

Shawsville Middle School

Student and Family Handbook 2025-2026



Home of the Mustangs

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Additional revisions may take place throughout the summer, prior to the first day of school.

2025-2026 SMS Parent-Student Handbook

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year!

I want to start by saying how excited I am to have the opportunity to be entering into my fourth year as the principal at Shawsville Middle School. I am also excited that I am working with my assistant principal, Mr. Derek Hairston for the third year. The entire office staff has worked extremely hard to make this year spectacular.

We also have three new teachers. Mrs. Joy Brown is our new reading specialist. Mr. Allen Childress is our new Health/Physical Education Teacher. Mrs. Sherilynn Newton is our new Math Instructional Coach. Mr. Joseph Ballard is our new General Music teacher. This year we plan to continue building on the student academic gains made in recent years. We are confident that this year will be a year of tremendous growth for our students and our school. We look forward to working with families as we take on this challenge.

I hope that you are recharged and ready for another exciting year in the classroom to learn about new content. We believe that all students can learn to become prepared for life after school by incorporating the 5 C's in education - critical thinking, communication, creativity, citizenship, and collaboration within the context of English reading and writing, mathematics, science, history, physical education, career and technical education training, and the fine and performing arts.

Good luck this year and GO MUSTANGS!

Mr. Keith

Contacting Shawsville Middle School

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Assistant Principal	Mr. Derek J. Hairston	Attendance/Guidance	Mrs. Chelsey Wooten
Counselor	Ms. CJ Kostenblatt	Bookkeeper	Ms. Trish Newby
Nurse	Mrs. Sally Howard	Cafeteria Manager	Mrs. Penny Davis
School Resource Officer	Deputy Ryan Zikes		

Attendance:	extension 1
Main Office:	extension 2
School Nurse:	extension 3

Cafeteria:	extension 4
Boys and Girls Club:	extension 5
Principal:	extension 6

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ATTENDANCE

1. Getting to School: Students can walk, ride in a car or take the bus. Please be here no earlier than 7:35 and no later than 8:00. 1st period begins at 8:05 and starts after the morning announcements.

2. Car Riders: For safety's sake, please drop off and pick up your student in the front of the school. Students will enter the building at the front door (Door #1). The bus loading/unloading area is located in the parking lot area. Students will enter the school from buses at the Cafeteria entrance (Door #17).

3. Bus Riders: The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus and its occupants at all times. RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS IS A PRIVILEGE, AND STUDENTS SHOULD FOLLOW THE BUS DRIVER'S RULES AT ALL TIMES.

4. Arrive on time:

- a. The doors open at 7:35. Students arriving before 7:55 should go to and remain in the cafeteria/gym. Breakfast is served from 7:45 until 8:00.
- b. First Period begins following the morning announcements. At 8:05, morning announcements will begin. This includes the Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence, daily lunch menu and school announcements. Instruction begins immediately after announcements. The chart below outlines the daily schedule of classes.

5. Bell Schedule - All 2024-2025 Bell Schedules are linked below

2025-2026 SMS Bell Schedules (30 ...

6. Attendance Incentive Program

Individual Awards

SMS wants to recognize students with perfect, excellent, and improved attendance.

- Excellent attendance means 95 - 99% attendance.
- Improved attendance means that a student's attendance Improved was a 10% improvement from 1st semester to 2nd.

Monthly

At the end of each month, students with perfect, excellent, or improved attendance will be given the opportunity to choose an award. Some examples of awards are:

- Listen to music during lunch
- Eat lunch outside

Awards cannot be redeemed without being given to the teacher. Some awards will require permission before use.

Quarterly

At the end of each quarter, students with excellent and perfect attendance will be entered into a

drawing for prizes.

End of the School Year Recognition

At the end of the school year, students with Perfect and Excellent attendance will be recognized with a certificate of attendance.

Grade Level Awards

Each quarter the grade level with the best attendance will be rewarded.

7. What to do if you miss a day of school?: If a parent/guardian keeps their student home for sickness or takes them to the doctor, they should call the school at 268-2262 extension 1 to report the absence. Parents must write a note when their student returns to document the absence. Notes should be given to the first period teacher upon the student's return to school. The First period teacher will bring them to the office. Absence notes need to be verified through a doctor, dentist, court, outside counselor or similar practitioner to be accepted as documented absences. Students should request their make-up work from each teacher. Students may not miss more than 7 days per year (*See MCPS Policy 7-2.3*).

8. Checking In: Students not in 1st period by 8:05 must check in through the office and bring a note from their parent or guardian stating the reason for their tardiness. The student will receive an admit slip before reporting to class.

9. Checking Out: Students may not leave school grounds without permission from their parent/guardian/person listed as an emergency contact. To check out, use the following procedure:

- a. The adult must come into the office and request that their student check out. The student will be called and instructed to report to the office to check out.
- b. Students should not come to the office to wait to be checked out.
- c. Students are not allowed to wait outside or meet anyone outside.

10. Getting to Class on Time:

- a. Getting to class on time means that the student:
 - i. is in their seat when the bell rings.
 - ii. has their supplies and materials.
 - iii. is focused and ready to learn.
- b. Any student not meeting these criteria will be considered tardy.
- c. Multiple tardies will result in consequences (silent lunch, after school detention, ISS)

11. Hall Passes (E-Hall Pass): Students must have an e-hall pass to be in the hall when classes are in session. Students should not interrupt instruction to ask for a pass for permission to go to the restroom, counselor, locker, office, etc. Teachers are not permitted to allow students to leave class without a pass.

12. End of the Day:

- a. Students are dismissed at 2:50. First load buses leave by 2:55. Second load bus students will remain in the classroom with their 7th period teacher and will be dismissed by announcement for dismissal. Second load buses leave at 3:00.
- b. Car riders report to the front of the building (Old Town Road side). Students should use the

- exit nearest room 100 to exit to the car rider pick up line.
- c. Students in after school activities report to appropriate areas immediately.
 - d. What if.....
 - i. a student wants to go home with someone else? They should bring a note from their parents to the main office in the morning. The note should tell the name of the person they are going home with, what bus he/she rides, and their parents' phone number. The school will call the parent to verify the note. When we have verified a note, we will bring the student a bus note with the appropriate signature. The student then gives that note to the bus driver.
 - ii. a student needs to stay after school? They can stay if they meet **ALL** of the following criteria:
 - * Their parents have given them permission.
 - * They have a school activity that begins immediately after school. (They cannot hang around until their activity starts unless the teacher who sponsors the activity will be with them.)
 - * The teacher in charge of the activity has given them permission.
 - * They have **NOT** been in ISS or on OSS that day.
 - * They have been present at school for at least half of the day.
 - * They follow all rules while they are here.

13. School Closings, Delayed Openings & Early Releases: Inclement weather or other emergencies may necessitate a delay in the opening of school, the release of students from school early, or the closing of schools for one or more days. The division superintendent makes such decisions and they typically apply to all schools in the county. Area radio and television stations are notified immediately and will make frequent announcements and updates regarding this decision. You also may call 382-5102 to hear a recorded message from MCPS on school closings and delays. Unless an official announcement is made to the contrary, schools will operate on a regular schedule and according to the MCPS calendar. Parents should regularly view the MCPS Facebook page or follow MCPS on Twitter for immediate notifications. Parents should have a plan in place for inclement weather days, potential late starts, early releases and closed school days.

SMS CAFETERIA

14. Breakfast and Lunch: The cafeteria is open to all students for breakfast and lunch. All students can apply for free or reduced priced menu meals. Also, you may pack your lunch. A la carte items are also available, but are not included in free or reduced meal prices. Parents and family members who are on a student's contact list are welcome to eat school lunch with students for the adult price. They may not bring in food from other vendors. They must receive a visitors' pass from the office. Breakfast is served between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Second Chance Breakfast is available between 1st and 2nd block classes.

15. Lunch Periods

6th grade lunch is 10:39 - 11:03

7th grade lunch is 11:27 - 11:51

8th grade lunch is 12:15 - 12:39

16. Cafeteria Prices -

All meals will be free during the 2025-2026 school year at Shawsville Middle School.

17. Cafeteria Accounts for A La Carte items: To keep track of student lunch money, all SMS students have an account on the cafeteria computer system. Parents may send cash or checks to deposit money to these accounts. Students should take checks to the cafeteria when they arrive at school so it can be entered into their account. Once the money is in the account, students cannot take it out. Parents may request a summary of their child's account if they want to check on what their child is eating or spending at school.

The School Nutrition Program Office offers to parents a secure, online payment vendor, mySchoolBucks, to add to a student's lunch account from home. The training website with instructions on how to use the program is <http://educate.myschoolbucks.com>. The web address for parents to use to set up the account for their students is <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>. If they need any assistance they can call mySchoolBucks online support at 855-832-5226.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

19. Description: At SMS, all staff members are focused on doing all that we can to ensure that every single student has every opportunity to learn. Our mission as a middle school is to offer learning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate for the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social needs of early adolescent students. Because of the great diversity among children at this level, emphasis is placed upon instruction that allows each student to develop according to his/her own potential.

The SMS curriculum is designed to stimulate the academic achievement of all students, challenging each student to explore and develop his/her individual abilities and talents. In addition to the various academic disciplines, students are provided with a balanced program of enrichment experiences and service opportunities with emphasis on personal growth, development of values and responsibility, exploration of career possibilities, and opportunities to pursue special interests. Therefore, the school program is organized to include a core block of time for academic subjects as well as time for exploratory courses, fine arts, related arts, physical education, and health.

Instructional practices at the middle school level are student-centered. Teachers have adopted practices that consider the developmental nature of the children and guide students toward a desirable level of responsibility. At each grade level, students are assigned to a “team” of teachers for their core academic subjects. Each grade level team has one Math, Science, English and Social Studies teacher. Teams provide a “family” learning environment for students. Team teachers work together to provide consistency and unity to the students assigned to them. Teaming encourages good relationships between teachers and students, and enhances teacher effectiveness at helping students be successful. Teaming in this way also facilitates collaboration, interdisciplinary cooperation, closer monitoring of student behavior, and more efficient communication with parents/guardians.

20. Courses: Students must take classes in English, Social Studies, Math and Science every year. These are called “core” academic classes. The state of Virginia has set Standards of Learning (SOLs) for each of these classes. The chart below shows the courses offered at each grade level at SMS.

MCPS has a unified Middle School Program of Studies. This document describes the total curricular program for middle school students, including required core academic courses and the multitude of elective options with designations which courses are available in each middle school. The Middle School Program of Studies can be found on the MCPS division webpage at the following link address:

http://www.mcps.org/departments/curriculum_pages/m_c_p_s_middle_school_program_of_studies

Parents may elect to enroll their child in a virtual education program. Students remain members of the student body, but will complete their courses in an online format. Parents should contact the school counselor for more information about the virtual education program.

A summary of required and elective course options are noted on the chart below:

Sixth Grade Classes	Seventh Grade Classes	Eighth Grade Classes
English/Language Arts 6	English 7	English 8
U. S. History to 1865	U.S. History from 1865 to present	Civics and Economics
Science 6 or Advanced Science 6	Science 7 or Advanced Science 7	Earth Science or Environmental Science
Math 6 or Advanced Math 6	Math 7 or Advanced Math 7 or Algebra I	Math 8 or Algebra I or Geometry
Health and Physical Education 6	Health and Physical Education 7	Health and Physical Education 8
Beginning Band 6	Intermediate Band 7	Advanced Band 8
Agriscience, Robotics, Tech Ed, Art, Career Investigations, Digital Technology Foundations, or the Grade 6 elective wheel	Agriscience, Inventions and Innovations, Introduction to Technology, Robotics, Family Consumer Science, General Music, Art, Theater Arts, Introduction to Coding, Make It Your Business, or General Music.	Inventions and Innovations, Introduction to Technology, Robotics, Family Consumer Science, General Music, Art, Theater Arts, Introduction to Coding, Make It Your Business, Agriscience, Agriscience and Technology, Spanish I, or General Music.
Reading Intervention or Math Intervention is provided to students who have a demonstrated need for additional support in reading, writing or math instruction.	Reading Intervention or Math Intervention is provided to students who have a demonstrated need for additional support in reading, writing or math instruction.	Reading Intervention or Math Intervention is provided to students who have a demonstrated need for additional support in reading, writing or math instruction.

Health and Physical Education (HPE)

All students in grades 6-8 are required to participate in health and physical education (HPE) unless excused by the principal. A signed statement from a physician must be filed in the principal's office stating the reason why a student is unable to participate in physical education and how long the student will be exempt.

Dressing-out and active participation are essential for physical development and success in the PE program. If a student is unable to participate in PE because of illness or injury, a note from his/her parent/guardian is required to excuse the student, and will be accepted for up to three (3) days per 9 weeks. A note from a physician is required if more than three days will be missed.

All PE students will be required to dress in appropriate PE attire. Students who fail to dress appropriately for PE may still be required to participate in physical activity that can be done in the clothing they are wearing and/or to complete alternative written assignments. Failure to dress appropriately for PE class repeatedly will result in a lowering of the grade and disciplinary action. Students are not required to purchase or wear a specific school PE uniform. Instead, students will be required to wear some type of athletic shorts or sweatpants, a t-shirt, athletic socks, and athletic shoes while participating in PE activities. Shorts must not be cut-offs and they must not have any buttons, zippers, etc. All clothing worn during PE activities must be in compliance with the current school dress code. Specific guidelines regarding other restrictions and expectations in HPE will be distributed to students in writing by their HPE teachers during the first week of school.

PE clothing must be different from those clothes worn to school. PE clothing and shoes are to be kept in a locked gym locker while at school (provided to each student at no cost) and should be taken home to be laundered regularly.

Portable “pop-up” changing rooms are available in the girls’ and boys’ locker rooms for use by anyone who would like more privacy while changing.

Health Education is part of the PE curriculum and will be taught by the HPE staff. PE classes alternate when they meet in classrooms for health instruction. [Family Life](#) is taught as part of the Health curriculum. Parents who wish to review the FLE curriculum materials may arrange to view these materials at their child's school with the principal or at the School Board Office with the administrator responsible for the Family Life curriculum. In compliance with the Board of Education’s guidelines for Family Life Education, this curriculum is offered as an “opt-out” program. Parents/Guardians may choose to opt their child out of any or all of FLE lessons at any grade level. All students will be included in the program unless their parent/guardian has requested they opt-out using the form linked below. Students who opt-out of the program are to be given an alternate health-related topic that is meaningful to the child and relevant to the overall health curriculum.

21. Grading/Achievement Measurement: Students will receive a midterm grade report from each of their teachers at the 4.5 weeks point of each grade quarter. At the end of each 9 weeks, students will receive a **report card** that lists all of their classes with the grade they earned. Report cards are mailed home to parents. Every teacher computes grades differently. The Course Organizer/Syllabus for each class explains how the grade was calculated.

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Numerical</u>
A	90-100
B	80 but less than 90

C	70 but less than 80
D	60 but less than 70
F	below 60

22. Report Cards: Report cards are distributed at the end of each grading quarter. See the MCPS School Calendar for exact dates.

23. Honor Code: Shawsville Middle School students are responsible for their own learning. Students are expected to do their own work on all assignments (classwork, homework, projects, tests and quizzes), unless otherwise directed by the teacher. Academic dishonesty (cheating) is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct (Division Policy 7-3.1). In order to maintain the integrity of our coursework and evaluation procedures, SMS has an Honor Code. Students may be required to sign their name alongside the phrase, “Honor Code” when completing an assignment. By doing so, students pledge that their work is in accordance with the Honor Code of SMS.

The Honor Code is as follows: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.” Whether written or not, the Honor Code applies to all assignments. The Honor Code will be reviewed with students during the first week of school, and students will sign an acknowledgement of their receipt and understanding of the Honor Code.

The following examples represent violations of the SMS Honor Code:

- Academic Dishonesty/Fraud: Any deception deliberately practiced in order to secure academic gain. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating, unauthorized work sharing, copying of another’s work, crib notes, cheat sheets, verbal and non-verbal giving or receiving answers or assistance. Additionally, copying and pasting from shared documents and representing the copied material as one’s own work is a form of academic dishonesty.
- Plagiarism: Quoting or using the ideas of another person or author without acknowledging that those were not your own. Such acknowledgement must be done through proper citation of the original source, as determined by the teacher.
- Teachers will notify students of any suspected Honor Code violations and provide them with the opportunity to address the alleged violation. For cases in which the teacher and student are unable to resolve the matter, the student will be referred to an administrator for further investigation and to ensure that due process is followed.

Honor Code violations are divided into two categories:

- Level I: These include those assignments that would be considered of an instructional classwork variety. Such assignments include, but are not limited to:
 - Homework
 - Classwork
 - In-class group coursework

Teachers have discretion in deciding what consequence will be determined for Level I violations. Violations such as these do not necessarily need to be referred to an administrator. It is up to the discretion of the teacher, and the consideration of other extenuating circumstances, that determine academic consequences or disciplinary action.

- Level II: These include those assignments that would be considered primarily evaluative in nature. Such assignments include, but are not limited to:
 - Quizzes * / Tests *
 - Research papers / Projects / Group work

- Any other assignments that a teacher may choose to be bound under Level II.

* Any unauthorized use of electronic devices during a test/quiz is an Honor Code violation. If necessary, the administrator will further investigate the matter and ensure that due process is followed.

Level II Honor Code violations will be recorded on the student's discipline record, and students who continuously violate the Honor Code can be subject to further disciplinary action. All assignments will be considered under the Honor Code unless stated otherwise by the teacher.

- During the first two weeks of school staff will review the honor code with students.

24. SOL tests are given at the conclusion of the course. Middle school students take an SOL test in:

- ✓ English Reading in grades 6, 7, and 8 and English Writing in grade 8.
- ✓ Math in grades 6, 7, and 8 and an end of course test for Algebra I and Geometry. (Algebra I and Geometry students must pass the SOL test to receive a verified credit toward high school graduation.)
- ✓ One Social Studies test in grade 8 Civics & Economics.
- ✓ Science in grade 7 that covers the material from grades 6 and 7 and an end of course test for Earth Science in grade 8.

The state uses the school test data to measure whether or not we are helping every child succeed academically. Students need a score of 400 to pass an SOL test. 70% of SMS students must pass the tests in math and science AND 75% must pass in reading and writing combined in order for our school to be accredited by Virginia's Department of Education.

25. Earning Promotion to the next grade: Teachers calculate final course grades. Whether or not a student is promoted to the next grade is the principal's decision with staff input. If students do not pass all classes, promotion decisions are made on an individual basis. The following questions are considered when making a decision:

- a. Did the student pass at least 3 of their core classes, both English and math and either science or social studies?
- b. Was the student's attendance acceptable? (Less than 7 absences for the year)
- c. Was the student's behavior acceptable? (See the section on Discipline)
- d. Did the student earn a passing score on their SOL tests?

If the answer to any of these questions is "NO," the student may be REQUIRED to attend summer school or another remediation program before being promoted.

26. Earning High School Credit: Students can earn credits toward high school graduation in Algebra I, Geometry, Earth Science, or Spanish I at SMS. A teacher recommendation and parental permission are required to take these classes. Students must also meet minimum eligibility requirements in order to take a high school class in middle school. The student must pass the class to earn the credit toward high school graduation. Also, in Algebra I, Geometry and Earth Science students must pass an End of Course (EOC) SOL test. If the student passes the class and the SOL test, they earn a "Verified Credit" toward high school graduation.

27. Dropping High School Credit Courses: If a high school credit class is too difficult for a student, they can drop the class by making a request to the school counselor. If a student and their parent do not like the final grade in the high school class, they may expunge the class from the

student's transcript. A request must be made to the school counselor. The deadline to make this request is October 1 of the year the student enters grade 9. If a grade is expunged, the student would be required to repeat the course.

28. Final Exams for High School Courses: Final exams are no longer required for high school credit courses. Students may be required to construct a final project or complete an SOL test for these courses, if one is required.

29. PARENTAL RIGHTS IN REFERENCE TO SCHOOL SERVICES:

PARENT INVOLVEMENT-THE COMPACT CAN ASSIST YOU IN ITEMS YOU CAN DO AT HOME FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE STUDENT

School-Parent Compact

Our school communities include teachers, principal, parents, students, and community partners, who share in the responsibility of educating and supporting each student to succeed in school and become a productive, responsible citizen.

Our schools focus on practicing safely, acting responsively, working together, and showing respect each day at school.

Family/Parent Responsibilities:

I will support my child's learning and...

- Send my child to school regularly, well-rested, and prepared to learn.
- Read with my child for at least 15 minutes and talk together about books to read.
- Establish a homework routine and make sure that homework is completed.
- Monitor and limit the use of any screen time (TV, internet, and computer games).
- Encourage my child to be an active learner, good listener, and to do his/her best.

Student Responsibilities:

I will do my best and...

- Read 15 minutes every day outside of the school day and talk about what has been read.
- Do my homework every day and ask for help if needed.
- Be an active learner and follow school/class/rules.
- Be respectful of classmates and teachers.
- Be responsible with school and personal materials.

School Responsibilities:

Our school will support each students' learning and...

- Provide information to families about curriculum, academic assessments and expectations, and the Title I program at the start of each school year.
- Communicate student progress on a regular basis.

- Support each student's learning by providing additional instruction/materials as needed.
- Provide information and/or workshops to parents as requested.
- Schedule parent-teacher conferences every fall and spring.
- Provide families opportunities to participate in his/her child's education and events.
- Communicate important information in a format and language parents can understand.
- Conduct parent surveys to identify goals and make improvements to Title I program.
- Provide a fall and opportunity to participate in District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) meetings to plan, review, and improve parent engagement.

**Parent Notification of Assessment Opt Out Policies Under
Section 1112(e)(2) of *The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA)**

On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) was signed into law. Section 1112(e)(2) of ESSA states that parents of students in Title I schools have a right to know about state or division policies regarding student participation in any assessments mandated by ESSA, including any policy, procedure, or parental right to opt students out of such assessments. You may contact your principal or Montgomery County Schools or find more information on the Virginia Department of Education's website: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/index.shtml>

PARENT'S RIGHT TO REQUEST INFORMATION ON TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

As Required Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended

On December 10, 2015, the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) was signed into law. Section 1111(h)(6)(A) states that as a parent of a student in a Title I school, receiving Title I funds, has the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers instructing your child. Federal law requires the school division to provide you this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please contact your child's school principal.

29. Honor Roll Recognition: The goal of the honor roll system is to recognize students for academic success and to encourage them to do their best in all of their classes. SMS publishes an

honor roll in the local newspapers at the end of each grading period. These are the honor rolls at SMS:

Superintendent's Honor Roll – All "A" average

Principal's Honor Roll – "A-B" Average

30. Student Fees:

- There are **NO** required student fees for the regular education program at SMS. There are no textbook rental or library fees. However, students are responsible for lost or damaged books and any assessed fines or replacement costs must be paid before students are allowed to participate in some extracurricular activities, including school dances.
- Yearbook purchase (\$25 if ordered before December 15, \$30 if ordered after January 1). Keep your receipt - **optional**
- Individual club fees are set by the club.
- Special student activities, such as school dances, may charge an entrance fee. These fees vary depending on the activity. These fees are nominal in nature.

31. School Supplies: All students are expected to bring textbooks, Chromebook, paper, pen, pencil, or any other appropriate materials to class daily. Individual teams at each grade level will create a supply list regarding specific materials needed for the core academic classes. These supply lists will be mailed home to students in the summer and will be posted at local retail stores that carry school supplies. The supply lists are posted to the school website. Additional materials may be required in exploratory or elective courses. A student who cannot afford school supplies should meet with the school counselor.

32. The Library: The SMS Library contains a wealth of information for research or reference, including hundreds of fiction and nonfiction books, periodicals, reference volumes, and maps. Students are allowed to use the library during school hours with properly signed passes from the classroom teacher. The library opens at 7:55. In the library, students can:

- a. Check out a book.
- b. Use the reference materials for research.
- c. Read the newspaper, a magazine or a book.
- d. Use the Internet to research a topic.
- e. Work in groups to complete classroom projects.
- f. Secure a loaner chromebook for the day.

33. Computer Devices: Each student is issued a mobile, electronic device for their personal use during the school year. Students should not share their login or password with other students. Students should follow all of the Technology Use Agreement rules in MCPS Policy 6-3.13. Failure to follow these rules will result in the loss of computer privileges. This device will be collected before the end of the school year.

34. Lockers: Hallway lockers will not be assigned for the 2025-2026 school year.

35. Field Trips: School field trips are for educational purposes and will include all students. However, students can lose the opportunity to participate in a field trip if they have demonstrated that their behavior interferes with the safety or learning of other students. Students may also lose

the opportunity to participate in field trips (including field day activities) due to accumulation of ISS/OSS- determined by administration. Students may have the opportunity to participate in fundraising activities to offset the costs of field trips.

36. **Intervention/Enrichment Period:** The Intervention and Enrichment block (I/E) is a scheduled time frame each day for students to remediate in core subject areas, explore or enrich their school experience in another area or utilize an academic time for homework completion. ALL students will be assigned an I/E teacher.

Lexia - Students who have qualified for reading support based on their Spring 2025 Reading SOL score will be placed in a Lexia intervention group daily for the entirety of the 2025-2026 school year.

Students in need of academic intervention and support in math and science will be hand selected next. All remaining students will be selected by teachers for their groups. Other days will be used for all students to participate in advisory activities such as social and emotional learning, career planning, anti-bullying activities, study skills, organizational skills, mental health or well-being, etc.

Students having academic difficulty should immediately contact their teachers in an attempt to resolve the problem. Teachers may offer additional assistance outside of regular classroom time, during intervention/enrichment time, or may suggest the student receive extra help before school, after school, or during lunch.

37. Fine Arts Performances: SMS makes an effort every school year to enhance the student learning experience through professional performances and presentations.

STUDENT SERVICES

38. Counseling Program: The Shawsville Middle School Guidance Department seeks to recognize students as individuals and to help them develop their potential and attain the knowledge and skills essential to successful living at work and in society. The guidance department strives to provide a developmental, sequential program based on a student's educational, social-emotional, and career-vocational needs.

Objectives include:

1. To help students make a successful transition at all levels of their educational experience.
2. To help students develop self-understanding.
3. To help students develop effective communication and interpersonal skills.
4. To help students acquire decision-making, problem solving, and coping skills.
5. To help students become more responsible, independent, and self-directive.
6. To help students resolve problems that interfere with learning.
7. To help students become aware of their academic abilities and strengths and to identify their educational needs and interests.

8. To help students pursue a planned, balanced program of studies, which meets Virginia graduation requirements and is consistent with their abilities, interest, and education needs.
9. To help students become knowledgeable of the world of work and establish career goals.
10. To help students acquire information about educational and vocational opportunities in and beyond secondary school.
11. To utilize the services of various resource people in the implementation of the guidance program.

Access to Student Information:

Only teachers who need access to background information about a student should consult the student's cumulative file, which is located in the main office. Information in student files varies from intelligence and achievement scores to grades, health and home conditions, all of which can add immeasurably to the understanding of an individual's behavior in school. These files are kept locked at all times.

39. Lost and Found: Students should turn in any items found to the office or place them in the Lost and Found box located at the main entrance across from the Library. Students who lose items should check the lost and found area regularly. Due to limited space, students should claim items as quickly as possible. The school is not responsible for unclaimed items. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity periodically.

40. Virginia Tiered Systems of Support (VTSS): VTSS is a coordinated system of academic interventions and supports coupled with Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Student Assistance Program (SAP), and mental health supports to allow students more opportunities to become successful in the classroom.

41. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a program to identify specific characteristics and behaviors which students identify with and demonstrate. The character traits identified will help to foster kindness in their actions, empathy for others, and socially acceptable behaviors. The characteristics are: Be Respectful; Be Responsible; Be a Community. Students are presented with acceptable behaviors around these character traits in multiple areas of the school. PBIS Lessons teach these behaviors. Lessons will be taught at the beginning of the year and repeated as necessary throughout the school year. **MUSTANG MONEY** - A school currency has been developed for the 2025-2026 school year. All students have the ability to earn money for positive behaviors, good attendance, and excelling academically in the classroom setting. Students have the opportunity to purchase clothing, snacks, and games through the PBIS Mustang Market Cart bi-monthly.

House System - TBD

42. Student Assistance Program: It is the goal of Montgomery County Public Schools to engage, empower, and encourage every student to succeed. Each school's Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a team approach to helping students access necessary resources needed to be successful in both the school and community. This team is a broad-based, flexible approach to prevention

services and supports. **Parent involvement, engagement and participation is crucial in this process.** The goal of the Student Assistance Program Team is to build resiliency in youth while empowering them for academic and emotional success. To make a referral or for more information, contact the School Counselor or Principal.

Student Assistance Programming (SAP) Parent Notification

Our school has a Student Assistance Programming (SAP) Team that helps students who are struggling with their academics, behavior, attendance, and/or emotional wellness by working together with YOU. **You are the expert on the needs of your child** and your voice matters. If your child is referred, you will be notified and invited to participate in this ongoing process.

The SAP Team will gather, review, and document information important to your child's learning and monitor his/her progress. The following activities **may be** completed as part of the SAP Team process:

Vision Screening	Classroom Observations	Academic Assessments
Hearing Screening	Develop/Review Intervention Plan	Work with School Counselor
Record(s) Review	Anecdotal/Written Notes	Other necessary information

If you have any questions regarding the Student Assistance Programming Team process, please contact your school's administrator.

43. Suspected Child Abuse: All allegations of possible or suspected child abuse or neglect are reported to the principal. The principal will report such cases to the Virginia Child Abuse Hotline as required by law. The state determines reasonable cause and seriousness of the reported incidents. Any student needing further information or help should see our school counselor.

44. Attendance Monitoring and Truancy: Student attendance is monitored daily. It is the single, most important factor relative to student learning and academic progress. Attending school and class is critical to teaching and learning. Students who do not attend regularly are considered truant and will be required to participate in an attendance plan meeting and/or Family Resource team meeting or be referred to Juvenile and Domestic Court services for not attending school. At the middle school level, both parents and students will be held responsible for regularly attending school.

45. New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS) & National Counseling Group (NCG): NRVCS and NCG provide counseling services to students who qualify for their services at school. Counselors provide intensive behavioral therapy and teach strategies for students to become more successful in their academic study. Therapeutic Day Treatment is the highest level of service offered to students at SMS. Other services include truancy management and mental health counseling. Students and parents are referred to NRVCS or NCG through the Student Assistance Program.

46. School Nurse: SMS has a full time nurse that administers student medications, investigates and evaluates student complaints of illness, evaluates and treats injuries, and makes other health-related decisions. Parents and students may be referred to the school nurse for a variety of health-related concerns. Students also may schedule an appointment with the school nurse to ask health-related questions.

47. Boys and Girls Club of America: This program is grant funded and may or may not be offered to SMS students. The decision to offer the program is out of the control of SMS. The B&G Club meets every day immediately after school until 6:00 pm. It starts with Power Hour, which gives kids time to do their homework. Club activities include arts and crafts, sports, computer time, leadership activities, healthy living activities, and field trips. While there is no fee to participate, Registration is required. Registration forms are in the main office. The club phone number is 268-2262 extension 5. The Boys and Girls Club has afternoon transportation to consolidated stops. The bus leaves school at approximately 5:00, so joining the club is a great way to get involved in after school activities, too. Students can go to their school club meeting and then go to B&G Club and ride the bus to a stop near their home.

SCHOOL-SPONSORED AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS and ATHLETICS

48. Participation: All students have the opportunity to participate in activities after school as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for that activity. The following is a list of activities and sports for students to choose from. Parents must make arrangements for student transportation to these activities. Students **may not** attend any after school activities if they are suspended or have

been in ISS that day.

49. The Beta Club: The Beta Club is an honor society whose goal is to provide service to the school and the community. Membership is by invitation only based on academic performance.

50. Student Council Association (SCA): The SCA is the student government organization that provides students with the opportunity to learn and to practice leadership skills. Students elect officers and class representatives each school year. These school leaders plan community service activities, fundraising activities, and school spirit activities for the school year.

51. Future Farmers of America (FFA): Open to students who have taken an agriculture class, or who are currently enrolled in one during the school year. It meets after school. Parents provide transportation. Agriculture teacher approval required.

52. Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA): Open to students who have taken a business class. It meets after school, parents provide transportation and business teacher approval is required.

53. Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA): Open to students who are or have been enrolled in a Family and Consumer Science class. This club meets after school. Parents must provide transportation. Approval of the Family and Consumer Science teacher is required.

54. Art Club: Open to students who are or have been enrolled in an Art class. This club meets after school. Parents must provide transportation. Approval of the Art teacher is required.

55. Theater Club: Open to students who are or have been enrolled in a Theater class. This club meets after school. Parents must provide transportation. Approval of the Theater teacher is required.

56. Intramurals: Students at SMS may engage in age appropriate, non-competitive sports activities through participation in the intramural program. Supervised intramurals are organized for grade level/teams multiple times per year.

57. Sports Teams: Shawsville Middle School offers the following sports for 6, 7 & 8th graders.

Girls' Basketball	Cheerleading (Fall and Winter)
Boys' Basketball	Girls' Soccer
Volleyball	Cross Country (Boys & Girls)
Track and Field (Boys & Girls)	Football
Boys' Soccer	Girls' Softball

Eastern Montgomery High School allows 8th graders to participate in the following junior varsity sports, with the approval of the SMS and EMHS principals:

Basketball Baseball Tennis Volleyball Cheer

58. Eligibility for Participation on middle school and JV Teams:

- a. A student who turns 15 on or before August 1st of the current school year will not be eligible for a middle school sport.
- b. A student who turns 16 on or before August 1st of the current school year will not be eligible to play 8th and 9th grade football.
- c. 8th grade students are allowed to participate for one year only as an 8th grader on a JV team.
- d. 6 & 7th graders may not participate in JV sports.

59. Academic Eligibility for Sports: To be eligible to represent Shawsville Middle School in any school-sponsored interscholastic contest, a student shall meet the following requirements:

- a. Be currently enrolled in not fewer than seven classes.
- b. Have passed 4 core subjects during the immediate preceding semester.

60. Sport Events: Students and their families are encouraged to show their school spirit and support of student athletes by attending SMS sports events. Admission cost for all sports events is \$5.00 for adults, students, and guests. Athletic passes are available through the main office. Spectators are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and behavior that positively reflect on our school and community. Students are reminded that the Code of Conduct applies to all school-sponsored activities and that inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the sport event and school grounds. Students who plan to attend athletic and other school-sponsored events that do not begin immediately after school must leave the building and grounds and return closer to the event's start time unless they have pre-arranged to be supervised by a staff member. Students who leave the gym or stadium without permission before an event is over will not be permitted to re-enter. Parents or Guardians should pre-arrange transportation for their child to get home after the game.

61. Chromebooks: All students are issued chromebooks for use during the school year. Students assume responsibility to handle chromebooks with care. Students will be responsible for keeping the chromebook in usable condition or being held financially responsible for replacing the chromebook. Report to a teacher if the chromebook is lost or damaged.

62. Student Debts: Any student who has a delinquent or outstanding debt – library fines, charges for lost/damaged books, intentional damages to a Chromebook, unpaid fees for uniforms, unresolved accounts for fundraisers, etc. – may not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular event sponsored by the school for which there is a cost. Such activities may include sporting events, dances, and some field trips. Payment of these debts should be made to the school bookkeeper. Debts incurred in the preceding school year are carried over to the current year. **Students who have any unsatisfied debt from the previous school year will receive a notice of debts in a summer mailing. Debts may follow a student to another school to graduation.**

SCHOOL RULES

Overview: Please review the MCPS Code of Conduct. (By order of the MCPS School Board, all students are expected to follow the rules set forth while on school property or at a school-sponsored activity including field trips and sporting events. The policy also covers students going to and from school and waiting at bus stops.

The following expectations also apply at Shawsville Middle School. We want students to be able to come to school safely, without fear or concern for themselves or others. When students feel safe it is easier for them to learn. If a student knows of a problem and is concerned, they should report it to their teacher, the school counselor, their parents, or the principal. If they ever need to report students who may be endangering themselves or others and are concerned about confidentiality, they should feel free to call 4-Safe-VA. This toll-free school safety hotline has been established to assist students in reporting safety concerns at school. To confidentially report a dangerous situation at school, please call 1-877-4-SAFE-VA (1-877-472-3382).

63. Bullying/Biased Behaviors: SMS students and staff have set out to eliminate bullying from our school. Bullying can be defined in many ways. MCPS uses a 3-part definition to decide whether or not bullying is occurring. An incident is identified as bullying when a student:

- a. is exposed to the behavior repeatedly and over time,
- b. experiences Negative Actions on the part of one or more students, and
- c. perceives imbalance of power.

Behaviors associated with bullying include: any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. "Bullying" does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument or peer conflict. Students, either individually or as part of a group, shall not harass or bully others. Behaviors associated with bullying include, but are not limited to, intimidation, taunting, name-calling, and insults. Bullying behaviors may take a variety of forms, including by electronic means such as cell phone, social media, text message and email. Bullying, threatening, intimidation, harassment, or any other activity characterized by targeted, intentionally hurtful behavior (verbal or nonverbal) that results in any physical, social/relational or emotional/psychological harm to another person is not tolerated in any form in any Montgomery County Public School. The principal shall notify the parent of any student involved in an alleged incident of bullying, as defined herein, of the status of any investigation within five school days of the allegation of bullying.

All SMS students are asked to take the anti-bullying pledge:

- ✓ I will not bully others.
- ✓ I will try to help others who are being bullied.
- ✓ I will make a point to include students who may feel left out.

64. Tipline: Tipline is a service that allows students to anonymously report any concerns that they feel need to be shared, including bullying, suicide, and other forms of violence or potential harm to themselves or others. Students can access the Tipline through the following avenues:

- Call - **1-833-300-STOP**
- Email - **tipline@securly.com**
- Website - **www.securly.com/tip**

65. Gossip as a Form of Bullying: It includes talking about other people, writing notes about others or online talk about others. It is one of the most disruptive behaviors in school because it often leads to hurt feelings and anger which sometimes results in negative interactions between students.

66. Dress Code: SMS has adopted a dress code that expects students to come to school in clothing that is appropriate in a school setting. Students who are in violation of these rules or whose dress is considered inappropriate will be asked to change and/or parents will be contacted. Over time, the teachers, administrators, and parents in this community have found that the following dressing regulations work best at SMS:

- a. Do not wear clothing, jewelry, or other apparel that advocates violence, alcohol, and other drug use or distribution; that represent gang activity and/or membership; that advertise obscenities; or that reflect adversely on persons due to race, gender, gender identity, creed, national origin, physical, emotional, or intellectual abilities; or that are considered to be distracting or inappropriate attire. (MCPS Code of Conduct)
- b. Do not wear clothing or other apparel and do not bring personal belongings to school with the Confederate flag/Rebel flag symbols to school, during school sponsored field trips or to school sponsored events and activities.
- c. Do not wear hats, visors, scarves, bandanas or other headgear inside the buildings.
- d. Do not wear pajamas, lounge wear, or house shoes.
- e. Clothing should be comfortable. It should cover the student's body from mid-thigh to shoulders. Cleavage should not be visible.
- f. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.
- g. Shoes should be comfortable and safe for walking indoors and outdoors.
- h. Personal writing on clothing and/or bodies is not allowed.
- i. Students are not to **bring or use at school** hair paint or temporary hair color or gel.
- j. Appropriate PE clothes are required for physical education. You may purchase one from the school or provide your own as long as it meets school requirements.
- k. Sunglasses may not be worn in the building.
- l. Do not trade clothes with other students.
- m. Blankets and towels are not to be worn during the school day as wraps.

Some students and staff members are highly allergic to perfumes and colognes. To protect the wellbeing of all people who attend SMS, no one should wear heavy scents. You should never bring perfume or cologne to school. Students should bring deodorant for use after gym. Teachers may ask students to change clothes if he or she believes what the student is wearing is inappropriate. If a student does not have something else with them, they should report to the office. We have a Caring Closet that contains clothes for student use if needed. To disobey or to argue with a member of the staff is disrespectful, may be disruptive to learning and may result in a discipline referral.

67. Accidents and Safety: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner at all times whether they are in a classroom, in the hallway, on the playing field, in gym or on the bus. Every effort is made to create and maintain the safest environment possible for our

students and staff. Video cameras have been placed in the main hallways to improve supervision. While safety is a priority, accidents will occur. Students who are injured should report the injury to any staff member or the school nurse immediately. The school nurse is on campus and can treat some minor injuries. Contact with a parent/guardian will be attempted for injuries or emergencies of a more serious nature. It is important that a reliable daytime telephone number at which a parent/guardian may be contacted and the name and telephone number of an emergency contact person be on file and kept current for every student. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update this and pertinent medical information as needed. Students whose behavior causes an accident or damages property are subject to disciplinary action when reckless or careless actions lead to injury or property damage.

The school clinic is equipped to handle routine treatment of minor injuries (e.g., Band-Aids, daily medications, temperature checks, etc.). Contact with a parent/guardian will be attempted for injuries or emergencies of a more serious nature. It is important that a reliable daytime telephone number at which a parent/guardian may be contacted, and the name and telephone number of an emergency contact person, be on file and kept current for every student. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update this and pertinent medical information as needed.

68. Electronic devices such as iPods, cellular phones, radios, CD players, hand-held video games, etc. are **non-school items and can be disruptive to the learning environment. They should not be used at school** and will be confiscated by school personnel and may be returned only to parents. If a student brings an electronic device to school they should be turned off and kept in their locker. Other non-school items may include toys, playing cards, collectible cards, etc. These items are not to be used at school.

Safety concerns, peace of mind, and emergency situations are all legitimate reasons for parents wanting their children to have cell phones. However, in school, cell phones have the potential for being more of a nuisance than a means of legitimate communication with parents. Common problems experienced with student cell phone use during school hours include the following:

- Students calling or texting each other for a variety of frivolous reasons, distracting them from learning.
- Receiving calls in class is distracting to students who are supposed to be focused on learning, and are disruptive to the learning environment for everyone else in a class.
- Cheating has increased with text messaging and picture-taking capabilities of cell phones.
- Camera phones can be used to photograph minors without their permission and invade personal privacy.
- Premature contact with parents and other people outside of school during a **perceived** crisis can create undue anxiety by spreading misinformation. Such contact also can work against thoughtful information control during a **potential** crisis, creating or exacerbating a crisis situation.
- Students may receive information on their cell phone that causes them to become emotionally upset or volatile. Without the support of an adult when receiving certain types of news, students may break down emotionally in class, disrupt instruction for the entire class and possibly make unwise decisions.
- Cell phones allow students to talk with people who their parents may not wish for them to contact. Office phones remain accessible to students when they need to make a call, and the

office staff is able to ensure that only approved contacts are called.

- Decision-making and problem solving are important skills for young people to learn. Students with instant access to their parents are inclined to seek parental assistance before trying to solve a minor problem on their own or with the help of other adults available to them.
- Allowing students to use cell phones at any time during the school day has potentially negative social ramifications. If students are texting or talking with people elsewhere instead of interacting with peers around them, students may not develop necessary interpersonal skills and there is a loss of community among students.
- When changes in after-school plans or check-out arrangements are made directly with a student without going through the main office, school officials can be left searching for what they believe to be a missing student. School buses have even been delayed from leaving while a student's whereabouts are confirmed.

Learning to respect boundaries is an important lesson for young people. Students need to learn how to use cell phones responsibly and respectfully in school and in everyday life. Individuals are expected to turn off cell phones in certain situations. Students may have cell phones in their possession for use after school hours, during bus rides to and from school and during athletic events.

MCPS Policy (7-3.1) states that students are not permitted to use or display cell phones, beepers, & other portable communication devices during regular school hours. Such devices will be considered to be "in use" if they are on (regardless of if they are on silent or set to ring), sending or receiving a call or text message, being used to take, display, or send photos/videos, etc. However, students may have such items in their possession for use after school hours, during bus rides to and from school and during athletic events.

If cell phones are in use or ring during school hours, they will be confiscated. Once confiscated, the cell phone must be picked up in the office by the parent.

Students are not allowed to come to the office to make phone calls at any time during the school day without teacher permission. Parents may call the school to leave messages for their children. If an emergency arises that requires a parent to talk with their child right away, an administrator will have the student pulled from class to take the call. If students keep their cell phones off during school hours, parents can call them and leave a voicemail or text message on their cell phone for them to check at the end of the school day. If a student absolutely needs to use his/her cell phone during the school day for any legitimate purpose, it can be done in the office with permission.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS:

- Instruct your child to turn off his/her cell phone at 7:55 am and turn it back on after 2:50 pm each day.
- Reassure your child that if you need to contact him/her you will call the school.
- Explain what constitutes a true emergency and under what circumstances you expect to be contacted.
- Encourage your child to use resources at school to problem solve. Office phones remain accessible to students when parent contact is necessary. Office staff is able to ensure that only approved contacts are called.
- Periodically check your child's cell phone activity (*i.e.* call logs and record of text messages sent/received, photos, contact list, etc.).

Additional information about safe and appropriate cell phone use by children:

<http://www.safekids.com/cellphone.htm>

http://www.common sense media.org/parent_tips/commonsense_view/index.php?id=253

http://pediatrics.about.com/od/otherparentingissues/i/kids_cellphones.htm

69. Cheating, which is giving or receiving unauthorized aid on school assignments, may result in loss of credit for the assignment. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. See Honor Code (#23)

70. Computer Usage: Shawsville Middle School provides both computer and Internet access to students for general research and instructional purposes. Students and parents must read and sign an Internet usage form and computer usage form to take advantage of these opportunities. Any violation of the usage agreement will result in loss of computer privileges for an amount of time to be determined.

71. Returned checks: Montgomery County Public Schools uses an outside vendor to process returned checks submitted to our schools. This includes all checks written to the school for any fees/payments. In the event of a returned check, all communication about the check will come directly from the outside vendor, not from the school. The vendor will contact the writer of a returned check by mail and by telephone in order to make arrangements to pay before an attempt is made to collect the check electronically. Each returned check is subject to the applicable state returned check fees.

72. Disruption includes any behavior that interrupts the learning environment. Shawsville Middle School is a place for all students to learn. No student should behave in a way that interferes with the learning of others. The following are examples but **not** an all-inclusive list: continual talking after being asked to cease, throwing objects not part of a supervised school activity, use of electronics or portable communication devices, gambling, display of pornographic materials, etc. Students who repeatedly interrupt learning may be considered for referral to the School Board for long-term suspension or expulsion.

73. Defiance or Noncompliance: When an adult employed by Montgomery County Public Schools, gives fair and reasonable directions to a student and the student refuses to follow those directions, the student is being defiant or noncompliant. Defiance is a serious offense all of the time. An example that often occurs involves something as simple as a teacher telling a student to move to another seat. The student might reply, "Why do I have to move?" Another frequent response is "What about Jane? Why don't you tell her to move?" These are two examples of defiance that interrupts learning. When students argue with a teacher about following directions, they are taking time away from learning.

74. Sodas, soft drinks, coffee, and energy drinks are prohibited: These drinks create difficult spills that are hard to clean up. The side effects of energy drinks and caffeine can also cause disruptive impacts to the learning environment.

75. Drugs and alcohol (including tobacco): State law prohibits use and/or possession of alcohol or drugs by students during regular school hours or at school-sponsored events. Tobacco products including smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes and vapor possession and use is prohibited. This policy also covers misuse of prescription and look-alike drugs. Students who violate this policy will be recommended for long term suspension/expulsion, and/or OSS (Out-of-School Suspension) and may be referred to local authorities for prosecution and to the guidance office for counseling. Further details on the Shawsville Middle School drug & alcohol policy will be found in the Montgomery County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct.

76. E-cigarettes and Vapes: Electronic cigarettes, vapes, joules, etc are considered the same as tobacco paraphernalia and will be confiscated from students and surrendered to the School Resource Officer. Students in middle school are not permitted to possess these products in school. Consequences will include an educational component to educate students about the effects of using such products as a teen.

77. False Alarms: Setting off false alarms or making bomb threats is unacceptable. We will contact law enforcement authorities for these or similar activities.

78. Group or gang activity: Any group activity that threatens, is illegal and/or violent or indicates the possible development of gang activity is inappropriate. Gang activity may include groups wearing similar clothing or colors, groups hanging out in unsupervised areas of the building, groups of students who are bullying or harassing another person.

79. Hall Behavior - Before and after school as well as during class changes, the halls are busy, crowded areas. Students can help the flow of traffic by making a habit of walking to the right and not congregating in the halls. Students also are expected to remain in the hall designated for their grade level unless they are attending a class assigned to a different hall. Misconduct may result in a student being asked to identify himself/herself to a supervising staff member. Students are expected to do so promptly and respectfully or face disciplinary action for noncompliance. If a student must be in the hall during class time for any reason, he/she must have a signed hall pass.

80. Involvement of Non-Custodial Parent: As specified by the Code of Virginia and the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), non-custodial parents have the full rights as parents for access to student records and for participating in school activities, “unless otherwise ordered by the court for good cause shown.” It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide documentation of any restrictions on a non-custodial parent. Duplicate copies of report cards and other written communications mailed to a student’s home will be made available to non-custodial parents upon their request. If a person not known to school officials’ attempts to contact or pick up a child at school, a photo ID and other verification of identity/relationship to a student (including confirmation with the custodial parent) may be required before releasing the student.

81. Emergency Drills and Evacuations: Emergency drills and evacuations will be completed as required by the Virginia Department of Education. Typically, this includes fire drills, lockdown drills, earthquake drills, and bus evacuation drills.

Adults will teach students the processes required for each drill and will guide them throughout the exercise. Additionally, directions for evacuating the building during a drill or actual crisis situation are posted in each room.

82. Medications: Administration of medications will be permitted on school property only when medically necessary and under the direct supervision of appropriate staff members. We attempt to discourage the administration of medication during school hours and whenever possible, request doses of medication be scheduled other than school hours. The first dose of any newly prescribed medication should always be given at home. For the safety of the students, the following procedures must be followed:

- If prescription medications are to be given at school, the Montgomery County Medication Permission form must be provided and signed by the doctor/licensed prescriber, and the parent/guardian. It must specify the name of the medication, dosage and time to be given. A separate medication permission form must be completed for each medication. Please note: Prescription bottles do not take the place of a medication form signed by a physician.
- If non-prescription medications are to be given at school, the medication permission form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian, indicating the name, dosage and time to be given. Non-prescription medications can be administered for no longer than three consecutive days, after which time a written order from a physician/other licensed prescriber is required.
- All medication is to be brought to school by the parent or guardian in the original, properly labeled container. The information on the container must match the information on the medication permission form. If the parent is unable to deliver the medication to the school, he or she must call the school to report that the medication is being delivered by the student. All medication must be accompanied by a medication permission form.
- Self-administration of any medication, prescription or non-prescription, is prohibited for students in grades kindergarten through eight with one exception. Medications needed in a medical emergency such as inhalers, epi-pens, or glucose tablets may be kept in the possession of a student and self-administered only with a written statement from a physician/licensed prescriber.
- Sharing, borrowing or distributing any medication is prohibited and may result in a recommendation of expulsion.

Medication permission forms are available in the school office and most local doctors' offices. They can also be downloaded from the MCPS website.

83. Prohibited Activities: In addition to the student behaviors addressed by the Code of Conduct, specific activities prohibited at SMS include (but are not limited to) the following items:

- a. Students are not permitted to buy, sell, or trade items while on school property. Only the sale of items as part of an approved school fundraiser is permitted.
- b. Initiating or participating in the production of written instruments that promote or encourage derogatory "ratings" of, or defamatory statements about, other students (i.e. "Slam Books")

is strictly prohibited. Such activity is disruptive, creates an intimidating, hostile, and offensive environment and will not be tolerated. Any student engaged in this activity will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

84. Skipping school is being absent from school without a parent or guardian's permission. **Skipping class** is being absent from class without the teacher's permission.

85. Telephone: Students are not allowed to use the telephone without teacher permission. In the case of an emergency, a staff member will contact parents/guardians. Students will not be pulled out of class to receive calls. The receptionist will take and deliver any important messages.

86. Unauthorized Areas: Students are not permitted in the following areas of the school without teacher/staff permission and direct supervision:

- Teacher workrooms (Use of phones and vending machines is not permitted)
- Staff offices, unoccupied classrooms, auditorium/stage, parking lots, breezeway
- Custodial closets, kitchen, mechanical rooms
- Locker rooms other than when scheduled for PE
- All stairwells
- The elevator, unless use is authorized due to injury or disability
- Grade-level halls/areas other than those designated for their particular grade level unless required by their class schedule.

Additionally, students are not permitted to be outside of the building at any time during the school day, unless as part of a supervised class activity or a scheduled class change that requires traveling through the breezeway. Students who are found in an unauthorized area or who leave the building/grounds without permission are subject to disciplinary action.

87. Visitors: Students are not allowed to bring visitors to the school or have them visit during school hours. Only parents/guardians and individuals with official school business are allowed to contact a student at school. All visitors must report to the main office before proceeding to any other intended destination in the school. Students will be called from classrooms to meet with approved visitors in the office.

88. Unauthorized Persons on School Property

Unauthorized persons should not be in the school building or on school grounds at any time without the permission of the principal. Unauthorized persons include, without limitation, the following:

- Students not assigned to SMS
- Students suspended or expelled from any MCPS school
- Students advised by the principal or assistant principal to leave school grounds
- Any person who has not obtained a visitor's pass from the main office (not an approved visitor)
- Any person previously warned not to be on school grounds
- Any other person not having official business at the school
- Any person who is causing a disruption of the programs or activities

Citizens and parents/guardians whose conduct is not disruptive of the normal school operations are always welcome to observe the operations of the school, but must first obtain permission from the

principal's office. Teachers are obligated to inform the principal of any unauthorized person they find on the premises. Any unauthorized person will be asked to leave the grounds at once. An administrator may enlist the aid of law enforcement officials to remove any unauthorized person from the school grounds refusing to leave on their own or whose actions are disrupting the school's instructional or extracurricular programs.

Sex Offenders on School Property

Per Division Policy 2-3.6, "No adult who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense, as defined in Virginia Code Section 9.1-902, may enter or be present upon public school property, during school hours and during school-related and school-sponsored activities, unless: (i) he is a lawfully registered and qualified voter, and is coming upon such property solely for the purposes of casting his vote; (ii) he is a student enrolled at the school; or (iii) he has obtained a court order allowing him to enter and be present upon such property, and is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the order."

All Montgomery County Public Schools utilize driver's license scanners with a sexual offender auto-check program for visitor registrations. This system will run the names and birthdates of visitors through the sexual offender registry. The school will attempt to confirm the information in the database to conclusively determine if the visitor is on the registry. **Any visitor whose name and/or birth date triggers a warning within the sexual offender registry will be denied entrance and will be asked to leave the premises.** Unfortunately, the Sexual Offender Registry is not perfect and there is always a possibility that a person's name and/or birth date could trigger a "false positive." It is our practice to treat all registry alerts as valid until conclusively proven otherwise. Any alert that cannot be readily identified as a "false positive" will result in the visitor being asked to leave school premises and/or contact local law enforcement. If a visitor is uncooperative, or wishes to challenge the information on the registry, the school will contact local law enforcement for assistance.

For visitors who flag the system but leave when asked, the school will still notify local law enforcement of the incident on the day of its occurrence. Visitors who believe that there is a mistake should call the school and make an appointment to discuss the matter further with the principal and work with our local law enforcement to ensure that the situation is appropriately addressed. Our ultimate goal is to protect our students and uphold the law. We do this with the safety and best interest of our students in mind.

89. Search and Seizure: School administrators are authorized to perform student searches and seize items that do not belong in school. Administrators may search students, bookbags, backpacks, or personal possessions and seize possessions. Administrators may search lockers if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses an item that does not belong to them or is prohibited at school.

90. Trespassing: Students are not permitted unsupervised in school buildings or on school grounds outside of school hours. Students who are suspended out of school will be considered trespassing if the student is on school grounds for any reason during the suspension time. Per Division Policy 2-3.6, "No one shall be in a school building after school hours unless he/she is on official school business, is participating in a supervised school activity, is authorized by the administration, or is a spectator at an activity open to the public. It is unlawful for any person to enter a school at

nighttime without the consent of an authorized person except to attend an approved meeting or service. It is prohibited for any person, whether or not a student, to enter or remain on any school property, including school buses, in violation of (i) any direction to vacate the property by an authorized individual, or (ii) any posted notice which contains such information, posted at a place where it reasonably may be seen. Persons violating these provisions of state law may be prosecuted. For purposes of this policy, school principals are ‘authorized individuals,’ and may direct persons to leave school premises and, in appropriate circumstances, issue no trespassing directives.”

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

91. Hate Speech Policy

HATE SPEECH

The Montgomery County Public Schools Hate Speech Policy aims to proactively foster an environment where everyone feels safe and included. As used in the Policy, “hate speech” means any form of expression that threatens, abuses, bullies, disparages, or intimidates individuals or groups based on ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Reporting Procedures

1. Reporting by Students: Students who believe they have been subjected to or have witnessed hate speech should report the incident to a teacher, school counselor, or administrator as soon as possible. No student shall be punished for failing to report any hate speech incident.
2. Reporting by Staff: Staff members who witness hate speech or are informed of such must report the incident to the principal or designated school administrator immediately. Failure to do so shall result in disciplinary action as outlined in school policy.
3. Anonymous Reporting: MCPS provides an anonymous reporting system for students and staff to report hate speech without fear of retaliation.
4. Reporting by Parents: Parents of an MCPS student who believes they have been subjected to or have witnessed hate speech should report the incident to a teacher, school counselor, or administrator as soon as possible.

Investigation Procedures

1. Initial Review: Upon receiving a report of hate speech, the principal or designated administrator will conduct an initial review to determine whether the reported speech is hate speech as defined in this policy and the report's credibility.
2. Formal Investigation: If the initial review indicates a potential violation of this policy, the principal or designated administrator will conduct a formal investigation. This may include interviews with the involved parties and witnesses and a review of any relevant evidence (e.g., written statements, digital communications).
3. Confidentiality: The investigation will be conducted in a manner that respects the privacy of all parties involved to the fullest extent possible.
4. Determination: If the formal investigation determines that a student violated this policy, that student shall be subject to discipline as described below.
5. Appeal Process: When disagreement exists with the outcome of the investigation, an appeal can be brought before a three-member appeal committee established by the superintendent for said purpose. A final appeal can be brought before the superintendent.

Disciplinary Actions

MCPS employs a progressive discipline approach to address hate speech policy violations. The following outlines possible disciplinary actions, which may be adjusted based on the severity of the behavior. These disciplinary actions shall be administered according to the procedures in School Board Policy 7-3.1 (Code of Student Conduct) and Policy 7-3.2 (Student Suspension/Expulsion), as applicable.

Middle and High School Hate Speech Offenses		
First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
- Written warning and explanation of the hate speech policy. - Restorative practices, such as mediation or conflict resolution, or other means to educate and improve behavior. - Parental notification and a meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and school counselor. - Possible detention or in-school suspension (1-3 days).	- Written warning and documentation of the incident. - Restorative practices, such as mediation or conflict resolution, or other means to educate and improve behavior. - Parental notification and a meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and school counselor. - In-school suspension (3-5 days). - Development of a behavior intervention plan.	- Written warning and documentation of the incident. - Restorative practices, such as mediation or conflict resolution, or other means to educate and improve behavior. - Parental notification and a meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and school counselor. - In-school suspension (5-10 days). - Review and revise the behavior intervention plan. - Possible out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days).

Severe or Repeated Offenses
For severe or repeated offenses, the following actions may be taken: - Long-term suspension (more than 10 days). - Expulsion. - Referral to law enforcement if the behavior constitutes a criminal offense. - Additional interventions to include mandatory counseling or participation in a diversity and inclusion program.

Support for Affected Students

MCPS is committed to supporting students affected by hate speech. Measures that will be taken to assist these students include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing increased access to counseling services.
- Increasing academic support to ensure their educational progress is not hindered.
- Offering safe spaces where they can discuss their experiences and receive support in a safe environment.

92. Physical assault: Any physical confrontation that results in no injury, minor injury, or serious injury, including but not limited to by kicking, spitting, elbowing, aggressively touching, shoving, pushing, hitting, and fighting is considered assault. Self-defense or action undertaken on the

reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect your person or some other person will be taken into consideration. However, if a student feels threatened by someone, they should immediately report the incident to a teacher, the principal or their parents.

93. Public Displays of Affection (PDA): PDA includes any and all forms of physical contact, including but not limited to kissing, hugging, holding hands, etc. Public displays of affection are prohibited while on school property. Any unwelcome sexual advances or other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is considered harassment and is strictly prohibited by the Code of Conduct.

94. Sexual Harassment: It is prohibited for any employee or student, male or female, to harass another employee or student by making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or engaging in other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when (1) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for academic decisions affecting the student; (2) such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; or (3) submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's participation in school programs. The School Board has adopted a grievance procedure for complaints by students of discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual harassment. The policy is located in the School Board Policy Manual section 7-1.1 located at www.mcps.org.

Generally, students (or parents) are encouraged to report incidents of sexual harassment to the building principal as soon as they become aware of the conduct forming the basis of the complaint. If the principal is the individual who is the subject of the complaint, the student (or parent) should contact the Superintendent.

95. Student Language: All students have the right to come to school and not hear inappropriate language. Students heard by adults using inappropriate language will be referred to the administration for immediate consequences. **Verbal Abuse:** Any use of profanity, obscene gesture, bullying, intimidating gestures, or language that interferes with teaching and learning or that intentionally offends or threatens another. Abusive language includes, but is not limited to, language that demeans another's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, intellectual ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other personal characteristics.

96. Substance Abuse: The possession, use and/or distribution of alcohol, tobacco and/or tobacco products and other drugs on school grounds, on school buses, or during school activities, on or off school property is prohibited. See MCPS Student Code of Conduct.

97. Threats: Communicating intent to cause harm to another person (threatening someone) verbally, in writing, electronically or through a third party is a form of harassment.

98. Vandalism is causing or attempting to cause damage to school or personal property. Please take care of the school, which has served this community for over 80 years.

99. Weapons Possession and/or use: Possession and use of weapons is a violation of the law as well as the Student Code of Conduct. See the Weapons Policy in the Montgomery County Public

Schools Code of Conduct for further definitions and consequences.

100. Late/Tardy: Students are expected to report to class on time. If students are late, or tardy to class, and do not have a note from a staff member, **consequences** will be given.

- * 1st and 2nd time = Warning
- * 3rd and subsequent times = Silent lunch and parent notification by classroom teacher
- * excessive times will result in a referral to the administrator

If a student is late to school, a counselor or administrator will make contact with the parent. An attendance plan or contract may be created and agreed to by the school, parent, and student.

101. Creating Aggravating Circumstances in Class/School: Any behavior that impedes academic progress of the student or of other students. The following are examples, not an all-inclusive list: continual talking after being asked to cease, throwing objects not part of supervised school activities, use of CD/tape players or radios, cameras, recording devices, electronic games or other non-instructional articles during regular school hours, gambling, display of pornographic material, etc.

102. Sex Offenses: Inappropriate activities including, but not limited to, indecent exposure, sexual assault, fondling, and obscene phone calls.

103. Corrective Actions: The following actions may be taken in an attempt to change behaviors that are in violation of the Montgomery County Student Code of Conduct or the SMS School Rules. (See MCPS policy 7-3.1) Teachers and administrators may use the following corrective measures:

- a. **Silent lunch** is usually assigned by a teacher. Each team determines how it will carry out silent lunch. Students are to follow their teacher's directions for completing their assignment to silent lunch. The purpose of silent lunch is to give students some time-out to think about their actions and decide how they can fix the problem. Students will not be given silent lunch for more than one week at a time. Their parents should be notified if silent lunch does not remedy the problem.
- b. **Time-out** is also usually assigned by a teacher, but each team determines how it will implement this corrective action. Students should follow their teacher's directions. No student should be given time-out for more than one day at a time. Parents should be notified if this consequence is ineffective or is assigned with any frequency. No student will be left alone.
- c. **After School or Saturday Detention** is assigned and supervised by teachers. Parents and teachers will arrange this action.
- d. **Loss of Privileges:** School privileges that can be lost include use of the computers, lockers, library materials, sports/activities participation or attendance at events.
- e. **Community Service:** Students may be required to complete projects around the school to make up for inappropriate actions. In the past these tasks have included helping the custodial staff, washing tables at lunch, cleaning desks and picking up trash. Parents will be notified if their student's community service requires them to stay after school. Parents must agree to the assigned task.

- f. **Parental Conferences** are most effective when the school staff and the parents work together to reinforce positive behavior and correct inappropriate behavior. Teachers will contact parents to schedule conferences when a student's conduct does not improve using classroom/team consequences and rewards.

****The Principal or designee may use the following corrective measures.****

- g. **Reprimand/Warning**
- h. **Counseling** with the school counselor and/or referral to an outside agency may be required to assist a student with changing inappropriate behavior.
- i. **Referral** to other health or human services agencies.
- j. **In School Suspension (ISS)** requires students to sit in the ISS room for a period of time. Students will complete the assigned work, which will be returned to classroom teachers for a grade. They will be counted present and the work will count toward their grade. Parents will be notified of an ISS assignment that covers more than part of the school day by mail. If students refuse to do the work assigned in ISS, they will be suspended from school.
- k. **Notification of law enforcement** will occur when a student violates the law. Law enforcement will be contacted in the event of, but not limited to, the following violations: weapons violations, assault and battery, sex offenses, bomb threats, possession, use, and /or distribution of illegal substances, property crimes, robbery, or threats against school personnel.
- l. **Out-Of-School Suspension** – Administrators may temporarily remove students from the school campus for a period of 1 to 10 days. Students who are suspended are not allowed on any Montgomery County School property for the duration of the suspension. Parents will be notified by phone and by mail.
- m. **Suspension at Montgomery Central** - Students may be assigned to serve an in-school or out-of-school suspension consequence at Montgomery Central in lieu of time served at SMS or at home.
- n. **Assignment of tasks** deemed appropriate by the principal and agreed to by the parent.
- o. **Restrictions of student privileges and/or behaviors.** These may include, but are not limited to, changes in classes, schedules, lunch assignments, bus seating, bus riding etc.
- p. **Probation:** An administrator sometimes places students who disobey school rules on probation for a period of time. If a student is referred for a disciplinary action while on probation, a more severe consequence will be given at the discretion of an administrator.
- q. **Parental Conference**
- r. Recommendation for **placement in a specialized program at another site.**
- s. Recommendation for **long-term suspension** will be coordinated with School Board Office personnel.
- t. Recommendation for **expulsion for an indefinite period of time**, in some instances up to 364 days.
- u. **Restitution**

104. Appeals Process: If a parent disagrees with the corrective action that a teacher assigns a student, the parent may appeal that consequence to the principal. Before making an appeal to the principal, the parent should discuss the matter with the teacher. Corrective action will not be

delayed pending an appeal. If a parent disagrees with the corrective action that the Assistant Principal assigns a student, the parent may appeal that consequence to the principal. If a parent disagrees with the corrective action taken by a principal, the parent may appeal that action to the Superintendent or designee. Before making an appeal, parents and students should meet with the principal to discuss their concerns. Appeals must be filed in accordance with School Board policies. Different processes may apply to different types of discipline. Corrective action will not be delayed while an appeal is pending. (See Appendix 2)

Please read the MCPS Code of Conduct for further details regarding School Board Policy.

Appendix 1

Notice of Compliance

EEO/Civil Rights Statement

Montgomery County Public Schools does not discriminate in its programs and activities for reasons of race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, age, or on any other basis prohibited by law. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:

Director of Human Resources and Assistant Superintendent for Operations 750 Imperial Street SE,
Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540) 382-5100

Appendix 2

Activities Parents Can Do to Help Your Child(ren) Succeed in School

For Students of All Ages

At Home

1. Ask about their homework—what it is, when it's due--and check to make sure they do it.
2. Provide a quiet place, with a good light and away from distractions, for them to complete homework.
3. Make sure they get a good night's sleep each night and eat a healthy, substantial breakfast each morning.
4. Talk to them about school for at least a few minutes each day to let them know you're interested and that you think school is important.
5. Teach them respect for others and responsibility for their own behavior.
6. Make sure they get regular health and dental check-ups.
7. Limit children's exposure to television and video games.
8. Be positive about school. If parents say "I wasn't good at school" or "I really didn't like school." This can turn children away from learning.
9. Check your children's school websites regularly to keep informed.

At School

1. Attend back-to-school nights and parent-teacher nights to meet your children's teachers.
2. If you are concerned about something, meet with your children's teachers promptly, before a minor issue becomes a major problem.
3. If possible, volunteer—regularly or even just occasionally—at your children's schools. You will get to know the school better and show your children that you consider education very important.
4. Join a parent-teacher organization (PTA or other parent group) and attend meetings.
5. Ask about after-school programs or extra-help sessions if you think your children could benefit from these.

For Middle School Students

At Home

1. Talk to your children about their specific interests related to school—subjects or teachers they like, clubs or extracurricular activities, books they are reading, projects they are working on, etc.
2. Discuss their choice of courses with them so they are well prepared for different options entering high school.
3. Begin discussing with them what they might like to do after they graduate from high school.
4. Know your children's friends, where they live, and, if possible, their parents.
5. Continue to celebrate school successes with appropriate rewards. Even though they may seem embarrassed, your children will appreciate your enthusiasm for their good work.

At School

1. Get a copy of your children's schedules each semester.
2. Find out what guidance services are available to your children

3. Volunteer for school activities—chaperone a school dance or field trip, help with sports events, etc.
4. Serve on school committees that involve parents.

Appendix 3

Grievance Procedures

All students attending Montgomery County Public Schools may participate in education programs and activities, including but not limited to health, physical education, music and vocational and technical education, (homemaking and consumer education, trades and industrial education, business and office education, etc.), regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sex.

Grievance procedures and contacts have been established for students, their parents, and employees who feel discrimination has been shown by the school division.

Title IX (gender equity)	Section 504 (disability)	Equal Opportunity Employment and/or Sexual Harassment
Ms. Leah Bressler Supervisor of Science MCPS 750 Imperial Street Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540) 382-5100	Mr. Jason Garretson Director of Student Services MCPS 750 Imperial Street Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540) 382-5100 X1091	Mrs. Amanda Weidner Director of Human Resources MCPS 750 Imperial Street Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540)382-5100 X1067

Appendix 4

SOL Information and Student Impact

Middle School

Virginia Department of Education regulations require students to take Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in middle school. In Montgomery County, the SOL assessments are given in the spring of each year in grades 6, 7, and 8. Students in grade 6 take Reading and Mathematics. Students in grade 7 take Reading, Mathematics, and Science. Students in grade 8 take SOL assessments in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Civics and Economics, and Science. The scores range from 0 to 600 with 400 to 499 being Pass Proficient and 500 to 600 being Pass Advanced.* Students who do not pass an SOL may be considered for remediation programs and/or summer school. Failing an SOL assessment may also be used as one of many criteria for retention. Students who fail the English Reading and/or Mathematics SOL assessments in grade 8 will have an opportunity to retake the test the following year.

Additionally, students who enroll in a high school credit-bearing course with an accompanying SOL assessment, such as Algebra I and Geometry, must take the SOL assessment upon conclusion of the course. Students who do not pass one of the SOL assessments at the high school level will be considered for remediation programs and will be given the opportunity to retake the SOL assessment at each available opportunity.

*Subject to change by the Virginia State Board of Education

High School

Virginia Department of Education regulations require students to take and pass Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in order to graduate from high school with a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma. When students pass a high school course **and** pass the SOL assessment associated with that course, the student earns a *verified credit*. Verified credits can be earned in the following courses:

English: Reading/Literature/Research	World History/Geography to 1500 AD
English: Writing	World History/Geography from 1500 AD
Algebra I	World Geography
Geometry	Earth Science
Algebra II	Biology
US & Virginia History	Chemistry

No matter the diploma status, students must earn five verified credits to graduate. These verified credits are as follows:

2 in English: reading and writing 1 in history/social science

1 in mathematics 1 in science

Students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) pursuing the Applied Studies Diploma must meet Literacy and Numeracy requirements. To meet the Literacy requirements students must meet the cut score on the Grade 8 or Grade 11 English Reading SOL assessment. To meet the Numeracy requirements, students must meet the cut score on either the Grade 8 Mathematics, Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II SOL assessment.

Students who do not pass one of the SOL assessments at the high-school level will be considered for remediation programs and will be given the opportunity to retake the SOL assessment at each available opportunity.

Appendix 5 FERPA NOTIFICATION

NOTICE TO ALL PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING THE MONTGOMERY

COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ALL STUDENTS CURRENTLY ATTENDING THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHO HAVE REACHED THE AGE OF 18.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that governs the maintenance of student records. Under the law, parents of students, or students if they are 18 years of age or older (“eligible students”), have the following rights:

The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school division receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the relevant school principal or other appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal or appropriate school official, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Several exceptions exist to the rule requiring consent before release of personally identifiable information. One exception permits disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests in the information. For the purposes of this exception, a school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. A second notable exception to the consent rule relates to the disclosure of education records to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. The Montgomery County Public Schools disclose such records without prior consent. A third exception to the consent rule relates to the disclosure of “directory information.” Please see the discussion below regarding Montgomery County Public Schools’ policy regarding directory information.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605**

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that Montgomery County Public Schools obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. A student's address, phone number, or email address cannot be released in response to a request or under FOIA unless the parent has consented in writing to the disclosure. Appropriately designated directory information will be disclosed if you have given MCPS permission to do so in writing.

MCPS has designated the following categories as directory information: student's name, address, email address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

Any parents or eligible students who object to the release of any or all of this information without their consent must notify, in writing, the principal of the school where the records are kept. Using the Directory Consent form and PowerSchool, the objection must state what information the parent or eligible student does not want released. If a consent form is not received, your child's information will not be shared in any of the publications listed above.

The Montgomery County School Board has adopted a written policy regarding rights of parents and students under FERPA. Copies of the policy may be found in the Superintendent's Office, in the principal's office at each school, and in your local public library.

For additional information regarding the student records policy, contact either the principal of the school your child attends or the Superintendent's Office at 382-5100.

APPENDIX 6

MCPS Student Attendance Policy (Policy 7-2.3 updated)

Public education is a right available to all young people of school age in Montgomery County. It is provided at considerable expense to parents and other citizens of the county.

Student attendance is a cooperative effort among schools, parents, and students. To achieve optimum learning, good attendance by students K-12 is crucial. Tardies (check-ins) and early dismissals (checkouts) are disruptive to the instructional time of the entire class. Each parent or guardian is responsible for the student's regular and punctual attendance.

Regular class attendance is considered by the Montgomery County School Board to be essential to the educational process and to the satisfactory completion of the requirements of any class and subject offered. Regular school attendance also is directly related to the development of good habits, which are important in the world of work and in higher education. A ninety-five percent (95%) or better attendance rate is the goal.

School personnel shall recognize their responsibilities to motivate students to attend school and to conduct the curriculum in such a manner as to provide for the individual needs of students.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the division superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory attendance law.

Compulsory Attendance Procedures

A reasonable effort will be made to contact a parent/guardian of each absent student every day and to obtain an explanation for the student's absence, where there is no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence.

The following procedures apply when a student fails to report to school for scheduled school days:

Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support:

After a total of five (5) scheduled school days missed, where there is no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absences, the principal or the principal's designee will make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, in person, through a telephone conversation, or through the use of other communications devices to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent consequences of continued non-attendance. The principal or the principal's designee, the pupil, and the pupil's parent will develop a plan to resolve the pupil's non-attendance. The plan must include documentation of the reasons for the pupil's non-attendance.

Additional Absences Without Parental Awareness and Support:

If the pupil is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent, and school personnel have received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the principal or the principal's designee shall schedule a conference with the pupil, his/her parent, and school personnel. Such conferences may include the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the pupils nonattendance. The conference shall be held no later than ten (10) school days after the tenth absence of the pupil, regardless of whether his parent approves of the conference.

The conference team shall monitor the pupil's attendance and may meet again as necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In circumstances in which the parent is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the pupil is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or his designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the pupil and his parent within 10 school days and may: file a complaint with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court alleging that the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in Virginia Code § 16.1-228; and/or institute proceedings against the parents pursuant to § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the parents, the division superintendent's designee shall provide written documentation of the efforts already undertaken to resolve the pupil's absence. If the student's parents have joint physical custody of the student and the school

has notice of the custody arrangement, then both parents shall be notified at their last known addresses.

Ten or More Undocumented Absences Without Parental Awareness and Support:

If the pupil has ten or more undocumented absences, the principal, or his or her designee, in addition to any other actions required by applicable law or this Policy, may petition the juvenile and domestic relations court to suspend the pupil's driver's license.

Student Absences/Tardies/Early Dismissals

Student absences, tardies, check-ins, and checkouts will be recorded on a daily basis for each class in the following manner:

- a. A student is counted present only when he/she is present in the classroom or other approved designated area at the time of the tardy bell or is attending or participating in an approved school-sponsored field trip or event.
- b. A student reporting after the tardy bell or after the designated starting time for the class period will be recorded as present and tardy.
- c. If a student is being transported by a County bus or vehicle that arrives late, the student will not be counted as tardy.
- d. A student shall be considered absent when he/she does not report to class during the class period.
- e. A student who reports to the school attendance office late, with or without documentation will be marked as a check-in.
- f. A student who requests an early dismissal with documentation shall be marked as a checkout at the school attendance office.
- g. At the beginning of the school year, teachers should inform students of how the tardy policy is implemented in their classrooms for middle and high school students.

Teachers are responsible for initiating the necessary communications with parents any time absences, check-ins or checkouts are jeopardizing the student's progress in class. Absences for each grading period will be reported to the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the report card.

For elementary school students, if a student misses five (5) days within any grading period, a letter may be sent to the parent to encourage improved attendance. Retention may be considered for any student missing twenty (20) days of school.

Documenting Absences

All absences shall be identified as excused or unexcused. Each student should present to the school attendance office a written note which includes the date(s), cause(s), and the parent's/guardian's signature for daily absences, early dismissal or late arrival of the student. Parental permission for early dismissal must be presented to school officials on or before the day requested. Notes of explanation for student absences or check-ins should be received the day following the absence or check-in.

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Absences for any of the reasons listed below shall be excused.

- a. state mandated testing or other school/division testing programs;
- b. school-sponsored field trips or activities;
- c. all VHSL activities;
- d. late bus or buses which fail to run;
- e. conference with guidance counselor, administrator, or other related staff members;
- f. in-school suspension (I.S.S.);
- g. involuntary court appearance (copy of court order or subpoena required);
- h. death in the family or household (verification may be required);
- i. religious holidays (verification may be required);
- j. college visit or work based learning opportunity (verification required) up to 3 school days
- k. illness, including mental health and wellbeing (if over 3 days, the school may require verification)
- l. doctor/dental appointments (verification required)
- m. extenuating circumstances which are determined by school administration

Any excessive check-ins, checkouts, or patterns of absences may result in administrative intervention including the development of an attendance improvement plan and/or disciplinary action.

All notes of excuse, requests, or any other correspondence concerning student absences, check-ins, and check-outs shall be preserved for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days after the close of the school year.

Make-Up Work

It shall be the responsibility of the student and/or parent to request make-up work for absences and for the student to complete all assigned make-up work within one school day for every day missed (Example: miss 3 days, 3 school days to make up the work) unless the teacher extends his/her time. Teachers shall have the discretion to extend the time limit because of extenuating circumstances. Make-up work shall be provided for all absences, including absences caused by out-of-school suspensions.

Absences for Observance of a Religious Holiday

A student may be excused from school for the observance of a religious holiday. The parent/guardian of such a student shall provide a letter to the student's school in advance of the planned absence notifying the school of the planned absence, the dates of the planned absence and the religious holiday being observed.

A student who is absent in accordance with this policy shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, for any which he or she missed by reason of such absence. Make-up work shall be completed as described in “Make-Up Work,” above.

Adopted: April 2004

Revised: June 2004, August 2004, May 2008, June 2009, June 2010, June 2011, June 2014, August 2015, August 2017, June 2018, August 2018, October 2019

APPENDIX 7

School - Parent Communications

Communication

At SMS, we encourage communications between the school and home. Each staff member has an email address. Email addresses may be found on the SMS webpage at **sms.mcps.org**. SMS also utilizes ***SchoolMessenger***, a notification system designed specifically for schools, to deliver personalized voice messages and emails to parents. To receive these messages, **please make certain that your phone and email contact information is up-to-date in the office records.**

For news, announcements and updates about school events, you can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook. There is an electronic school calendar of events, including athletic events, located on the SMS webpage.

SMS will utilize Remind as a message platform for classroom teachers to communicate specific classroom messages. Coaches often utilize this messaging system to communicate with players and parents. At no time should a teacher electronically communicate with an individual student without the parent’s knowledge.

There are regular communication points during the school year when SMS will host parent-teacher conferences, provide interim (mid-point) grade reports and communicate student grades, attendance, and behavior. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the school and individual teachers, counselors, and administrators when the need arises. Student and parent issues and concerns can be more easily resolved when communication flows both to and from the student’s home and school.

There are planned events when parents can speak directly to teachers about their child(ren)’s attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Emotional or relationship issues and concerns can be discussed with the school counselor. Appointments can be made that are at convenient times for both the parent and school personnel. Parents are encouraged to have their child attend meetings and conferences in order to fully participate in the discussion or resolution.

Appendix 8

MCPS POLICY 7-1.1 EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Montgomery County Public Schools' educational programs and services shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students and shall not discriminate against any individual for reasons of race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or on any other basis prohibited by law.