

# **Fannin County Middle School**

## **Student/Parent Handbook**

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

### **FCMS Mission**

Our vision is for all students to be challenged to their greatest potential, expand their expectations for their future, and fully prepare them for life.

#### **Title I Funding Notification**

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

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

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

### **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **ACCREDITATION**

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

## ASBESTOS STATEMENT

This is to certify that the Fannin County School System has fully complied with Federal Regulation (HOCF763- Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). All school buildings have been inspected for asbestos by an EPA certified inspector. A Management Plan is available to the public during regular business hours. Copies may be obtained for a fee of \$.25 per page.

## ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

FCMS offers interscholastic activities in basketball, cross country, tennis, football, wrestling, golf, soccer, softball, volleyball and cheerleading. Students are encouraged to participate. The primary emphasis of the middle school athletic program is not winning, but on developing skills, knowledge of the sport, good sportsmanship, and a sense of fair play.

All students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities in grades 6-12 must have on file at the school a current valid annual physical examination, medical release, and be covered by the school athletic insurance policy or show proof of other insurance **before** trying out or beginning practice. Practices and games occurring on a school night (Monday-Thursday) cannot begin until the end of the regular school day.

In order to be eligible to participate in practices or competitions, students must be in attendance for at least half of the school day. If a student receives days of ISS or time-out, they will not be allowed to take part in games or competitions until their consequences are completed.

## ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

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

### **Absences**

The school recognizes there are times when a student must be absent for reasons that are beyond the control of the student and the parent. Absences of this nature will be excused in accordance with state attendance laws. According to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, lawful absences are: (1) personal illness (2) serious illness or death in the immediate family (3) recognized religious holidays (4) absences mandated by governmental agency (i.e. summons for court) (5) Acts of God (6) a

student whose parent is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five school days per school year (7) serving as a Page for the General Assembly. All other absences are considered unexcused.

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

After each absence, upon returning to school, students are to report to the office for admittance to class. A note from a parent or doctor must be presented to the official in the office for admittance to class. If a note for being absent is not presented on the first day back, the admittance will be considered unexcused. The student will have three (3) days in which to bring a note to remove the unexcused absence.

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

### **Early Dismissal**

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

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

### **Tardy**

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

### **BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (BYOD)/TELEPHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICE USAGE**

Students should ask to use the office telephone only when sick or in emergency situations as deemed necessary by office personnel. Students should not come to the office without an agenda signed by their teacher. Students should never use the telephone in the classroom without the teacher's express permission. We ask that parents refrain from calling with messages for their children except in cases of extreme emergency. In our efforts to provide your child with the best and least interrupted education possible and to protect your child to the fullest of our

capabilities, we will not call them to the phone unless it is a real emergency situation, and the caller is a parent or guardian. We will be glad to take a message for your child. As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, positive educational benefits become available for our students. To encourage student growth, Fannin County Middle School permits students to *Bring Your Own Device* (BYOD). To that end, students are free to bring electronic devices to school as long as they are only used in classes with the teacher's permission. Only the Internet gateway provided by the school may be accessed while on campus. Personal Internet connective devices are not permitted to be used to access outside Internet sources any time. Please remember that the loss and/or theft of such items will not be investigated, nor will the school be held responsible for any devices that are lost, stolen, or damaged. Use of such devices without teacher permission shall result in the confiscation of the device in accordance with our Telephone/Electronic Device Usage policy outlined below.

Fannin County Middle School students are allowed cell phones and other electronic devices under strict provisions. For purposes of this policy, the instructional day is defined as the time students arrive on school property until the time school is officially dismissed. Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be in the **OFF** position at all times during the instructional day. Cell phones and other electronic devices must also be kept out of sight. During the instructional day, cell phones and other electronic devices may be used, with administrative permission. The use of cell phones while on school buses is strictly prohibited unless an **emergency** situation arises and students have permission from the bus driver. Any use of electronic devices during the instructional day, including lunch breaks, and change of classes, without permission of the administrative staff shall be considered a disciplinary violation and will be subject to disciplinary action which may include: temporary confiscation of the device, work detention, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, conferences with parents, or placement in Alternative School. Laser pointers, dice, cameras, cards, and similar objects are not permitted at school. These items will be considered a nuisance. The loss/theft of these items will not be investigated.

### **CAFETERIA INFORMATION**

The school provides food services for students and teachers in the cafeteria. There are three lunch periods with a third of the student body assigned to each one. Lunches may be purchased or the student may bring lunch from home, however no food is to be taken out of the lunchroom. **Lunch prices for the 2018-2019 school year are \$2.40 for middle school students.**

**Prepayment for lunches is encouraged. Students may present cash or checks to cashiers at breakfast or lunch. Please place your student's payment in an envelope with the student's name and lunch number. Parents may also pay online at**

<https://www.mynutrikids.com/Login.aspx>. To complete this process, parents will need to know the student identification for their child. It begins with 655 and contains 9 to 11 digits.

Students are allowed to charge meals. Any balance on the student's meal account at the end of the school year will remain current on a student's account until paid. The balance will carry over into the next school year. If a student moves to a new school or new grade level unpaid meal charges will remain on the students meal account.

Applications for Free or Reduced-price meals are sent home on the first day of school and as requested anytime during the school year. Please remember that if the student qualified for free or reduced meals last year, you still must complete a new application within the first 30 days of the new school year. **During the school year, if your family has a change in income or family size, you may submit a new Free or Reduced Meal Application to the office.** If you have any questions, please contact the School Nutrition Director, Candice Sisson, at Fannin County Board of Education, 706-258-2619 or Teresa Ray, Fannin County Middle School Nutrition, 706-632-6100.

## **CLUBS**

*The following clubs are active at FCMS:*

FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)	Chess Club	
FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes)	TSA (Technology Student Association)	
Reading Bowl	FFA (Future Farmers of America)	
Academic Team	Anime Club	Sign Language
Friends Club	Yearbook	Geography Club

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

## **ESSA RIGHT TO KNOW**

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

1) Whether the student's teacher:

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

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

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (“the Act”), parents and guardians have a right to:

- 1) Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or those who are emancipated, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- 2) Request the amendment of the student’s education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible student of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- 3) Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. (Optional: Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll).

### **FERPA SCHOOL DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Fannin County Middle School has designated the following information as directory information:

- (1) Student’s and Parent’s name, address, and telephone number
- (2) Student’s date and place of birth
- (3) Student’s participation in official school clubs and sports
- (4) Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team
- (5) Dates of attendance at the Fannin County School System schools
- (6) Awards received during the time enrolled in Fannin County School System

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. **Please remember that information regarding student participation in school activities, accomplishments, and awards are released to local newspapers and other agencies.** You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 10 days after the beginning of the new school year or new enrollment.

## **GIFTED**

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

## **GUIDANCE**

Students are encouraged to visit with the counselor for personal guidance and for information on grades, study help, and testing programs. A student is encouraged to visit the counselor whenever he/she needs to talk with the counselor. Students may request an appointment and will be given a specific time and a pass to leave class.

Parents, teachers, and administrators may ask the counselor to meet with a student. The counselor is available to discuss any home, school, or social concerns.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

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

## HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND

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

## IMMUNIZATION RECORDS & MEDICATION

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

All students entering a Georgia school for the first time must also present records of proper eye, ear, and dental exams from the local health department (DHR Form 3300) within 120 days of entering school.

All medications must be brought to the office of the school in the original pharmaceutical containers, clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the time of the dose. (The pharmacy will provide a small labeled container if asked.) **Medications that have not been pre-approved cannot be transported by students on the bus.**

Over the counter drugs may be administered with written parental permission. The medication must be in its original container and be marked with a note containing the child's name and instructions as to how and when the medication must be given. Medication dosage may not exceed recommended amount without a physician's order.

Should you have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call Diane Ritchie or the school nurse at the school office.

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

## INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

Under the IDEA, school districts must give parents of a child with disabilities a copy of their parental rights one time a year. Also, a copy of their rights must also be given to parents upon initial referral or parental request for an evaluation, upon filing a

request for a due process hearing, and upon request of a parent. A school district may post a copy of the procedural safeguards on its website.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

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

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

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

### **MEDIA CENTER**

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

### **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

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

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

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

### **PARENT RESOURCE CENTER**

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

## **PROGRESS REPORTS & REPORT CARDS**

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

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

### **Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)-
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility
- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of-*
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others
- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use -
  1. Protected information surveys of students
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Fannin County School District will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Fannin County School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least

annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Fannin County School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Fannin County School District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
  - Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
  - Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.
- Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*  
Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901.

### **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

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

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

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes (“marketing surveys”), and certain physical exams and screenings.

Following is a schedule of activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the upcoming school year. This list is not exhaustive, and for surveys and activities

scheduled after the school year starts, the Fannin County School District will provide parents, within a reasonable period of time prior to the administration of the surveys and activities, notification of the surveys and activities and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out, as well as an opportunity to review the surveys. (Please note that this notice and consent/opt-out transfers from parents to any student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.)

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

### **PPRA CONTINUED**

*Planned Surveys: Georgia Safe and Drug Free Schools Survey*

*Consent:* If you do not wish for your child to participate in this survey, please send a letter stating that you do not want your student to participate in the Georgia Safe and Drug Free Schools Survey with your signature and phone number by September 30, 2018.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **RETENTION AND PROMOTION**

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

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

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

## **SEMESTER EXAMS**

Final Exams are scheduled the last two days of each semester. Students may earn exemptions from final exams based on attendance and academic performance in each class. To be exempt from an exam a student may have no more than 3 absences with an A average (90 – 100), no more than 2 absences with a B average (80-89), and no more than 1 absences with a C average (70-79). Students with a semester average below 70 are required to take their semester exams regardless of attendance. Students are expected to take their required exams according to the semester exam schedule sent to parents each semester. Unexcused absences during scheduled exams will result in a final exam grade of zero. Please remember that required final exams are 10% of your student's final semester grade.

## **STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

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

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

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

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

- Skirts must have hem length no more than 4 inches above the top of the kneecap.
- Shorts must have a hem length no more than 4 inches above the top of the kneecap.
- All shorts and pants must be worn at a natural waistline and must be hemmed or cuffed.
- Excessively baggy clothes are unacceptable (pants, shirts, coats, etc.) All clothes must be sized appropriately.
- Bare midriffs or midriffs that show when arms are raised or in a bent body position are prohibited.
- Tops that leave the shoulder bare are not permitted. Sleeveless tops must have an appropriate arm opening that fits around the arm. Shoulder straps must be two inches or more in width.
- Trench coats or excessively large or baggy coats are not permitted.
- Facial piercing jewelry: earrings, studs and posts are permitted. Not permitted are hoops, rings and spikes in eyebrow, nose and lips. All jewelry must be worn appropriately.
- Hair styles, makeup, paints or clothing accessories that present a disruption to the school environment are prohibited.
- Clothing with advertisements for illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco is prohibited.
- Clothing with derogatory, terroristic, insulting, sexual, violent or insinuating messages is prohibited.
- Clothing related to gang activity is prohibited.
- Slashed clothing, clothing with holes, tights, sheer lace, cropped tops, sunglasses, hats, bandanas, or chains are not acceptable.
- Tights or leggings are prohibited unless top garment is no more than 5 inches above the kneecap.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Pajamas are not permitted.

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

## **STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL**

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

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

## **STUDENT INSURANCE**

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

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

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

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

Textbooks and lockers issued to students are the property of Fannin County Board of Education. Textbooks should be used with care and returned in good condition. Students are responsible for and must pay replacement cost for textbooks, chromebooks, and library books that are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond use. Each student is assigned a locker by his/her homeroom teacher. Students are responsible for the contents of their locker and are expected to keep it in an orderly fashion. ***School officials may inspect the contents of backpacks, lockers or other personal property at any time.*** Students may not write, mark, or use tape in or on lockers. Locks are not permitted on hall lockers. Locks for gym lockers will be provided to students.

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

## **VISITORS**

All parents and visitors must enter the school through the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass before going to any classroom. If parents would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, they should first contact the teacher by email or telephone or contact Deb Cantrell, parent involvement coordinator ([dcantrell@fannin.k12.ga.us](mailto:dcantrell@fannin.k12.ga.us)). Students are prohibited from having visitors at school.

## **504**

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

## **III. STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

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

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITY**

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

### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students are taught how to meet these expectations in various school settings. Students are rewarded with REBEL passes and teachers use a Tracking Form to communicate effectively with parents. Student Tracking Forms are located in this agenda. Positive behavior is rewarded through extended breaks and prize drawings. Parents are encouraged to check their student's Tracking Form and communicate with teachers as concerns arise.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITY**

FCSS has adopted the Mindset Program in order to facilitate insight, raise awareness, enhance skills and certify response teams in preventing and managing aggressive

behavior. FCSS uses physical restraint only in circumstances where the student is harming themselves, harming others, or there is imminent danger. If a student has to be restrained under the preceding circumstances, a written report will be given to the parent/guardian within one school day.

### **AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL**

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

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

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

1. fighting or encouraging others to fight
2. bullying others
3. possession of or evidence of use of intoxicating substances such as drugs, inhalants, or alcohol
4. possession of or use of a weapon or potentially dangerous object (“Dasani Darts” or other projectiles)
5. theft
6. horseplay or running in the hallways
7. inappropriate bodily contact or wrestling
8. embracing or kissing-physical relationships are limited to hand holding outside the building
9. profanity
10. obscene language or gestures
11. cheating
12. trading, buying or selling of any item
13. cutting class
14. leaving class, school or area without permission
15. unexcused tardiness to class
16. forged note in any form
17. any form of disruptive behavior
18. physical or verbal abuse, or any form of disrespect toward a school employee
19. verbal abuse or threats to impose physical harm to any student, school personnel or visitor
20. insubordination: unwilling to submit to authority

21. damaging, defacing, or destroying property
22. sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct
23. refusal to accept discipline
24. remaining after school without authorization
25. other infractions that may interfere with the learning environment of the school or the safety of others

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **BULLYING**

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

Any student, parent, guardian, or school employee is encouraged to report or otherwise provide information, either anonymously or in the person's name, concerning bullying activity. Any report will be appropriately investigated by the

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

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

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

## **BUS BEHAVIOR**

During transportation to and from school, it is the responsibility of each student to conduct him or herself in a manner which shows respect for the safety of themselves as well as others. Bus transportation is a privilege extended to FCMS students. All students who ride FCSS buses do so under the authority of their bus driver. Students may be removed from FCSS buses at any time for disruptive and/or unsatisfactory conduct.

Students who wish to ride a bus other than the one to which they are assigned must have written permission from their parent/guardian. This note must be stamped in the FCMS office ***prior to*** 1:00 p.m.

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

1. Comply with the Student Code of Conduct, including the guidelines for student behavior in this Handbook.
2. Help keep the bus clean.
3. Behave in a courteous manner.
4. Cooperate with the bus driver.

5. Stay seated.
6. Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus.
7. Sit in assigned seat if directed to do so by the driver.
8. Refrain from inappropriately touching other students or acts of violence or harm to others.
9. Refrain from throwing anything. (Automatic 3 Day Suspension for 1<sup>st</sup> Offense)
10. Keep all personal items out of the aisle.

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

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

1st Offense: Administrative conference with student, with possibility of additional consequences.

2nd Offense: 1-3 day bus suspension, with possibility of additional consequences.

3rd Offense: 3-5 day bus suspension, with possibility of additional consequences.

4th Offense: 5-10 day bus suspension, with possibility of additional consequences.

5th Offense: 30 day bus suspension, with the possibility of referral to Disciplinary Tribunal.

6<sup>th</sup> Offense: Suspension from riding any FCSS bus for the remainder of the academic year, referral to Disciplinary Tribunal.

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