniform standard of conduct for all public school students. It describes inappropriate student behavior, ensures equal treatment for misconduct, and presets specific actions for remediating prohibited behaviors. The Code is based on the premise that rules must be enforced fairly, firmly and consistently and in a fashion equitable and just, while complying with state mandates and regulations. It recognizes that as student's progress in school and advance in age and maturity, they will assume greater responsibility for their actions. It is also recognized that differences in age and maturity require different types of disciplinary action.

In this Code, discipline is defined as the implementation of and adherence to behavioral rules and regulations which will ensure an educational environment free of mental and physical hazards to students, teachers and staff. Such an environment is conducive to the practice of good citizenship and encourages learning. The enforcement of the Code will help ensure a safe and orderly school climate for students and staff alike.

Specific provisions of the Code include:

1. A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools shall be responsible financially for his or her minor child's destructive acts against school property or persons.
2. A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools may be requested to appear at school by the school attendance officer or the principal, for a conference regarding the destructive acts of their child, or for any other discipline conference regarding the acts of the child.
3. Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools who refuses or willfully fails to attend such discipline conference specified in paragraph (2) of this section may be summoned by proper notification by the superintendent of schools or the school attendance officer and be required to attend such discipline conference.

4. A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools shall be responsible for any criminal fines brought against such student for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds or buses.
5. Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child who
 - a. fails to attend a discipline conference to which such parent, guardian or custodian has been summoned under the provisions of this section, or
 - b. refuses or willfully fails to perform any other duties imposed upon him or her under the law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction shall be fined not to exceed an amount provided by law.
6. The DeSoto County Schools shall be entitled to recover damages in an amount not to exceed an amount as provided by law, plus necessary court costs, from the parents of any minor (7-17) who maliciously and willfully damages or destroys property belonging to this school district. However, this section shall not apply to parents whose parental control of such child has been removed by court order or decree.
7. As an alternative to suspension, a student may remain in school by having the parent, guardian or custodian, with the consent of the student's teacher or teachers, attend class with the student for a period of time specifically agreed upon by the teacher and school principal. If the parent, guardian or custodian does not agree to attend class with the student or fails to attend class with the student, the student shall be suspended in accordance with this Code.

CODE OF DISCIPLINE

GRADES K-12

Student Conduct:

Acts of Misconduct

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors which disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on the school grounds including the following:

Level I

- 1 – 1 Tardiness
- 1 – 2 Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or building
- 1 – 3 Inappropriate personal contact including but not limited to pushing and shoving, inappropriate gestures and public displays of affection, recklessness, or any inappropriate contact which does not result in physical harm, or any additional contact which the principal determines to be in this level.
- 1 – 4 In unauthorized area without pass (halls, etc.)
- 1 – 5 Dress code violation
- * 1 – 6 Displaying any behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

Minimum: Teacher-Student Conference

Maximum: Teacher-Student-Parent Conference

Repeated or Flagrant Violation

Minimum: Teacher-Student-Administrator-Parent Conference (Home Suspension)

Maximum: Corporal Punishment, in-school suspension, detention, and/or school suspension

* Students, who after having a student-teacher conference, a teacher-student-parent conference, home suspension, Teacher Support Team interventions, continue displaying behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education, can be suspended from school, pending a disciplinary hearing.

Level II

- * 2 – 1 Leaving the school grounds without permission
- * 2 – 2 Skipping class
- * 2 – 3 Insubordination - refusal to follow written or verbal school rules after receiving specific directions from a person in authority including, but not limited to breaking school or classroom rules, failure to respond to staff request, refusal to complete assigned task, or exhibiting disrespect towards adults.

* 2 – 4 Students shall not possess, smoke, or use tobacco or any product containing tobacco or nicotine while on campus, while attending school-sponsored activities, or while under the supervision and control of district employees. This includes the possession and/or use of any electronic device that delivers nicotine or other vaporized liquids to the person inhaling from the device, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, vapes, vaporizers, cigars, pipes, hookahs, or any electronic device that delivers nicotine or other vaporized liquids to the person inhaling from the device.

* 2 – 5 Exhibiting any hostile physical or verbal actions

**2 - 6 Unauthorized and/or inappropriate use of electronic devices (as defined in Board Policy IJBA).

2 - 7 Cheating on tests or exams (The grade "0" will be assigned regardless of other punishment).

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

Minimum: Administrator-Conference, ALC, mandatory student-parent-administrator conference, corporal punishment

Maximum: School suspension (one to three days)

Repeated or Flagrant Violation

Minimum: School suspension (three days)

Maximum: School suspension (three days) and/or ALC for up to ten (10) days and/or Teacher Support Team interventions

* Students who, after having a student-teacher conference, a teacher-student-parent conference, a mandatory student-parent-administrator conference, and Teacher Support Team interventions, and a Functional Behavior Assessment, continue displaying behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education, can be suspended from school, pending a disciplinary hearing.

** Additional disciplinary action for unauthorized and/or inappropriate use of personal electronic devices (as defined in Board Policy IJBA):

1st Offense: First offense will result in confiscation of the device with parental contact. The electronic device will be returned at the end of the school day to the student or his/her parent/guardian as determined by the building principal.

2nd Offense: Second offense will result in confiscation of the electronic device and a mandatory parent/administrator conference. The electronic device will not be returned directly to the student; parent/guardian must meet with a school-level administrator to collect the electronic device.

3rd Offense: Third offense will be considered repeated and/or flagrant and the penalty for such acts will be determined by the building administrator. The phone will be confiscated, and penalties could include, but are not

limited to the following:

- Check-in/Check-out procedures for the electronic device during the school day (1-10 days)
- ALC/In-School Suspension (1-3 days)

4th Offense: Fourth offense will result in school suspension (1-3 days), and a loss of electronic device privileges pending reinstatement by the building principal.

Level III

3 – 1 Fighting

3 – 2 Gambling

* 3 – 3 Theft of personal and/or school property

3 – 4 Acts which threaten the safety and well-being of students and/or staff: engaging in any behavior (by word or act) that encourages, incites, or instigates threatening or aggressive acts which can create the risk of harm to another person.

3 – 5 Extortion- use of intimidation, coercion or force

* 3 – 6 Vandalism of personal and/or school property

3 – 7 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language and/or gestures, and/or possession of obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive materials.

3 – 8 Sexual conduct, including unwelcomed sexual contact, or recording and/or transferring sexually suggestive images through personal electronic devices.

3-9 Bullying (as defined in Board Policy JDDA)

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

Minimum: School suspension from one to three days, ALC, corporal punishment

Maximum: School suspension (three days), report to authorities when applicable

Repeated or Flagrant Violation

Minimum: School suspension (three days), ALC (ten days), and/or Levels 3-4 and 3-8 Teacher Support Team interventions

Maximum: School suspension (three days) and possible assignment to DeSoto County Alternative Center pending the results of a disciplinary hearing.

* For theft or vandalism restitution shall be made regardless of other punishment

Level IV

4 – 1 Possession, use or under the influence of alcohol, synthetic drugs, counterfeit drugs, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substance(s) or paraphernalia.

4 – 2 Assault on a student. Assault is defined as purposely or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury (including pain or discomfort) to another.

4 – 3 Assault on a school employee. Assault is defined as purposely or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury (including pain or discomfort) to another.

4 – 4 Directing profanity, vulgar or threatening language, and/or obscene gestures toward a staff member.

4 - 5 Participating in sexual activity including but not limited to sexual intercourse, sexual contact or exposing intimate body parts while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.

Any student in violation of the above shall be suspended by the principal for three days and ordered to appear for a disciplinary hearing before a District Hearing Officer.

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center and a report will be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Maximum: Expulsion

Students below grade 6 may be given other punishment.

Level V

5 – 1 Possession and/or use of a weapon as defined in MS CODE § 97-37-17. Weapons possession on educational property. The definition of weapon for the sake of this policy also includes any instrument used as a weapon which is capable of causing death or serious physical injury. Also, any toy or look-alike weapon that looks enough like an authentic weapon to be reasonably mistaken as authentic. Examples of weapons include, but are not limited to guns, rifles, pistols, toy guns, knives, toy knives, craft knives, utility tools, scissors, air or gas operated weapons, AirSoft pistols, BB guns, air rifle, air pistol, daggers, slingshots, razors, dynamite cartridges, bombs, grenades, mines, etc.

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Possession other than gun will result in assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center and a report will be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Maximum: Possession of a fire arm/gun or use of other weapon will result in expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year (under certain circumstances expulsion can be from the student's assigned school to the DeSoto County Alternative Center).

For students below grade 6, the hearing officer may recommend other punishment if the behavior does not require expulsion and the student is likely to benefit from remediation.

5 – 2 Sale or distribution, or conspiring to sell counterfeit drugs, synthetic drugs, illegal drugs/alcohol, narcotics or controlled substance(s)

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center and a report will be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Maximum: Expulsion

For students below grade 6, the hearing officer may recommend other punishment if the behavior does not require expulsion and the student is likely to benefit from remediation.

5 – 3 Students are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or possessing in any manner on school property or at school-sponsored events clothing, apparel, accessories, drawings, or messages associated with any gang or social club that is associated with criminal activity, as defined by law enforcement agencies.

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Mandatory student/parent/resource officer/administrator meeting to investigate situation and determine proper discipline consequence.

Repeated: Assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center

Maximum: Expulsion for repeated violations and/or gang activity that includes but is not limited to:

- Acts which disrupt the process of orderly education
- Recruitment with use of intimidation
- Tagging or marking
- Assault
- Battery

For students below grade 6, the hearing officer may recommend other punishment if the behavior does not require expulsion and the student is likely to benefit from remediation.

5-4 Threats of violence or harm: Any spoken, written, gestured or electronically communicated threat that disrupts the educational environment of the school and/or suggests a student intends to cause bodily harm or carry out an act of violence against district property, students, employees, or others (e.g. bomb threats, school shooting threats, etc.:-).

Disciplinary Action

Students found to have made threats of violence or harm against district property, students, employees or others will be subject to expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year (under certain circumstances expulsion can be from the student's assigned school to the DeSoto County Alternative Center).

In addition to these penalties, provisions of the Mississippi Criminal Code are applicable to illegal behavior. Principals are required to report illegal activities to the police. Students committing any crime or involved with any criminal behavior are subject to arrest by local law enforcement.

The DeSoto County Board of Education permits individual schools to adopt additional regulations governing actions not covered by Conduct Code. However, such additional regulations may neither substitute for nor negate any of the provisions, in spirit or intent of the Conduct Code, and **must be approved in writing by the School Superintendent.**

DUE PROCESS

In cases where the imposition of punishment is for a suspension of three (3) days or less, the student will be orally informed of the charges lodged against him. The student shall have a right to respond and refute these charges. There may be a delay between the time that "notice" is given and the time of the parent/student right to respond. A parent will be notified of the suspension by telephone, if possible, and in writing. The student's parent/guardian has a right to discuss this matter further and have the charge and punishment explained by the administration along with all other rights provided by board policy.

DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

When a student appears before a disciplinary hearing, the student will be subject to additional punishment up to and including suspension of more than three (3) days, assignment to an alternative educational setting for more than ten (10) days, or an expulsion from school.

For additional information on due process and disciplinary hearings, please refer to Board Policy JDAAAA - Disciplinary Procedures.

ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

After a student is referred for consideration of placement at DeSoto County Alternative Center (DCAC), the District Review Board and Transition team will determine appropriate placement for the student. Once a student is accepted into DCAC, the District Review Board and Transition Team will develop an Individualized Instruction Plan (IIP) for each student. The plan will follow the program and class schedule of the home school. DCAC follows the frameworks that are established by the state of Mississippi for the subject matter to be taught in each course. Certified personnel will send a daily feedback sheet home that requires a parent signature for all students attending DCAC.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) committee meets to determine every change of placement for our special education students. Students with special education rulings follow their IEP while at DCAC.

Parents are notified of the recommendation for placement at DCAC during the disciplinary hearing. The home school will contact the parent once acceptance is granted by the District Review Board. All parents and students will meet with a DCAC administrator to discuss the DCAC program and requirements. The student shall complete a minimum of thirty (30) successful days prior to returning to his/her home school.

The District Review Board consists of school-level administrators, district-level administrators, and counselors as determined by the Director of Pupil Services.

FELONY CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS FOR OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT

If a student commits a crime off campus and is formally charged with a felony or an act that substantially disrupts or has the potential to disrupt the educational process the student will be recommended for reassignment or expulsion.

BULLYING

The DeSoto County School District does not condone and will not tolerate bullying or harassing behavior. Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern or gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance,

opportunities or benefits. Any more detail concerning this policy can be found at desotocountyschools.org.

PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING A COMPLAINT

Any student, school employee, or volunteer who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior, or has witnessed or who has reliable information that a student, school employee, or volunteer has been subject to bullying or harassing behavior shall report such conduct to a teacher, principal, counselor or other school official. The report shall be made promptly after the alleged act or acts occurred. The school official shall complete a "Bullying/Harassing Behavior" complaint form which shall include the name of the reporting person, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the name of the victim(s) of the misconduct, the names of any witnesses and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the complaint. The report shall be given promptly to the principal or superintendent who shall institute an immediate investigation. Complaints against the principal shall be made to the superintendent.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Paddling is a form of punishment used at Hernando Middle School and is approved by the DeSoto County School board Policy and the Mississippi State Legislature. If paddling is a punishment option, the student will be given a choice of paddling or alternate punishment. If you wish your child not to receive corporal punishment, a letter must be on file and renewed yearly.

TARDY POLICY

Tardies are counted as they occur to any/all classes each semester. Students, who are not in the room when the bell stops ringing, are tardy.

Morning Tardies:

Tardies 1 thru 5 – No punishment and no parent notification.

Tardy 6 - Written Warning

Tardy 10 – Parent Conference/Home Suspension

Tardy 11 and consecutive- Student will spend the rest of the day in ALC or have After School Detention.

Period Tardies:

Students are allowed three (3) tardies with no punishment and no parent notification.

Tardy 4 – Students will be assigned lunch detention

Tardy 6 – Students will be given a home suspension. (If a home suspension has already taken place for another class, then the student will be assigned ALC for one day or After School Detention).

Tardy 9 – Students will be assigned ALC or After School Detention (3 days).

Tardy 12 and consecutive – Students will be given a 3-day suspension.

EQUIPMENT/INTERNET RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

A child enrolled in DeSoto County Schools will have the opportunity to use a computer for class activities, research, and internet functions. DeSoto County Schools' computers are equipped with

filtering software in an effort to prevent contact with inappropriate sites. When your child uses the equipment, the following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- The pirating of software.
- Damaging or abusing any equipment.
- Printing, accessing, or installing any obscene or dangerous materials on the computer.
- Exposing any DeSoto County computer to a virus.
- Changing any records or permanent operating system files.
- Bringing any personal software and using on school computers.
- Sending/receiving unauthorized e-mails.

DRESS CODE

Proper attire and grooming are deemed important to scholastic achievement and orderliness. The responsibility for the appearance of the students begins with the parents and the students themselves. Students' clothing, make-up, and hairstyles should reflect neatness, cleanliness, and self-respect so that the school is a desirable place in which to promote learning and character development. It is virtually impossible to formulate a set of regulations that adequately covers every detail of proper grooming. Violations of the Dress Code will be dealt with in accordance with the DeSoto County Schools Code of Discipline. It will be treated as insubordination and will be handled as stated in the Code of Discipline of the DeSoto County Schools. Insubordination is a Level II violation.

Initial Violation: Written warning and ALC for the rest of the day. (Parent can bring proper attire to remove student from ALC).

First Violation: Home suspension and ALC for the rest of the day.

Second Violation: School suspension for three days

Repeated Violation: Suspension from school pending a disciplinary hearing

1. Hair must be neat, clean and worn in a manner that does not interfere with vision or cause disruption in the classroom. No combs, picks, rollers or extreme coloring will be allowed.
2. T-shirts with sleeves, white or colored, are acceptable. Shirts must be worn properly closed, zipped or buttoned.
3. No article of clothing that pertains to or depicts the following will be acceptable: (a) substances or activities illegal by law for minors: alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gambling (b) profane, suggestive or violent language (c) derogatory symbols: remarks directed to any ethnic groups.
4. Sufficient underclothes must be worn appropriately and must not be exposed.
5. Tank tops, tube tops, muscle shirts, spaghetti straps, thin straps, or tops that expose the midriff, any part of the bust or excessive part of the back or are excessively tight or distracting are not permitted. No slits in shirts are to be above the waistline of pants or skirts.
6. Students in grades 6-8 are allowed to wear shorts as a part of their daily attire. Shorts should be no shorter than the length of the students' fingers when the student is standing straight, and hands are extended by the side. They should not be excessively tight or baggy.

7. Dresses and skirts that are the length of the students' fingers when the student is standing straight, and hands are extended by the side are allowed. Shorts of some kind must be worn under dresses and skirts. No slits in these skirts or dresses above the kneecaps are allowed.
8. No spandex articles are allowed.
9. Shoes must be worn at all times and no house shoes are allowed. Shoes w/laces should be laced and tied.
10. No visible tattoos will be allowed. Neither male nor female students will be permitted to wear rings in their tongues, or any exposed body parts other than the ear and appropriate rings on fingers. Nose rings are acceptable – no hoops, studs only.
11. Coaches, physical education classes or any other organized athletics have the option to ban all jewelry due to safety reasons and violation of the Mississippi High School Activity Association regulations.
12. Sunglasses, other than prescription, must be removed when inside the building.
13. All pants must be worn no lower than the hips with or without a belt. Pants should fit appropriately. No baggy pants are allowed. No writing is to be on the seat of the pants.
14. Leggings are allowed when worn with a top that reaches the end of the student's clenched fist when the student is standing straight, and hands are extended by the side. Leggings cannot be sheer/see through.
15. If needed, properly placed patches may be worn on pants. No holes, tears or shreds that expose skin above the clenched fist of the student when standing straight and their arms are extended by their side will be allowed.
16. No hats, head adornments, hoodies, or bandanas may be worn.
17. Pajamas and lounge pants/shorts are not allowed. (Unless allowed for special events)
18. Specific outfits designed for extracurricular activities and decisions concerning any questionable clothing will be left up to the discretion of the principal.
19. Students must keep proper hygiene.
20. Local Principal or their designee has the power and discretion to make all decisions on their campus.

AREAS OF INTEREST

Assembly Program: Assemblies are held periodically in the school gymnasium or in the auditorium. Students should give respect to all speakers and not talk while a speaker is talking. Good manners are always expected of students. Everyone is required to conduct himself/herself in a manner appropriate for the program being presented.

Care of Property: School property is for the benefit and use of students. It is our desire that everyone will exhibit pride in helping to keep the buildings and furniture clean and in good repair. No one should write on school desks, walls, or doors. Any student who damages, defaces, or destroys school property

will be punished, and the parents will be liable for all damages. Students should not be on school property before or after school hours unless involved in a school-sponsored activity. The school is not liable for any stolen or lost property; this includes wallets, phones, watches, money, etc.

Checks

The school offices will be happy to accept checks for the amount of workbooks, fees, etc. We will not be able to cash checks and provide change for students. Returned check must be cleared with cash, and then no other checks will be accepted. *All checks must include a working phone number.*

Classroom Courtesies: Students are to enter the classrooms quietly and orderly and are to be seated before the bell rings. Permission must be granted before talking or leaving the seat is allowed. Cooperation with the teacher and other students is necessary for a positive learning environment. Eating or drinking in the hallways or classrooms is prohibited. Water in containers with lids may be used if approve by the teacher.

Fast Food: In order to provide a healthy school lunch environment, parents are not allowed to bring students fast food for lunch.

Hall Courtesies: All traffic should keep to the right when changing classes and no unnecessary roughness will be tolerated. Students should cooperate with the custodians in keeping the hall free of dirt, paper, and other waste. Noise should be kept at a minimum at all times to show consideration for classes in progress.

Insurance: A low cost accident insurance policy is offered through the school. Each student will receive an insurance form at the beginning of the school year. All athletes and cheerleaders are required to take this policy if they are not covered by other insurance.

Lost and Found: All articles found in the school and on the campus should be turned in to the main office. It is strongly suggested that each student put his/her name in any outerwear worn to school. Each year, many jackets, sweaters, and coats are left at the school and go unclaimed. Lost and found is located in the gym.

Medical: It is of the utmost importance that student registration forms be filled out in full so that parents can be reached in case of an emergency. The school will not provide medication of any kind to students (this includes Tylenol and Advil). The school will not administer prescription medication to a student without a parent's signed permission sheet. Leave all prescription medication in its original container for distribution to student. Label all medications with the student's name, dosage, mode of administration, time interval and date of expiration. All students known to have diabetes should provide the school they are attending with a Diabetes Medical Management Plan and a Quick Reference Emergency Plan signed by their physician. These plans should be provided within the first week of school. See office for full details of requirements.

Parent Portal: Parents may register on-line at the parent connect website (www.desotocountyschools.org) to check on their children's grades, attendance, and discipline.

Prohibited Items: The following items are not allowed on the Hernando Middle School campus: Students will face disciplinary actions if they bring any of these items to school. This list is not all-inclusive. Headphones, Skateboards, Pillows, Bandannas, CD's, DVD's, Look-a-like drugs, Laser lights, Water Pistols, Electronic Equipment, Caps, Fireworks, Outside Drinks, Noise-making devices, Cigarette lighters, Matches, Blankets, Stuffed Animals, Gang Paraphernalia, Look-a-like weapons.

Replacements

Netbook Replacement: The cost of the device (Contact Mr. Hurst if this happens)

Charging Chord Replacement: \$50.00

School Food Service: Hernando Middle School serves lunch on a daily basis. Food Service will provide forms to students who wish to apply for federal assistance with their lunch. Free and reduced lunch is provided to those students who qualify. Please use mealpay through the www.desotocountyschools.org to prepay for your child's lunch. Students may purchase extra food and milk.

Student Complaints and Grievances: Students have both the right and responsibility to express school related concerns and grievances to the administration. For the discussion and consideration of a grievance, any student or group of students should request a meeting time and place with a school principal. One faculty member of the student's choice may be present at such meetings. Such time and place will be designated upon request.

School Hours: The school opens at 6:50 a.m. and closes at 3:15 p.m. Students must leave the campus by 3:00 unless they are involved in a supervised activity.

Telephone Use: Students are to use the office telephone only in cases of real need, such as illness requiring a student to go home. Students will not be called from class to speak to a parent or to make a phone call to a parent. Due to the heavy volume of business in the school office it is requested that parents not call the school to have messages delivered to their children except in cases of emergency. Parents should try to make arrangements with their children before they come to school.

Textbooks: Textbooks are furnished by the DeSoto County School District. They are loaned to the student for the school year or until the student withdraws from school. Books are to be treated with care, and students are encouraged to use book covers. No writing is permitted in any textbook. Fines are assessed for misuse or loss of a book. It is advisable for students not to lend their textbooks to others.

SCHOOL SERVICES AND CLASSES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Counseling Services: Students and parents are encouraged to contact the school guidance counselors, who are available to help with a variety of student needs. Your counselor can provide information about subjects you need to take, about scheduling your classes, and about personal/social problems with which you need assistance.

Library Services: A full-time librarian is available to help students learn reference skills. The librarian encourages students to read and has books that should be of special interest to all students. Students should treat books with care so that others may enjoy them. Fines will be charged for damaged, lost, or late books.

Gifted Education Program: Each middle school has a gifted education program for the intellectually gifted in the 6th grade. Certified gifted education teachers focus on the areas of thinking skills, creativity, communication skills, research skills, and leadership skills. For specific information see the gifted education teachers or counselors.

Carnegie Units: Two Carnegie credits are given to 8th grade students who successfully complete 8th grade Math and Cyber Foundations. Mississippi Studies and World Geography both offer ½ credits.

Band: The band classes are open to all interested students in grades six, seven, and eight. Each student must make arrangements for the use of an instrument.

Music/Chorus: Music/chorus classes are open to all interested students in grades six, seven, and eight.

Physical Education: In grades six, seven, and eight, physical education (PE) classes are available as elective courses. In these classes, students are introduced to a variety of sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, aerobics, football, and track. Students who are in the football, basketball, volleyball, and/or

track classes must be able to participate in the games and meet which are held in the afternoon, at night, and on Saturday depending on the sport.

Cheerleading: Cheerleading squad members are selected from eligible sixth and seventh graders at the end of each academic year for the following year's squad. In addition to ability, those who are selected must have an overall "C" average and acceptable behavior both at school and in the community.

School Yearbooks: School yearbooks are published each year depicting every area of school life. Orders are taken for yearbooks during the fall for spring delivery.

Fellowship of Christian Students/Fellowship of Christian Athletes: The Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) is a nondenominational organization. FCS membership is open to all students. It sponsors devotion one day a week for all students. FCS builds positive leadership through school and community service.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Principal's List and Honor Roll: To be on the Principal's List a student must earn all A's during a grading period. Students who earn A's and B's will be on the Honor Roll.

National Junior Honor Society: Honor Society students are selected each year from seventh and eighth grade students. The requirements are a cumulative 95 average in the four academic subjects (based on seventh grade end of the year averages): English, math, science, and social studies. Selection is also based on leadership, service, character, and citizenship.

SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system.

DISTRICT ASSURANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

The DeSoto County School District will provide a free appropriate public education to children ages three (3) through twenty (20), with a disability who, by reason thereof, need special education and, as appropriate, related services as defined under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2007(IDEA), Mississippi statutes, and the Mississippi Department of Education policies. A free appropriate public education will be provided to students with disabilities residing with the jurisdiction of the district and who are enrolled in the DeSoto County School District. These services will be provided at no cost to the parent, meet the standards of the Mississippi State Board of Education as set forth in state policies and procedures, and in conformity with a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Provision of a free appropriate public education will continue for a student with a disability through the school year in which a student reaches age twenty-one(21) if the student was enrolled in the district and was twenty(20) at the beginning of the school year.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, no student in the DeSoto County School District shall be subject to sexual harassment.

It is the intent of the School Board to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment are prohibited. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or employee to use sexual harassment toward any other student or employee.

DeSoto County Schools will investigate all formal and informal, verbal and written complaints of sexual harassment.

An employee who is found to have used sexual harassment toward a student or another employee will be disciplined. (MS Code 37-9-59)\

Safety Announcement

In an attempt to keep DeSoto County Schools safe for all students and staff, the following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- The use or possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang dress or gang activity
- Distribution of illegal drugs, prescription drugs or any substance dangerous to students (distribution includes giving substances to students)

Students who openly defy this warning will be considered a threat to the safety of students and staff and suspended pending a disciplinary hearing. The student could be expelled from DeSoto County Schools

Gang Policy

The DeSoto County School District prohibits gang activity, defined, hereinafter. Students who engage in gang activity will be subject to discipline pursuant to the District's Code of Discipline, up to and including expulsion.

A "gang" is defined as a group that initiates, advocates, or promotes illegal activities, activities that threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property on school grounds, or at supervised school functions, or activities that are harmful to the education process.

Prohibited "gang activity," includes, but is not limited to:

1. Soliciting students to become gang members;
2. Participating in gang initiation or other gang ceremonies;
3. Deliberately wearing, displaying, or possessing prohibited gang symbols;
4. Engaging in gang-related violence or threats of violence;
5. Threatening others, including threats by brandishing a weapon or a replica of a weapon on school campuses, or a supervised school functions; or
6. Engaging in any behavior undertaken in such a manner as to be reasonably likely to incite violence or endanger persons or property.

Prohibited "gang symbols" may include, any type of clothing decoration, jewelry, patches, bandanas, gang names, depiction of gang signs or symbols, and/or body signals/movement which is recognized as denoting a gang or is a sign, signal or movement utilized in connection with gang communications, including but not limited to those appearing with "Gang Awareness" pamphlet found in school board policy JDCA that is located on the district website www.desotocountyschools.org. School officials will keep a booklet containing known "gang symbols" in each school office. Students and parents who may have questions regarding this policy should contact the school principal for further clarification of any part of the policy.

Additional Rules

1. Fast Food is not allowed in building!
2. Only bottled water or refillable water bottles are allowed.

3. Glass bottles, energy drinks, coffee and caffeine enhanced drinks are not permitted.

Destruction of Restrooms and/or School Property

Students caught vandalizing school property will receive an automatic school suspension and will have to attend a disciplinary hearing. Students could face up to 30 days at the Desoto County Alternative Center.

NONDISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT

The Desoto County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For questions regarding discriminatory practices please call Central Services at 662-429-4154

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Each student in the DeSoto County School District will have equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, sex, handicap, religion or marital status. No student shall be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, athletics, counseling, employment assistance, or extra-curricular activities. Further, the DeSoto County School District prohibits sexual harassment of or by any student. This policy applies to conduct during and relating to school and school-sponsored activities. Any student who engages in the sexual harassment of anyone in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary action.

DeSoto County Schools School Calendar

August 1, 2023	Teachers' First Day
August 3, 2023	Students' First Day
September 4, 2023	Labor Day Holiday
October 9, 2023	Fall Break
Nov. 20,- Nov. 24, 2023	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 15, 2023	End of First Semester
Dec. 18, - Jan. 1, 2023	Christmas Holidays
Jan. 2, 2023 – Jan. 3, 2024	Staff Development Days (Teachers Return)
January 4, 2024	Students Return
January 15, 2024	Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday
February 16, 2024	Staff Development Day (Student Holiday)
February 19, 2024	President's Day Holiday (All)
Mar. 11, - Mar. 15, 2024	Spring Break Holidays
Mar 29, 2024	Good Friday Holiday
April 1, 2024	Easter Holiday
May 22, 2024	Students' Last Day
May 24, 2024	Teachers' Last Day

TENTATIVE MAKEUP DAYS:
February 16th, February 19th, April 1st, and May 23rd

Dear Parents,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do to make Hernando Middle School a success. We hope your child will have a great school year. This handbook contains rules, regulations, discipline codes, and many other aspects that pertain to you and your child throughout the school year. Students are to keep these handbooks with them at all times during the day. The handbook also serves as a way for teachers to communicate with parents. Please make sure that you and your child take time to read through this handbook and sign the form below stating that you have read and understand the entire handbook and its rules and return it to the student's homeroom teacher. Note, certain policies and procedures are subject to change. Any changes that occur will be communicated. We thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,
Hernando Middle School Faculty/Staff

I, _____, the parent/legal guardian of _____
(Print Name) (Print Name)

have read and understand ALL the policies, procedures, and guidelines in the Hernando Middle School student handbook issued to my child.

Student's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT

In an attempt to keep DeSoto County Schools safe for all students and staff, the following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- The use of possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang writings, gang dress, or gang activity.
- Distribution of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or substances dangerous to students (Distribution includes giving substances to students)
- Students involved in the above activities will be suspended for a period of no less than three (3) days, have a disciplinary hearing and may be expelled.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

*** * Please sign and return this form to your child's school. * * * ***