

# Pulaski Middle School

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This student handbook belongs to:

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**Parents:** Please review this handbook with your child and sign that you have done so. Should you have questions regarding school policies or rules, please call your child's teacher or the principal's office. Thank you.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **W**elcome

This handbook has been prepared for parents and students to provide a general understanding of the expectations at your middle school. We believe each child is a very important person in our school. In a structured environment, students are provided experiences that help them develop academic and social skills, as well as establish a set of values.

The faculty and staff are willing to work with you in any way to make the middle school years interesting, productive, and personally rewarding.

## **Course of Study**

Five classes are required which include language arts/reading, social studies, science, mathematics, and physical education. Additional classes include band, choir, family and consumer science, technology education, informational technology, art, and music.



The physical education program in the middle school offers a variety of team and individual activities providing children with the opportunity to improve their levels of health and fitness. Each student is expected to dress in appropriate gym clothing and follow established safety procedures in all activities.

Successful student progress in physical education is based on cooperation, participation, and effort.

## **Student Activities and Clubs**

Students and faculty sponsors, upon securing the approval of the principal, may organize worthwhile clubs and activities. Students are not to leave a regularly scheduled class for any activity or program unless the activity or program has been approved and announced by the principal's office.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

During the school year a number of extracurricular activities are provided for middle school students. These activities may include athletics, after-school clubs, academic competitions, Lego League, drama, and concerts. Students and their parents are encouraged to be alert to other opportunities throughout the school year. Students are encouraged to try out and to participate as often as possible.

## **Library**

Students are expected to use the library and it's many services. A variety of books, magazines, newspapers, and audio-visual materials are available in the library. Students may use the library briefly before class each morning and after class each day until 3:30 p.m.

All students may use the library as part of their classes. Books may be checked out for a two-week period and are expected to be promptly returned to the library. Students will be required to pay for any materials that are lost or damaged.

## **Guidance**

The guidance department of the middle school has been created for the purpose of giving assistance to the students of the school. The primary goal of guidance is to help students understand their developmental progress while in middle school.

Students are encouraged to use the guidance services which include individual and group counseling. Any student is welcome in the guidance office; however, before students come to the guidance office, they should get permission from their teacher.

Parents may contact the guidance counselors by calling the school and asking for the guidance office.

Students participate in the classroom guidance program that consists of group activities directed by a guidance counselor. The purpose of the varied activities is to promote positive self-concepts for the students.

Remember, guidance services have been created for the benefit of students. Students are encouraged to use the services provided by the counselors.

## **Athletics**

Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of athletic activities. A VHSL physical examination is required for participation in interscholastic sports. Certain academic criteria are required to remain eligible for sports. Please see page 11 of the student handbook for details concerning the academic components of athletic eligibility. Students who participate in sports are subject to random drug testing. During each sports season, parent information meetings about the drug-testing policy and concussions are conducted. At these meetings, the drug-testing policy will be explained in detail and copies of the policy will be provided to parents.

## **Sportsmanship**

The school's reputation depends on proper conduct of our entire student body. Students should strive to be good citizens and display good sportsmanship both inside and outside our school building. Loyal students support their school and do their best to keep their scholastic and activity standards at the highest possible level. Coaches may remove students from individual games/events or the team for disciplinary infractions.

## **Visitors in School**

All visitors are required to show a photo ID before entering the building.

The middle school does not write individual passes for visitors from other schools. Students are asked to explain this policy to guests in their homes and others to avoid embarrassment to their friends and themselves when the school must refuse to allow student visitors to remain on school property.

Parents of middle school students are welcome to visit our school and may attend classes with their child. Parents may pre-arrange their visit by contacting the school office.

## **Student Behavior**

It is the responsibility of each student to conduct him/herself in such a manner as to promote the safety and well being of him/herself and others.

Examples of unacceptable behavior are theft, physical assault, bullying, etc. Any criminal activity will result in suspension and will be reported to proper authorities.

Bullying involves physical and emotional behaviors that are intentional, controlling, or hurtful, thus creating a climate of harassment and fear. It may be considered a form of abuse (i.e. peer abuse). Research confirms that a strong, proactive stance is the best means to address bullying in school settings. Consequences for middle school students who bully others are as follows:

### **A. First Offense of Bullying Behavior Reported**

1. Contact parent and make them aware of the seriousness of the situation
2. Conference with a counselor to discuss the situation and consequences
3. Document in student discipline record as a warning for bullying behavior

### **B. Second Offense of Bullying Behavior Reported**

1. One to three days SRC
2. Parent contact
3. Document in student discipline record a second offense has occurred
4. Initiate a contract of agreement to stop the behavior (counselor will be involved)

### **C. Third Offense of Bullying Behavior Reported**

1. Three to ten days out of school suspension (depending on offense)
2. Document in student discipline record a third offense has occurred
3. Parent contact

#### D. Fourth Offense of Bullying Behavior Reported

1. Recommended long term suspension
2. Consider placement in an Alternative Education Program

The school's interest in student conduct extends to cover all school-sponsored events including sports events and activities at other schools. The school may take disciplinary action regardless of whether the student is a participant or a spectator at these events.

**Any student who fails to cooperate with school authorities, fails to comply with their directions, or knowingly withholds information that leads to endangering the safety and welfare of other students is subject to suspension from school. Any disruption of the learning environment may lead to suspension from school. A student who intentionally damages school materials or property will be required to pay restitution.**

Students who display appropriate behavior may be afforded the privilege of outside field trips or other activities. Students who are given ISS or OSS may be excluded from after-school activities such as sock hops or outside field trips. The team teachers, along with administration, will assess student behavior to determine if any student has not earned these privileges. Parents will be notified in a timely manner if their child has lost the privilege of going on an outside field trip. Truancy issues will also affect the privilege of taking an outside field trip. All students who participate in school-sponsored field trips must have a health form on file with the school nurse.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is a most important factor in the establishment of a good scholastic record. Work missed through absence from school is difficult to make up. There is no substitute for the actual participation in daily classroom discussion and instruction. Students who are not in regular attendance will be referred to the proper authorities in accordance with the Virginia Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Parents are expected to notify the school at any time the child has to be absent.

When a student is absent from class, the grade of a zero will be recorded by the teacher. When the work is made up, the grade earned on the make-up assignment will be recorded. Work that is missed must be made up within five days after the student returns to school. Previously assigned work or tests are due the day a student returns to school. In instances where students have been absent for several days, teachers may use their judgment in extending the five day limit. If missed work is not made up, the zero grade will be averaged with other grades for the grading period. Therefore, absences and failure to make up the work can very quickly result in failing grades.

*Pulaski County policies regarding attendance, grading, and retention are available upon request.*

## Proper Student Dress

The middle school has among its primary objectives the development of an instructional program and environment which will foster positive attitudes. The appearance of an individual often reflects that individual's feeling of personal worth; therefore, the improvement of personal appearance should be encouraged in the school environment.

Insistence on wearing extreme dress that distracts from or disrupts the learning environment, or wearing clothing that endangers the health or safety of a student, will not be permitted.

1. All clothing must fit securely enough to be to be non-revealing; that is enough to protect the modesty of the wearer when the wearer is engaged in any activity one might reasonably be expected to engage in while at school or when participating in school activities. This includes, but is not limited to, excessively low-cut shirts and/or blouses; inappropriately short dresses, skirts or shorts; torn or shredded clothing, clothing that bares the shoulders, back, or midriff; beachwear and clothing that permits a view of undergarments at any time.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times while at school or participating in school activities unless the nature of the activity otherwise specifically supports going shoeless, such as swimming, etc. Bare feet are not permitted.
3. For prescribed activities such as Physical Education classes, athletics, certain field trips, etc., teachers and administrators may require specific styles of dress and/or footwear, including (but not limited to) designated uniform dress that is generally deemed appropriate for the activity. Students and parents will be informed of such activities' requirements for dress and footwear well in advance of the activity.

- Failure to comply will result in exclusion from the activity with all applicable penalties for non-participation, if any, applied to the student.
4. No (footwear) spikes, spurs, cleats, wheels, or other sole protrusions may be worn inside school buildings at any time.
  5. Pants must be worn secured at the waist at all times.
  6. Pant-leg hems must be above the sole of the shoe; no tread-upon hems are allowed.
  7. No clothing made from spandex or similar skintight material may be worn as outerwear.
  8. Clothing made from see-through fabric may only be worn as accessories over non-see-through appropriate outerwear.
  9. All clothing, particularly pants and shorts, must be worn with all closures closed and secured (including buttons, fly zippers, back zippers, etc.).
  10. No head coverings, hats, heavy coats, or sunglasses may be worn indoors. These items should be placed in lockers or in the homeroom class upon arrival at school. Deliberate violation of this policy may result in confiscation of these items and their return only to parents.
  11. No clothing, jewelry, or other accessories may be worn or displayed in any fashion which contains or is imprinted with lettering, slogans, signs, symbols, advertisements, logos, or artistic depictions of any of the following:
    - a. any controlled substance legally unavailable for sale to minors including, but not limited to, tobacco, products, alcoholic beverages, or illegal drugs;
    - b. vulgarity, obscenity, profanity, pornography, or sexually explicit or suggestive subject matter, including “double entendre” wordplay;
    - c. items which represent offensive affronts to any segment of the school population on the grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, handicapping condition, or national or geographic origin or residence;
    - d. weapons or violence.
  12. No gang-related insignia or style of dress is permitted at any time.
  13. Spaghetti straps and tank tops are not permitted in middle school or high school grades.
  14. No clothing deemed by administrators to be a disruption of the educational environment is permitted to be worn at school.

*Rule of thumb: If you are not sure whether it's appropriate to wear or not, it probably isn't. Choose something else!*

## Tobacco Policy

Tobacco in any form may not be used by anyone while on school property, at bus stops or on buses. Violation of the Tobacco Policy may result in suspension from school.



## Hallways

Students are to display courtesy and patience when hallways and stairs become crowded during class changes. Students are to walk, not run, on the right side in halls and on stairways. Students in the hall during class time are responsible for obtaining a signed hall pass from their assigned teacher before entering the hall.

## Telephones/Cell Phones

Students are only permitted to use school telephones with the permission of a teacher, administrator, counselor, nurse, or office staff. The use of these phones is restricted to emergency situations and other needs as deemed necessary by administration.

Students may possess wireless communication devices at school. The device will remain off and out of sight while students are on school buses. The use of these devices is restricted to approved, educationally appropriate use during school hours. Personal use of these devices is not allowed between 8:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. (Continued on the next page).

Students who are making personal use of these devices during class time are in violation of the policy and will face the following consequences:

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense** – The device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day.  
**Additional Offenses** – A parent or guardian will be notified of inappropriate use of wireless communications devices. The device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. The student will receive ASD or SRC for inappropriate use of their cell phone during school hours. A parent conference may be requested by the administration.

Students who become excessively abusive of cell phone privileges are reminded:

**If a student possesses or uses such a device other than as permitted in this policy, in addition to other disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed, the device may be confiscated from the student by the administration and returned only to the student's parent.**



## Personal Property

Students are not to bring headphones, iPods, CD players, video games, or other valuable electronic equipment to school. Using electronic equipment during school will result in the same consequences as using a cell phone. **The school will not be responsible for retrieving lost or stolen property of this nature.**

The wearing of expensive jewelry is not advised for the school setting.

Wearing any type of jewelry is inappropriate in physical education and technology education classes.

For safety and security reasons, bags of any kind (backpacks, purses, string bags) are ***NOT*** allowed to be carried throughout the school day. These should be placed in your locker at first bell and taken out only at the end of the day.

## Tardiness

The school day begins promptly at **8:25 am**. Students are **expected** to be in the classroom and ready to begin work by that time. If students are tardy to school they must report to the office to sign in before reporting to class. Parents are responsible for calling or sending a note of explanation for the student's tardiness. **Excessive tardiness may result in loss of locker privileges which means students will be required to carry all materials.**

## Suspension from School

When a student ceases to be amenable to the efforts to secure good conduct, and his/her behavior is detrimental to good order, he/she may be excluded from school and his/her return made contingent on his/her parent or guardian having a conference with the principal. If satisfactory adjustments can be mutually established among parent or guardian, student, and principal, the student may return to school at the discretion of the principal. In all cases of suspension, parents or guardians shall be notified immediately. The following procedure will be implemented when suspension is requested:

1. A conference will be held with the student and administrator.
2. The parent will be contacted as soon as possible.
3. A letter detailing specific dates of the suspension will be sent to the parent as soon as possible.

## Expulsion from School

In cases of gross and continued misconduct, and in cases in which the general welfare of the school is seriously affected, and after reasonable means have been exhausted to make satisfactory adjustments, a principal may recommend a long-term suspension or a permanent expulsion of a student from school. Such a recommendation shall be transmitted for action to the superintendent via an administrative disciplinary hearing with the superintendent's designee. If the superintendent concurs, the matter then proceeds to the school board for consideration. Parents and students are advised of appeal procedures for the principal's and superintendent's decisions in letters.

## Distribution, Possession and/or Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs

Any student possessing, distributing, consuming or under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances while on any school property, or while involved in any school related activity, shall be immediately suspended from school, will be reported to law enforcement officials and shall be recommended to the School Board for a long-term suspension hearing. This also includes possessing drug paraphernalia. It is the general philosophy that possession, use, or distribution of drugs and/or alcohol are never acceptable in the school environment and that a violator of this policy may forfeit the right to an education.

## Definitions

The term drugs, or controlled substances, shall include alcohol, anabolic steroids, marijuana, imitation drugs known as look-alikes, and all illegal drugs, intoxicants, inhalants, and any other drug, prescription medication, or over the counter medication not being taken for legitimate purposes.

Possession, distribution, or use of imitation controlled substances, or look-alike substances which by dosage, unit or appearance, including color, shape, size and markings, (or by representations made) which would lead a reasonable person to believe that the substance is a controlled substance, is included in this policy.

Drug paraphernalia shall include all equipment, products and materials of any kind, and the constituent parts thereof that either are designed for use and intended by the student for use in packaging, storing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing into the body marijuana or any other controlled substance.

## Weapons in School

Possession or use of a weapon in a school building or on School Board property is prohibited. A student found to be in possession of a weapon on school premises before, during, or after school, or at any school sponsored activity will be subject to administrative and/or legal action. This will include immediate suspension from school, with a recommendation to the School Board for expulsion. The violation will also be reported to law enforcement officials.

This policy establishes a mandatory one-year expulsion policy for students who bring weapons to school. "One-year" is defined as 365 calendar days.

Any object which could be used to injure or intimidate another person may be considered as a weapon for purposes of this policy. Weapons are identified in the following categories:

1. Articles used or designed to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate other persons. These include but are not limited to: firearms of all types whether loaded or unloaded, laser pointers, starter guns, projectile devices, knives of all types, throwing stars, knuckles, blackjacks, chuck sticks, lead pipes, darts, chains, etc.
2. Articles designed for other purposes but which could easily be used as a weapon to inflict bodily harm and or intimidate other persons. These include but are not limited to: unauthorized tools, belts, pencils, files, compasses, scissors, chains of any kind, or studded bracelets and accessories.
3. Articles or devices designed for destructive purposes such as explosives, incendiary materials, bombs, chemicals or poison gas, grenades, fireworks, stink bombs, etc.
4. Look-alike articles or devices that by appearance or representation might lead a reasonable person to believe that they are weapons capable of inflicting bodily harm and/or intimidating other persons are included in this policy. Look-alike weapons are not to be confused with obvious toys or trinkets that are not representative of weapons and/or used in an intimidating manner.

## Report Cards and Grading Procedures

Grades will be sent home at the end of each nine-week instructional period. Parents are requested to sign the report card envelope after reviewing their child's progress and return it to the homeroom teacher. Midterm progress reports are sent home to parents between each grading period. Parents will be contacted by the school at the end of the semester and/or at the end of the third nine-week period in cases where a student is in danger of retention or may be required to attend summer school. A conference between parents and teachers will be scheduled when a student's work is unsatisfactory and retention is being considered. Parents are encouraged to attend the parent-teacher conferences.



Students will be given the letter grades *A, B, C, D, F* in academic areas. Citizenship and work/study habits will be appropriately marked on report cards. The following numerical scale is to be used if grades are being averaged on daily assignments and tests: 90-100 *A*; 80-89 *B*; 70-79 *C*; 60-69 *D*; 0-59 *F*.

## Recognition for Academic Achievement



The middle school encourages every student to set high personal goals in school and to direct his/her efforts toward achieving those goals.

Academic achievement is recognized in several ways. Students who have excelled in their work, participated in projects, or entered contests are recognized in team meetings and assemblies.

Middle school students may be eligible for the Presidential Educational Excellence Award at the end of the eighth grade.

## School Expenses

A separate letter will be provided to each student explaining school expenses. Textbooks are loaned to students free of charge but library books or textbooks that are lost or damaged must be paid for by the student.

Gym uniforms must be purchased for students in grades six through eight. The exploratory classes may charge a small fee to pay for project material. These fees will be determined by the teacher.

School pictures will be taken in the fall and spring. Information regarding these pictures will be sent home prior to the photos being taken. Fall pictures will be featured in the school yearbook. Students may purchase a school yearbook in the spring.

## Cafeteria

Breakfast and lunch will be served in the cafeteria each day at a reasonable cost. Information concerning the cafeteria program will be sent home to parents during the first week of school. Milk is available for those students who bring their lunches from home. Extra milk may be purchased by students. Our computerized accounting system allows parents to pay for meals in advance. Since students have individual accounts, parents may send checks or cash to the school on Mondays to pay for lunches or breakfast on a weekly or monthly basis.

**It is the student and parent's responsibility to monitor the balance of the account. Students are told verbally when the account is running low and will be offered an alternative if they do not have money on the account at all.**

**Because the intent of the cafeteria program is to promote nutritious meals, soft drinks and fast food are not permitted at school.**

## School Store

The school store will be open each morning from 8:10 to 8:25 for students to purchase school supplies.

## Illness

An attempt will be made to contact parents of a student who becomes ill to determine if the student should check out of school or stay for the remainder of the day.

## Medication Policy

In the event that a student must receive medication during the school day, parents are required to personally deliver the medication to the school along with a doctor request. **Under no circumstances are students to bring medication to school.**

Parents should bring the medication to the school nurse or the main office. The school will ask the parent to complete a medication request form provided by the office.

The school's position is that any medication to be taken during school hours must be specifically prescribed by a physician.

## Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are held periodically during the school year. Each student will be informed of the proper exit procedures by his/her teacher.

***Some rules which will be of assistance for quick and orderly exit are:***

1. Leave all books, materials, and supplies on your desk.
2. Line up as quietly and quickly as possible.
3. Walk rapidly but do not run or push.
4. Follow all directions given by your teacher.
5. Stay in line outside the building in order that your teacher may check the roll.
6. Students should always return to the class they were attending prior to the drill signal.

## Leaving School Grounds

In order for a student to ride a different bus to go home with another student, notes from parents of both children must be approved by the principal's office. **Any changes in transportation arrangements or other messages must be called into the school before 2:00 p.m. to ensure that the message can be delivered before the end of the school day.**

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during normal operating hours unless expressed parental permission is secured by the school. Any student who must leave the school grounds because of illness or other emergency must be signed out through the office.

It is essential that each student be accounted for at all times during the school day. Any student leaving school property without permission of school authorities or without proper sign-out procedures may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Transportation--buses

Proper behavior on school buses is an essential safety factor.

Guidelines relative to bus safety are to be provided to each student in the middle school. Students should recognize that riding the bus is a privilege which can be suspended when the privilege is abused.

Those students who ride a bus to school are expected to return home in the afternoon on the same bus. Written parental permission is necessary to excuse a student from this requirement.

Students arriving at school before class begins will report to the designated bus wait area.

Students who walk will be allowed to leave class at the third dismissal bell. Car riders are dismissed on the second bell.

## Disclosure of Information

Student information will be released in accordance with Pulaski County Public Schools' Student Records policy. Generally speaking, the release of any information other than basic directory information requires written authorization by a parent or guardian.

## Home/School Communications

The Pulaski County School Board places emphasis upon open communication between the home and the school. Parents and guardians of school age children are informed of their legal rights and safeguards that are in effect to protect their children as mandated by state and federal regulations. Parents who have concerns are directed to contact the teacher and/or the school administration relative to resolution of the problem. If satisfactory resolution is not achieved at the school level, parents have access to the superintendent, the School Board, and a full procedural review.

## Selling in School

Students are not permitted to sell or trade any items while on school property or buses.



## Lockers

Lockers are provided to store bags, backpacks, purses and any other items belonging to students. Bags are not to be taken into classrooms due to space and safety reasons. Lockers lose their usefulness if the locker combinations are given to other students. **Students are advised not to share combinations with anyone because they will not be changed during the school year.** Personal locks are not permitted.

Lockers are to be kept clean and neat. Students should not tape anything to the inside or outside of lockers. The school administration reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Problems with lockers should be reported immediately to a teacher. **Excessive tardiness or leaving lockers "set" may result in loss of locker privileges which means students will be required to carry all materials.**

## Lost and Found

Students who have lost articles of clothing are asked to check the lost and found rack located in the auditorium. Since articles cannot be kept in lost and found indefinitely, students are expected to claim them as quickly as possible. Students are asked to label all items that may be misplaced.

Our experience has been that many students never check for lost articles. Since many items are turned in a few days after being lost, students should check in the office or in lost and found several times. Anyone finding items should turn them in promptly.

Lost items such as jewelry, radios, and music devices are kept in the office until claimed. The school accepts no responsibility for loss or theft of these valuable items and suggests students not bring them to school.

## Inclement Weather

When weather conditions exist that would make it hazardous for students to get to school safely, students and parents should listen to local radio and television stations for notification of school closing. Please do not call the school office or school personnel for school closing information.

Parents are asked to inform students as to proper procedures to follow in case school is dismissed early because of inclement weather conditions. This will help keep our telephone lines open in case of emergencies.

Students should anticipate resuming class work that was in progress, assigned, or announced by the teacher upon returning to school after class time has been missed because of weather conditions.

## Computer Policies

Students and parents must sign the **Acceptable Computer Use Policy** before being issued a network account. When a student accesses computers, computer systems, and computer networks owned or operated by the Pulaski County School system, he or she assumes certain responsibilities and obligations. All access of this type is subject to school policies and to local, state, and federal laws. The school division expects that student use of computers provided by the school will be ethical and will reflect academic honesty. Students must demonstrate respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, system security mechanisms, and rights to privacy.

Computer use is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action and/or cancellation of the privilege.

## Athletic Eligibility (Academic components)

1. Students' eligibility will be based on the VHSL guidelines. Entering seventh and eighth grade students' fall and winter eligibility will be based on their prior year's final grades. The requirement will be passing four of the five courses. All students' spring eligibility will be based on their first semester grades for the current year. The requirement will be passing four of five courses. Entering sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) grade students will automatically be eligible for fall and winter athletics.
2. To be eligible for middle school athletics the student must be a student in good standing with administration.