

# Student Handbook Information

## VISION STATEMENT

*We are committed to becoming a model middle school by:*

- Achieving academic excellence through engaged learning
- Displaying respect and confidence
- Embracing diversity
- Fostering productive citizens in a global, digital society
- Facilitating and inspiring lifelong learners

## MISSION STATEMENT

Northwestern Middle School is committed to challenging our students to strive to their full potential for academic excellence and personal growth.

## COLLECTIVE COMMITMENTS

*STUDENT COMMITMENTS:* Foster and Model Respect\*\*\*Have high expectations\*\*\*Monitor results, test scores and grades\*\*\*Success is understanding that our work is our responsibility\*\*\*Academic honesty is expected \*\*\*Show random acts of kindness - we are not just friends, or classmates, we're a family - treat each other like one.

*STAFF COMMITMENTS:* Foster and model respect\*\*\*Implement interactive and research based teaching strategies\*\*\*Help students discover their talents\*\*\*Promote strong communication and self-advocacy skills among our students\*\*\*Continue to improve through professional growth and professional learning Communities \*\*\*Maintain strong relationships within the community.

*PARENT COMMITMENTS:* Foster and model respect\*\*\*Support the mission and vision of the school community \*\*\*Collaborate, communicate and support the staff and administration to meet the needs of the child\*\*\*Encourage academic excellence\*\*\*Facilitate balance of academic, social and personal development \*\*\*Model and support effort and responsibility for our children.

It is the policy of the Fulton County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program or any other program, activity or service.

If you wish to make a complaint or request accommodation or modification in any program, activity or service, contact Compliance Coordinator at 6201 Powers Ferry Road Atlanta, Georgia 30339, or phone 470-254-4585 (TTY 1-800-255-0135).

## PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW

### Community Telephone Numbers:

Milton Parks and Recreation	678-242-2489
Alpharetta Community Center	678-297-6100
North Fulton Health Center	404-612-2273

# Parent Teacher Organization

The PTO serves as a valuable resource for our school. Many parents volunteer their time, financial resources and expertise through this organization. We encourage all of our parents to join our PTO and our volunteer program.

## 1. Absences

The Fulton County Board of Education considers regular school attendance essential to successful school progress. Students must be present to take full advantage of available educational opportunities. **Poor attendance or excessive tardiness may result in low grades or failure.**

## Check-Outs

**A Photo ID (in the form of a Driver's License or Passport) is required. Other forms of I.D. cannot be accepted.**

If a student needs to leave school at any time during the day or prior to dismissal time, **a note from the parent must be sent to the front office by 8:55 AM.** If the student doesn't have a note to meet the parent/guardian in the office, students may be called to the front office for checkout only when the parent/guardian arrives in the front office. **If a note was not delivered, you may be asked to wait until a class change to pick up your child.** Your cooperation with this procedure is requested as it minimizes interruptions to instruction. *Parents must come to the front office in person to sign out the student.* **Students will not be checked out after 3:30 PM.**

Students cannot be released without proper parent/guardian identification. **If your child is going to be picked up by one of your emergency contacts, they must provide proper identification at time of checkout and already be listed as an emergency contact in eSchool Plus.**

*This protocol is in place to protect the safety and security of our students. Thank you in advance for your patience, cooperation, and understanding, regarding these procedures.*

The Board supports vigorous enforcement of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law, which makes school attendance the responsibility of the parent and the student. If you have any attendance questions, please call the **NMS Front Office at 470-254-2870** or email **[nmsfrontdesk@fultonschools.org](mailto:nmsfrontdesk@fultonschools.org)**.

## Excused Absences

A student's absence from school or class will be considered excused when it is due to any of the following circumstances:

- Personal illness of the student. Verification by a medical doctor may be required for excessive illness. A **physician's statement is required** for all absences which exceed 10 consecutive school days in a school year, and for all absences that are due to communicable diseases or under other conditions deemed necessary by the principal.
- Attendance at school would be detrimental to the health of the student or others.
- A serious illness or death in the student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
- Compliance with a court order or an order issued by a governmental agency.
- Observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety.
- Serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly.

- **An Approved Absence must be prearranged through written request to the Principal 5 days before the absence occurs. Approved absences shall be permitted for a travel opportunity with educational benefits, a graduation or wedding of a close family member, a specialized educational experience, or an event approved by the Principal. Approved absences are limited to six per year.**

## **Requests For Make-Up Work**

Parents and students are encouraged to request make-up work for absences, excused or unexcused. Students are encouraged to establish systems by which they can contact other students in their respective classes to get class assignments and homework in case of an absence. Parents may request assignments via e-mail. Assignments may be picked up one school day after the request is made. Upon returning to school following an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the teachers to request make-up work. The contact should be made on the day the student returns to school. Work missed during the last week of the semester must be completed with the first ten (10) school days of the following semester.

## **Tardiness/Check in Procedure**

**Students must be in class by 8:55 a.m.** It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the student for the student to arrive on time. **Oversleeping or car trouble is NOT a legitimate excuse for tardiness.** Excused tardies include illness, medical appointments, and legal matters. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must send a note with the student when he/she is tardy. All students who are tardy must report to the office **before** reporting to class. Chronic tardiness to school or to class may result in disciplinary consequences. Chronic tardies to school and absences may be referred to the school social worker.

## **Class Tardies**

**Students must be in class by 8:55 a.m.** Students late for class will be marked as tardy. After students accumulate 3 tardies, they will receive a private detention assigned by their teacher. After 5 tardies, an office referral will be made. Subsequent office referrals will be made with every additional 2 tardies.

## **Unexcused Absences**

An unexcused absence is an absence other than an excused or approved absence. It includes, but is not limited to, truancy and class cuts.

## **Written Excuse for an Absence**

Any student who is absent from school shall present a satisfactory written excuse, to the front office signed by one of his/her parents or guardians within 3 days after returning to school. The excuse must state the dates of absence, reason for the absence and the parent(s) or guardian(s) signature. If the student is absent three consecutive days and the school cannot get information as to why the student is absent, a referral shall be made to the visiting teacher/social worker office. Reporting a child's absence by phone is not accepted. Work missed during the last week of the semester must be completed with the first ten (10) school days of the following semester.

## **2. Cafeteria**

The school cafeteria offers a variety of lunches each day. Daily choices can include a hot entrée, specialty items, and a salad plate. Cookies, ice cream, milk, bottled water and different juices are extra items that may be purchased.

All breakfasts are \$1.20 and all lunches are \$2.70. The students may open a lunch account anytime during breakfast or lunch or pay in the cafeteria on a daily basis. Students are encouraged to open a lunch account. **Students may not charge** for their lunches. If they forget their money, they need to see the Cafeteria Manager. Free/reduced price lunches are provided for students who qualify for these federal programs. Application forms are distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Lunch prices are subject to change by the Fulton County Board of Education.

## Meal Pay

We offer *MealpayPlus*. The web address is [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com) or you can go to the NMS website under Quick Links. This system will eliminate the need to send checks to the school or worry about lost or forgotten lunch money. *MealpayPlus* allows any family to:

- \*Make a prepayment into your student's meal account.
- \*Create settings to automatically replenish your student's account.

## 3. Communication

### Home – School Communication

Every effort is made to ensure effective communication between the home and the school. Our WILDCAT WEEKLY newsletter is located on our website. You must opt-in to receive the weekly and be sure to check your spam/junk mail box if you are not receiving them after opting in. School Messenger is a communication tool, which sends information to your home email address on file in eSchool Plus.

Conferences may be requested by the teacher, student or parent at any time during the school year. Please contact the teacher in order to arrange an appointment. When a conference is scheduled during the school day, parents should report to the office before going to the classroom. A Photo ID (in the form of a Driver's License or Passport) is required. *Other forms of I.D. cannot be accepted.*

If you have any discipline or academic concerns, we encourage you to seek assistance from school personnel. Please adhere to the following chain of command:

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Assistant Principal
3. Principal

If you have concerns regarding your students well-being or academic concerns related to their overall well-being, please reach out to our counselors.

## 4. Grading

### Principal's Honor Roll Qualifications

Honor roll recognition requires that a student earns all A's on a report card.

### Promotion Policy

Promotion in middle schools will be based on student performance for the entire school year. Students must have a passing grade of 70 and above in language arts, reading or foreign language, mathematics, social studies, science, and one of the following: a combination of grades in the connections segment or the physical education/health connections segment. A passing semester grade in the connections or physical education/health segment is accomplished by earning an average of 70 or above when averaging the combination of two nine-week grades during the semester. Students who have failed courses may have an opportunity to attend summer school and advance to the next grade.

- The Promotion and Retention Committee will be involved in all special cases.

- Parents will be notified both by conferencing and in writing when there is a concern regarding a student's promotion/retention.
- In most cases, students will be retained no more than twice except with the approval of the school's Area Superintendent.
- In most cases, students who will be 16 years old on or before September 1 shall not be retained in the middle grades.
- The staffing committee, which develops the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), shall establish standards for promotion or placement for students with disabilities.
- Any student who receives an average for both semesters of 69 or below shall fail the subject for the year.
- A failing grade in a subject can be made up by the student earning a passing grade in the appropriate subject during a summer school session.

## Report Cards, Mid-Terms and Grading

Students will receive a formal PROGRESS REPORT every nine weeks and a semester report card at the end of 18 weeks. An informal 4 ½ weeks interim report will be sent home; one for you to keep, the other to be signed and returned to school (**Parents should promptly sign and return all reports and teacher communications**). Unless there are extenuating circumstances, these should be returned within two school days.

### Grading Scale

90	-	above	=	A
80	-	89	=	B
70	-	79	=	C
Below		70	=	F

Due to the balancing of classes & state mandated class size limits, class change and specific teacher requests cannot be honored. Decisions regarding participation in elective connection classes (band, orchestra and chorus) should be finalized prior to the beginning of school. These classes may not be dropped after the first nine weeks of the school year except under extenuating circumstances. Requests for changes must be made in writing by the parent or guardian to the teacher. Changes in connections (9-week classes) are made only in extreme circumstances.

**The Pride Wall program is designed to reward students for not only academic success but also in the arts or athletic success, altruism and academic improvement. Each nine weeks the teachers nominate deserving of recognition in one of these areas.**

## 5. Discipline

It is our belief that to establish an effective educational and social climate, it is important for students to understand that appropriate standards of behavior are expected at all times. Consequences will be administered when an individual's actions interfere with the right of students to learn and or teachers to teach. All students are expected to be familiar with and to follow the Fulton County Board of Education Student Code of Conduct and Northwestern's Instincts. Each student will receive a copy of these guidelines for review at the beginning of the school year.

**Each student will be given a conduct grade of 1, 2, 3 or 4 in each class based on his/her conduct.**

The administration may use a variety of disciplinary methods including student conferences, parent conferences, public or private detention of the student with a teacher or administrator, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension.

Students who have been suspended in-school or out-of-school will be deprived of extended field trips or after-school activities (e.g., dances, performances, etc.) during the period of suspension.

## Cafeteria Conduct

Students should observe the following procedures:

1. Students must sit where assigned.
2. Enter the cafeteria in an orderly fashion and either proceed to a serving line or go directly to a designated area.
3. Use good manners and speak in a moderate volume.
4. Wait to be dismissed.
5. Check the table and area to see that it is clean before taking trash and trays to the designated area.
6. With the exception of bottled water, food and drink cannot be removed from the cafeteria.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome conduct, either sexual or non-sexual, that is directed toward a person because of the person's gender. A student should inform a teacher, counselor, or administrator if he or she believes that he or she is receiving unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favor, or being confronted with other unwanted verbal and physical conduct, which has sexual intent.

## Verbal or Physical Acts of Bigotry

Board policy JCAC states that the Board of Education believes that a valuable element of education is the development of respect for all individuals, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, age, gender, or handicap. In an effort to provide a safe, respectful educational environment, the Board prohibits any student, while on school grounds or at a school activity, from committing an act of bigotry that, under the circumstances, would tend to cause substantial disruption of the educational setting or school activity.

## Dress Code

Administrative Procedure JD Rule 12 states the following: "Students in the school system are expected to dress and groom themselves in such a way as to reflect neatness, cleanliness, and safety. All students shall dress appropriately so as not to disrupt or interfere with the educational program or the orderly operation of the school. Extremes in dress will not be permitted. Examples are: "short-short" clothing (above mid-thigh); sagging pants; bare midriffs; frayed/ripped clothing (above the knees); exposed under garments; shirts extending longer than shorts; or apparel which designates gangs or similar organizations or any dress that is disruptive to the educational process. The school principal or other fully authorized school official shall determine whether any particular mode of dress or grooming results in a violation of the spirit and/or intent of this rule."

**If violated, the student will be provided alternative clothing options initially. Failure to comply can result in more serious disciplinary actions.**

## DISCIPLINE CYCLE FOR INAPPROPRIATE DRESS

- Step 1: Change Clothes/Parent Notification
- Step 2: Change Clothes/Parent Notification
- Step 3: Change Clothes/Parent Notification/1 Detention
- Step 4: Change Clothes/Parent Notification/2 Detentions
- Step 5: Change Clothes/Parent Notification/1 ISS
- Step 6: Change Clothes/Parent Notification/ 2 ISS

## NMS Electronics Policy:

### *School Surfaces*

Every NMS student has the option of receiving a Microsoft Surface to use all school year in class and at home. In addition to both parents and students signing a Device User Agreement and Pledge, all students are expected to follow rules and norms for use of the Surface. The following rules are:

- No food/drinks around devices
- Device stays in NMS bag when not in use
- Device stays in teacher's locked classroom during lunch/recess
- Device stays in locked PE locker during PE class time
- Outside of a locked and secure environment, the device cannot be left unattended at any time
- **Cellphones should be kept out of sight inside the classroom unless the teacher explicitly gives student permission to use for instructional purposes.**
- Students will be provided with 3 charging tickets to use if they are in need of charging
- Devices need to be charged to at least 90% prior to coming to school
- Devices may not be used on school buses
- Use discretion when using the device before school to preserve battery power (safe and appropriate use)
- Students will need to keep their device secure in their school locker or in the PE locker during afterschool activities (i.e. basketball, volleyball, track)

### *Personal Electronics/Cell Phones*

We must also protect the instructional environment. **Cell phones and electronic devices other than the MS Surface or administrative approved electronic devices, are not to be used or to be visible inside of our classrooms spaces without prior teacher permission.** Teachers must give students explicit permission to use or display devices prior to use. Students may check their phones between classes in a responsible manner. Answering a phone call or a text during class is considered a violation, even if that call comes from a parent. Please contact the front office if you have an emergency. We will connect you with your student.

The school makes every effort to assist students in safeguarding their valuables. However, the ultimate responsibility lies with the student. The school is not liable for theft, loss, or damage.

Teachers will follow the Classroom Behavior Management Matrix to handle cell phone infractions.

## **6. Health & PE Class**

### **Physical Education Expectations**

All students are **required** to wear royal blue shorts and a white or grey t-shirt. Students are required to change into these clothes during PE. They may not wear the same clothes in PE that they wore to school. During the winter months, students may choose to wear sweat pants over their shorts and a jacket or sweatshirt over their shirt. The shorts must be athletic style and of an appropriate length. They may not sag or be worn below the hips and may not be rolled up at the waist band. The shirt may **not** be a tank top, cut off or midriff style.

Students may choose to purchase their PE clothes on their own, however it is recommended they purchase the

school PE uniform. Extra uniforms will not be ordered during the school year, so it is highly recommended they are purchased early. Students who do not meet the proper dress requirements or who choose to not dress out at all will **not** be allowed to participate and will lose all credit for the day.

## **Sex Education**

Each student will be required to take a nine-week health education course at each grade level. A letter will be sent home to parents informing them of their right to remove their child from this unit. Parents are to sign and return the form indicating whether or not the student should participate in the sex education unit. Students not participating in this unit will be given alternative health assignments. All materials used in the course are available for parental review. Please contact your child's health teacher to make an appointment to see these materials.

## **7. Insurance**

School insurance forms will be available at the beginning of the year. Northwestern Middle School does not carry insurance to cover accidental injuries of students. Parents are urged to consider purchasing student insurance.

## **8. Lockers**

Students rent lockers for the safe keeping of books and personal property. It is the responsibility of the student to guard his/her combination and to see that his/her locker is secure. Locker rental fees are \$10.00. *Lockers remain the property of the school and are subject to periodic inspections by school personnel at any time during the year.* Students cannot change lockers without administrative approval.

**Bookbags are permitted to be used to and from school only. They are to be left in lockers during the school day.**

## **9. Lost/Damaged Instructional Materials**

All devices and books are barcoded and scanned when issued to each student. Restitution for lost or damaged devices is detailed on the device user agreement. Appropriate restitution for a lost book or damaged book is the cost of a new copy. Immediate written notice will be sent to parents/guardians when a student needs to make a restitution for lost or damaged devices, books or materials.

## **10. Lost and Found**

Students who find lost articles are asked to bring them to the school office so that they can be sent to the area designated for "lost and found". Lost articles may be claimed before school daily in the lost and found area.

## **11. Media Center**

The Media Center hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 pm. Pass AM in the Media Center is from 8:05-8:45 a.m. Pass AM is a study time for students.

## **12. Medication and Emergencies**

Students will not be allowed to take medication without written parental permission. All parents should supply school with current information regarding actions to be taken in case of

an emergency. (A form is provided for each student at his/her initial enrollment). Medication must be in its original container and clearly marked for the student. Certain medications can be carried by students after the appropriate form (found on NMS website) is submitted to the clinic. All other medication must be stored in the clinic.

### **13. Supervision of Students Before and After School**

Students are not permitted in the building prior to 8:05 a.m. The school cannot assume responsibility for students who arrive before 8:05 a.m. or remain after school unless they are involved in a scheduled before or after school activities.

If your student is attending a help session in the morning prior to 8:35 a.m. a **dated, signed pass from the teacher** will be needed to go to the academic hallways.

### **14. Telephones**

All school phones are used for school related business only and students will be allowed to use them only to place or receive calls for emergencies or at the discretion of the administration. The office phone is available after school until 5:00 p.m. for students.

### **15. Transportation**

Transportation is provided for all students. Any student taking advantage of this service is expected to follow the instructions of the driver and the local school. Any student failing to do so may be denied the privilege of riding the bus.

### **16. Bus Changes**

Requests for school bus transportation changes (i.e., your child riding home on another child's bus other than their own) will be approved according to Fulton County Board of Education guidelines. Northwestern Middle School is only authorized to approve one (1) day requests for childcare purposes. All requests must be hand-written by a parent or guardian and include the following information:

- Child's name & grade
- Parent/Guardian name
- Signature of parent/guardian
- Contact number of parent/guardian
- Name of student & their bus number of which your child is riding home
- Address of drop off location
- Adult name & contact number at drop off location

Your child must bring this written request to the front office before 8:45 a.m. and NMS personnel will call to verify the information. Once approved, your child must pick up a bus pass at the end of the school day in the front office. If you have a request for bus transportation changes for more than one (1) day, please call Crystal Brooks at the FCBOE Transportation Department; 470-254-0703

### **17. Visitors**

All visitors must sign in through the front office and obtain the appropriate visitor badge and clearance. **A Photo ID (in the form of a Driver's License or Passport) is required. Other forms of I.D. cannot be accepted.**

## Guests

Unauthorized persons will not be allowed in the building without administrative permission. A Photo ID (in the form of a Driver's License or Passport) is required. Other forms of I.D. cannot be accepted.

Students may not bring other students to visit in the classrooms or at lunch. This regulation is for the protection of all students and the instructional program. Classroom interruptions can be very detrimental to the learning process.

## Parent Visitation to the Class Room

The Northwestern Middle School staff values the concept of parents as partners in education, and understands that the student's education extends beyond the school. Parent and community support and assistance are vital in all facets of the school program. It is therefore essential that parents be informed and involved in the planning and implementation of policy and program.

If parents of currently enrolled students wish to set up individual classroom visitations, they will be provided the opportunity. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Make the request to the principal at least 24 hours prior to the requested time.
- State the purpose of the visit (i.e., identify what they expect to accomplish by the visit.)
- Sign in at the office by providing Proper I.D. **A Photo ID (in the form of a Driver's License or Passport) is required. Other forms of I.D. cannot be accepted.** Then, you will be escorted to the classroom.
- Refrain from engaging the attention of teachers or students through conversation or other means.
- Remain inconspicuous and non-disruptive to the instructional process.
- Parent visitations should be limited to one class period during the school day.

## 18. Writing

### Writing Expectations in All Classes

Students will be expected to follow specific writing guidelines in all classes. NMS feels that writing is a skill that must be instilled in all of our students.

## 19. Yearbook

Students who wish to purchase and pay for a yearbook, must do so directly through the yearbook company. You must purchase your yearbook with a credit card or a debit card. The yearbook company will email you a receipt. No order forms or payments will be accepted at NMS. Yearbooks can be ordered throughout the school year until April.