



BRAVES
SHOW GRIT

Western Alamance Middle School
2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook



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Aaron Acome- Principal & 8th Grade Administrator

Debra Sparks- 7th Grade Assistant Principal

Jenise Best- 6th Grade Assistant Principal

School Nickname – Braves

School Colors – Blue, White & Gray

WELCOME

The administration and staff would like to welcome you to Western Middle School and the 2024-2025 school year. We are excited about the upcoming year and look forward to working in collaboration to make this a successful year. It is our task and pleasure to help every child reach his/her potential, academically, physically, socially, and emotionally and we cannot do it alone. The commitment and involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, staff and students is needed to ensure that all students succeed while attending Western Middle School. We thank you in helping us push your child towards success by ensuring your child has consistent attendance, is prepared for class each day, gives their best effort daily, and is involved in both curricular and extracurricular activities. Our promise to you is that we will build positive relationships between students and staff, we will push academic growth for ALL students, we will create and foster a culture of collaboration, and we will consistently communicate with parents.

Working together, we can help our students grow and Western Middle to be an outstanding school.

Aaron Acomel, Principal

Master Schedule

	Class	Start Time	End Time
6th Grade	HR / Brave Time	8:10 AM	8:30 AM
	Focus Time 1	8:30 AM	8:55 AM
	Focus Time 2	8:57 AM	9:22 AM
	1st Core	9:24 AM	10:24 AM
	2nd Core/Lunch	10:26 AM	11:51 AM
	Encore 1	11:53 AM	12:38 PM
	Encore 2	12:40 PM	1:25 PM
	3rd Core	1:27 PM	2:27 PM
	4th Core	2:29 PM	3:30 PM
	Class	Start Time	End Time
7th Grade	HR / Brave Time	8:10 AM	8:30 AM
	Focus Time 1	8:30 AM	8:55 AM
	Focus Time 2	8:57 AM	9:22 AM
	1st Core	9:24 AM	10:24 AM
	2nd Core	10:26 AM	11:26 AM
	3rd Core/Lunch	11:28 AM	12:53 PM
	4th Core	12:55 PM	1:55 PM
	Encore 1	1:57 PM	2:42 PM
	Encore 2	2:44 PM	3:30 PM
	Class	Start Time	End Time
8th Grade	HR / Brave Time	8:10 AM	8:30 AM
	Focus Time 1	8:30 AM	8:55 AM
	Encore 1	9:24 AM	10:09 AM
	Encore 2	10:11 AM	10:56 AM
	1st Core	10:58 AM	11:58 AM
	2nd Core/Lunch	12:00 PM	1:25 PM
	3rd Core	1:27 PM	2:27 PM
	4rd Core	2:29 PM	3:30 PM

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

VISITORS

Parents and visitors are welcome in our school. All visitors are required to sign in the visitors' log at reception, wear a visitor's badge, and obtain permission to visit a classroom or volunteer in our school. All visitors must be escorted to their destination to ensure the safety of staff and students and limit disruption to classroom instruction.

Parents are only allowed to do a classroom observation by setting it up with their grade level administrator at least 48 hours prior to the desired date of observation.

Arrival

All students should report to school by 8:30 a.m. Parents will be released into the car rider circle beginning at 7:45. All students should enter into the B wing door and report to the gym. When students arrive, they should report directly to breakfast if desired, or to homeroom. Students should not be released from homeroom to get breakfast.

Dismissal

The school day ends at 3:30 p.m.

Car Riders

We know and understand that sitting in the car rider line can be a task. However, it is the parents responsibility to pick up car riders on time. Students must be picked up by 4:00 or when the car rider line is complete/the student stays with our after school program. If car riders are left after the car rider line is complete, we will follow these steps per semester (the steps start over at the beginning of the new semester):

Step 1: Verbal reminder to the parent

Step 2: Written reminder to the parent

Step 3: You will be charged \$10.35 (daily rate) for your child to stay in our after school program that day.

Walkers

Students are allowed to walk to their home, within a mile of WAMS, at dismissal with parent permission on file in the office. **However, students are not allowed to be picked up off school grounds. Students are not allowed to walk to nearby businesses in order to be picked up.**

Early Dismissal

Parents must present I.D. and sign students out should dismissal during the school day be necessary.

BUS INFORMATION

Students who come to school on the bus should return home on the same bus, unless they have a note from their legal guardian signed by an administrator. Bus students are to go immediately to the buses as soon as the specific bus is called. **Riding the school bus is a privilege. Failure to adhere to bus dismissal rules and established bus guidelines will result in disciplinary action including in school suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS) and/or suspension from the bus.** Please review the required bus contract for further information regarding bus transportation rules and expectations.

If your child is to go home by a different means of transportation, a note must be given to an administrator for approval at least one hour prior to dismissal. **Students are not allowed to ride a bus with other students due to space on our buses.**

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, TARDY, & GRADING **POLICIES**

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in school is imperative for educational success. School attendance is required by state law for all children between the ages of seven (7) and sixteen (16). The primary responsibility for school attendance rests with students and parents. The ABSS School Board seeks the full cooperation of parents in promoting good attendance and punctuality. Parents and legal guardians must ensure that students attend and remain in school daily. No person shall encourage, entice or counsel any child to be absent from school unlawfully.

The principal must assure adherence to attendance policies and regulations and notify parents of their responsibility under the Compulsory Attendance Law (G.S. 115C-378). Teachers must monitor and report student absences on a daily and class period basis and follow all rules and regulations concerning attendance.

The K-8 policy specifies that a student with more than twenty (20) absences during the school year may be subject to retention. Parent conferences will be held when a student accumulates an abnormal number of absences. After fifteen (15) absences, a letter will be sent to the parent or guardian to appear before the attendance committee to provide documentation that the absences are legal. It is the state attendance policy that a student must be present at school $\frac{1}{2}$ of the day to be counted present. If a student comes in after 11:53 a.m., he/she will be marked absent. The $\frac{1}{2}$ -day rule means any amount of time that adds up to a $\frac{1}{2}$ day. **Please remember a child must be present at school to attend extracurricular activities on the day of the event.**

EXCUSED ABSENCES

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the teacher or principal designee within 2 days after returning from an absence **or be submitted on the school website**. An absence may be excused for the following reasons:

Extended illnesses require a statement from a physician. Once a student has accumulated more than 10 unexcused absences in a school year (or more than 5 consecutive absences), a doctor's note (or other documentation approved by the principal) can be required by the principal to excuse further absences. This standard does not apply to medically fragile students as defined in the NC School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual and approved by the principal.

An Excused Absence for ANY reason is still a recorded absence. Board Policy excuses absences for the following reasons: 1. Illness or injury; 2. Quarantine; 3. Death in the Immediate Family; 4. Medical, Dental, or Other Health Care Provider Appointments; 5. Court or Administrative Proceedings; 6. Religious Observances; 7. Educational Opportunity; 8. Local School Board Policy; 9. Absence Related to Deployment Activities.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY EXCUSED ABSENCES

Requests for Educational Excused Absences Parents must provide a written request to the principal at least one week in advance in order for a team review of the request. The decision to excuse (in part or in full) will be documented with the child's homeroom teacher and data manager for accurate record keeping. Requests received during or after the trip will be denied. Requests should provide details on how the trip will reinforce the curriculum under study in the current grade of the child. **While many experiences are educational, the parameters for an excused absence are intended to reinforce curriculum standards or afford a unique opportunity such as an academic or athletic competition.** Please visit the curriculum section of the ABSS website for current grade level standards to align your reasons for requesting the time away to grade level standards.

Note: Family vacations, trips to Disney, long weekends at the beach or mountains as well as family reunions and celebrations are not reasons to request excused absences for educational opportunity.

Whether absences are excused, unexcused or because of school suspensions, the student will be permitted to make up his or her schoolwork. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

MAKE UP WORK

Students are responsible for securing make-up assignments. **Students are entitled to twice the number of days absent to complete all work initially assigned while the student was absent (maximum of five days).** Students who have missed over 10% of school days may be unable to make up assignments. In cases with unusual circumstances, the time allowed to make-up work may be extended with the approval of the principal.

GRADING AND REPORTS

Western Middle School operates on a nine weeks reporting system for grades. Report card dates are [linked here](#). Parents are encouraged to go over their child's report card carefully.

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100 B = 89-80 C = 79-70 D = 69-60 F = Below 60

MISSING/LATE WORK

Students will be allowed to turn in assignments up to one week after the due date with a possible point penalty.

CURRICULUM, TESTING & CONFERENCE INQUIRIES

At Western Alamance Middle School, we value open communication between parents, students, and teachers. If you have questions regarding your child's curriculum, testing, or would like to set up a conference to review academic achievement, please follow the process below:

1. Curriculum Questions

- Step 1: Start by contacting your child's teacher directly via email or phone. Teachers can provide details on lesson plans, learning objectives, and materials being used in the classroom.
- Step 2: If further clarification is needed, or if you would like to discuss broader curriculum topics, you can contact the grade-level assistant principal or the school's principal.

2. Testing & Assessment Inquiries

- Step 1: For questions about standardized tests, classroom assessments, or grading policies, please contact your child's teacher.
- Step 2: If you have questions related to district or state testing procedures, reach out to the school's testing coordinator or administration.

3. Setting Up a Parent-Teacher Conference

- Step 1: Conferences can be requested at any time throughout the year. Simply email or call your child's teacher to request a meeting to discuss academic progress or any concerns.

- Step 2: If needed, a team conference with multiple teachers can be arranged to provide a comprehensive review of your child's performance. Contact the school office for scheduling assistance if multiple teachers are involved.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS & DRESS CODE

DRESS CODE

The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his/her parents. Each student is expected to maintain an appearance that is neither distracting to other students nor disruptive to the educational environment and healthy climate of the schools.

UNACCEPTABLE DRESS

Headwear: No hats, durags, bonnets, or hoods, should be worn in the building.

Clothing: Student dress and grooming should meet minimum standards of hygiene and be presentable for the educational environment. No clothing may be worn which is provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar or obscene; which endangers the health or safety of the student or others; or which might reasonably be expected to cause substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

Examples of prohibited dress or appearance include, but are not limited to, exposed undergarments; sagging pants; shirts that expose a students chest (cleavage), oversized shirts that cover shorts; bare midriff shirts; strapless shirts or dresses (except on picture days); attire with messages or illustrations that are lewd, indecent or vulgar or that advertise any kind of product or service not permitted by law to minors; see-through clothing; attire that exposes cleavage; any adornment such as chains or spikes that could reasonably be perceived as a weapon; and any symbols, styles or attire associated with intimidation, violence, or violent groups about which students at a particular school have been notified.

Consequences:

1st offense- Verbal Warning (student will need to change clothes if the clothes cause a major disturbance to the learning environment). Parents will be called.

2nd offense- Required to change clothes and parent phone call

3rd offense- ISS

4th offense- ISS with required parent conference with an administrator

5th offense- OSS

Note: Exceptions apply to students participating or taking part in student related activities/functions and other activities approved by the school administration

CELL PHONES

Student cell phones, earbuds, and Airpods should not be seen or heard from 8:10-3:30. Student cell phone use is only allowed in the case of an emergency which includes contacting parents in case of canceled games and practices. If a student's cell phone is seen or heard, staff should follow the steps below:

First infraction: Warning (this includes whole class warnings, signs on the door that remind students to put away their cell phones/Airpods/earbuds away).

Second infraction: Teacher should take the student phone/earbuds until the end of the class period. The parent should be called and a minor infraction will be documented.

Third infraction: The grade level administrator will hold the phone until the end of the day. The teacher will need to contact the appropriate grade level administrator via email or cell phone to retrieve the phone/earbuds. The parent will be called and a major infraction will be documented.

Fourth infraction: The grade level administrator will hold the phone for the remainder of the day and the following day. The student should drop off their cell phone the following morning.

Fifth infraction: The phone will be confiscated and the student will be assigned a major infraction for non-compliance and receive consequences according to the ABSS Code of Conduct.

IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)

Students who exhibit behaviors that are unacceptable for the school may be assigned to in-school suspension (ISS). Students assigned to ISS will work on their regular school assignments in a closely supervised, isolated environment until judged ready to return to the regular classroom. Student athletes that are assigned ISS (not Chill Out) will be unable to participate in practice that day.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)

Out of School Suspension prohibits students from entering the school grounds or attending any day, night, or after school activity, or riding a school vehicle during the period of suspension. Western Middle School students are subject to the North Carolina General Statutes, ABSS Board Policy, the ABSS Student Code of Conduct and Western Middle School rules. Please refer to the ABSS Student Code of Conduct for the school board policy and rules that apply to all students.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

We are fully committed to ensuring parents and students constantly communicate to talk about students successes and struggles when necessary. As needed, parents can request parent/teacher conferences.

LUNCH BALANCES

Parents must complete a free/reduced lunch form each year to be eligible. Students who owe over \$50 will be unable to participate in afterschool, paid extracurricular activities. Students will also be unable to try out for sports. To find or pay your child's lunch balance, please visit: <https://www.k12paymentcenter.com/>.

ATHLETICS & INJURIES

ATHLETICS/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students at Western Middle School are encouraged to participate in the many extracurricular activities offered. Interscholastic athletics are offered for 6th-8th grade students for the following sports: baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross-country, dance, football, softball, track volleyball, and soccer (State regulations prohibit 6th graders from participating in football). Students must meet state and local eligibility requirements in order to try out for a sports team.

Eligibility Requirements

- Students must be less than fifteen years of age on or before October 16 of the current school year. Once a student enters the sixth grade, they have six consecutive semesters of eligibility.
- Students must maintain a passing grade in all four core subjects and one elective subject each semester. If a student is academically eligible or ineligible at the beginning of the semester, that status is retained for the entire semester.
- Students must receive a medical examination once every 365 days by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant.

Students are ineligible to participate in any extra-curricular activity during ISS assignments. The period of ineligibility will include the day of the incident.

Please contact Nick Coller, Athletic Director, for more information concerning athletics and athletic eligibility questions.

INJURIES/MEDICAL INFORMATION

If a student is injured at school, he/she must report the incident immediately to the nearest adult. Office staff must complete an accident/injury report, and a

parent/guardian will be notified. If a student becomes ill at school, he/she **will** be allowed to report to the office to contact a parent/guardian.

In order for students to take medication of any kind during the school day (prescription or over-the-counter), an *AUTHORIZATION OF MEDICATION FOR STUDENTS* form (available in the office) must be **completed AND signed by a doctor**. For a student to be excused from Physical Education or a student with physical restrictions, there must be a doctor's note on file. All completed authorization forms must be turned in to the main office along with the medication.

MEDIA CENTER

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Western Middle School media and technology program mirrors that of the American Association of School Librarians:

The mission of the school library and technology program at Western Middle School is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, school researchers, and ethical users of information by:

- Collaborating with educators and students to design and teach engaging learning experiences that meet individual needs.
- Instructing students and students and assisting educators in using, evaluating, and producing information and ideas through active use of a broad range of appropriate tools, resources, and information technologies
- Providing access to materials in all formats, including up-to-date, high-quality, varied literature to develop and strengthen a love of reading
- Providing students and staff with instruction and resources that reflect current information needs and anticipate changes in technology and education
- Providing leadership in the total education program and advocating for strong school library programs as essential to meeting local, state, and national education goals.

DEVICES

Student devices are owned by the school. School staff are able to review content on student school devices. School devices can be confiscated as part of a consequence or device concern and students will be required to complete tasks on paper.

Students that lose their device will be unable to receive a loaner device until the fee is paid. Students who crack their screen and do not pay the fee of \$52 will

receive a loaner that must be turned in by the end of each school day. If students do not consistently turn in their loaner or destroy (accidentally or purposefully) a device will not receive a loaner or new laptop.

MEDIA CENTER STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be respectful to staff and students at all times. Students need to be responsible for taking care of all materials used in and borrowed from the library media center.

Media Center rules are:

- Be kind and Considerate to all
- Take care of materials
- Don't cut through the library

GENERAL POLICIES

Borrowing Materials - Students

Students may check out three (3) fiction and/or nonfiction books for two (2) weeks. Students who wish to check out more than three books may do so if granted permission by the library media specialist. Students are allowed one renewal for most items.

Materials that have a hold request will not be renewed. Additional books needed, for major classroom assignments (e.g. biographies, research materials, etc.), may also be borrowed. Upon request, the materials can be borrowed for longer than two weeks as needed to complete the assignment.

Materials from the library media center are provided to meet the diverse needs of our patrons. Therefore, materials cover a wide range of interests and reading levels.

Students are encouraged to return materials that do not meet their individual needs.

Fines

The library media center encourages students to take care of borrowed materials and emphasizes that it is the responsibility of students to check out materials and to return them on time and in good condition. Students are encouraged to let us know about damages when they occur.

Cracked Screen- \$52

Destroyed Computer- \$250

Charger Replacement- \$25

Lost/New Device- \$250

Missing Keys: Varies depending on whether the entire keyboard must be replaced

Mother/daughter boards: varies depending on the damage

Book Fines

There is no fine for overdue books; however, there is a charge for lost books. Books that have been damaged will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (there is no charge for books that have fallen apart due to wear and tear or because it was poorly bound). Refunds will be issued if a lost book that has been paid for is returned by the student who paid for it within 30 days of the payment; after 30 days, no refund will be issued.

For several other ABSS policies and procedures, please see the ABSS website under Board of Education.