



**Whitwell Middle School
(Non-Abbreviated Version)
Student/Parent Handbook
2025-2026**

**Home of the Tigers and
The Children's Holocaust Memorial**

**Principal: Dr. Josh Holtcamp
Assistant Principal: Jennifer Holder**



(423) 658-5635



(423) 658-6949



WMS@MCTNS.NET

USE FOR TRANSPORTATION CHANGES (BY
2:30 PM CST) AND FOR PARENT/DOCTOR
NOTES



WHITWELLMIDDLESCHOOL.ORG
TEACHER EMAILS ARE LISTED BY GRADE LEVEL

Text the school and
correct grade level code
to the number 81010 or
'Join a Class" in remind app



WMS Student Body:
@6c4gbb9864

5th grade:
@g96eh2

6th grade:
@47ee77

7th grade:
@7thwms2526

8th grade:
@adkhadh

Follow us on social Media:



WHITWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Vision: Working together to build relationships and facilitate a love of learning for our future graduates so they can become productive citizens.

Mission: We believe in our students and their success. In order to ensure that they have the necessary academic, communication, and social skills to be college or career ready upon high school graduation, we will create a stable and safe learning environment and build relationships. By providing a high quality educational program and by teaching our students to respect the cultural differences and the rights of all people, we will be successful in creating self-sufficient citizens who are adaptable to change.

Whitwell Middle School Faculty Emails:

Either email address may be used when contacting faculty and staff.

Dr. Josh Holtcamp	Principal	jholtcamp@mctns.net jholtcamp@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Jennifer Holder	Assistant Principal	jholder@mctns.net jholder@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Felicia Floyd	5th Grade Math	ffloyd@mctns.net ffloyd@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Amy Patterson	5th Grade Science	apatterson@mctns.net apatterson@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Ms. Rebecca Spradlin	5th Grade ELA	rspradlin@mctns.net rspradlin@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Ms. Katie Hood	6th Grade ELA	katiehood@mctns.net khoo@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Kirsten Long	6th Grade Social Studies	klong@mctns.net klong@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Amber Jackson	6th Grade Math	ajackson@mctns.net ajackson@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Renee' Miller	5th/6th Ex. Ed.	rmiller@mctns.net rmiller@whitwellmiddleschool.org

Mrs. Kendra Hedrick	7TH Grade Sc./SS	Khedrick@mctns.net khedrick@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Brittany Ruth	7th Grade ELA	bruth@mctns.net bruth@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Morgan Guyear	7th Grade Math	mguyear@mctns.net mguyear@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Tanya Barbee	8th Grade ELA/SS	tbarbee@mctns.net tbarbee@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Angie Chidester	8th Grade Math/Sc.	achidester@mctns.net achidester@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Kristi Morrison	7th/8th Ex. Ed.	kmorrison@mctns.net kristimorrison@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Ms. Kristi Bumpus	Speech	kbumpus@mctns.net kbumpus@whitwellelementary.org
Ms. Linda Bartmess	Guidance Counselor	lbartmess@mctns.net lbartmess@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Gwen Coleman	Librarian	gcoleman@mctns.net gcoleman@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mr. Roger Payne	Music	rpayne@mctns.net rpayne@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Taylor Kilgore	Career Explorations	taylorkilgore@mctns.net tmcdaniel@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Shea Layne	Physical Education	slayne@mctns.net shealayne@whitwellmiddleschool.org

Whitwell Middle School Staff Emails:

Either email address may be used when contacting faculty and staff.

Mrs. Sissy Tate	Secretary	state@mctns.net state@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Linda Howland	Bookkeeper	lindahowland@mctns.net lhowland@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Jenni Sitz	Assistant	jsitz@mctns.net jsitz@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Dean Fine	Ex. Ed. Assistant	dfine@mctns.net dfine@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Jennie Green	Assistant	jenniegreen@mctns.net jgreen@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Sheri Goforth	Ex. Ed. Assistant	sgoforth@mctns.net sgoforth@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Ms. Jeffi White	Assistant	jwhite@mctns.net jwhite@whitwellmiddleschool.org
Mrs. Kathy Brown	Cafeteria Manager	kbrown@mctns.net
Mrs. Betty Lofty	Cafeteria	
Mrs. Sherri Ramsey	Cafeteria	
Mr. Gerald Bone	Custodian	
Mr. Joey Layne	Custodian	
Ms. Madonna Thomas	Head Custodian	mjthomas@mctns.net
Mr. Doug Roberson	SRO	douglas.roberson@yahoo.com

Commonly needed numbers:



WMS LIBRARY
(423) 658-7258



CENTRAL OFFICE
(423) 942-3434



**TRANSPORTATION
& ATTENDANCE:**
MACK REEVES
(423) 942-0945
EXT. 110



**TRANSPORTATION
& ATTENDANCE
LIAISON:**
DAVID SMITH
(423) 942-0945
EXT. 109

Marion County Non-Discrimination Policy:

It is the policy of the Marion County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs, or employment policies as required by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title IX (1972 Educational Amendments), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is also the policy of this district that the curriculum materials utilized reflect the culture and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, and disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country, and as awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a pluralistic society.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI, and VII, and IX or Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act should be directed to the office of the Director of Schools, Marion County Schools, 204 Betsy Pack Drive, Jasper, TN 37347, or the office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Washington D.C.

Section 504:

The Marion County School System complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, or disability. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities.

Section 504 provides that, “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States.....solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” The school system has designated the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Sharon Yarber, Marion County Board of Education, 423-942-3434.

Whitwell Middle School Policies

Message to Parents:

The entire handbook is arranged alphabetically for easy reference. Since it is not possible for this handbook to address all issues that may arise during the school year, parents and students should understand that the school's administration will use its professional judgment to make decisions on specific situations as they occur.

NEW POLICIES FOR 2025-2026



THE ONLY STUDENTS ALLOWED TO WALK TO THE ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL AT DISMISSAL ARE THE ONES WHOSE PARENT(S) ARE EMPLOYED THERE.



STANLEY BRAND AND/OR STYLE CUPS ARE NOT ALLOWED. ONLY WATER BOTTLES WITH A TWIST OR FLIP TOP ARE ALLOWED. WATER BOTTLES MUST CONTAIN WATER, ONLY!



STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WEAR "PAJAMA PANTS".

Arrival/Dismissal:

Arrival: Drop-Off time begins at 7:00 a.m., not before. School hours are from 7:50 a.m. until 2:50 p.m. Classes begin at 7:50 a.m. and students are tardy at 7:55 a.m..

Dismissal: Announcements will be made at 2:45 p.m. Carriders and Walkers will be dismissed at 2:50 p.m.; busses will be called thereafter according to bus arrival.

Car riders must be dropped off and picked up at the rear of the building in the morning and afternoon. The bus lane will remain open at all times.

Because there are students who walk from the elementary and high schools, use caution as they cross in front of cars. It is against Tennessee State Law to pass buses or cars when picking up or dropping off students. Violators will be addressed by the SRO.

Our front driveway is west to east. In the morning, you need to enter via Valley View Highway, go to the rear of the building, drop off your student, and exit via Valley View Highway.

To help dismiss students safely, you will be given a card/placard to place on your visor. This card will have your child's name and grade listed on it. If you need multiple card/placard(s) for multiple drivers, please let the office know.

In the afternoon, you must line up your car double file (subject to change after school begins due to volume of traffic) not blocking the main drive from Valley View Hwy. When you have your child in the car you must circle the front drive and exit onto Valley View Hwy. No child, other than your own, is allowed to ride home with you without written permission from his/her parents, even if this person is listed on the student's emergency card. Written permission notes are subject to approval from administration and are to be given to homeroom teachers. If we do not have a permission note, you will be asked to pull to the side until verification can be made. Please do not be upset with WMS personnel on duty. They are following directives from administration which is for the safety of all students.

Please do not come to the school office and ask to pick up your child unless you are signing him/her out of school. Instruction time ends at 3:00. Any student that is checked out before this time will be considered an early dismissal. You must use a doctor/dentist note or parent note, or the dismissal will be UNEXCUSED.

The office is very busy at the end of the day and there is not sufficient room for parents to wait for their children to come to the office. We recognize that occasionally there may be a circumstance or appointment that requires you to pick up your child in the office at the regular dismissal time.

Otherwise, all students are dismissed at the back of the building. Thank you in advance for not abusing this circumstance.

FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL STUDENTS, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A STUDENT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITH ANYONE WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE PARENT/GUARDIAN. ANY PERSON THAT MAY BE PICKING UP YOUR CHILD FROM SCHOOL NEEDS TO BE LISTED ON THE EMERGENCY CARD. It is crucial that the information on the emergency card be kept up-to-date, especially with legal alerts and phone numbers.

When you (or an authorized person listed on the emergency card) are picking up your child for the first time, you will be asked to provide your driver's license, which will be scanned and recorded in the Raptor system. This system instantly screens a registered list of sex offenders.

The only students allowed to walk to the elementary and high schools at dismissal are the ones whose parent(s) are employed there.

Athletic Program:

Whitwell Middle School is a member of the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA) and is under its constitution and bylaws. Any student who is going to be participating in any sport must have the proper completed TSSAA physical form from the physician certifying that they are physically able to participate and a consent form with appropriate insurance information before they are allowed to begin practice. One physical will cover your child for any sport for one calendar year. Forms are available in the school office or on the website.

To be eligible to participate in 7th & 8th grade sports, a student must not have his/her 15th birthday before August 1st. 6th grade students must not have their 13th birthday before August 1st. 5th grade students are not eligible to participate in middle school athletics.

Athletic contracts will be given to all students and must be signed before students will be allowed to participate. Coaches will make all decisions about team members and playing time. Their decision is final and will not be overruled by school administrators.

Admission for all athletic events, except tournaments, is: Students \$3.00 and Adults \$5.00. Younger brothers and sisters may not remain at school with older siblings for practice and/or games.

Parents must provide transportation to/from practice as well as games. Your child will need a note giving permission to ride with other parents, if you are not going to the game. The note needs to be turned into the office the morning of the event.

Attendance:

Students are awarded at the end of the year for perfect attendance. Perfect attendance means being present every minute of every day. Students with excused absences, early dismissals, or tardies do not have perfect attendance.

Unless a student is going to be absent for an extended period of time, please do not call the school office to request work. If your child must be absent for an extended period of time and work is to be sent home, please remember that teachers need ample time to prepare the work. Do not expect teachers or the office to have the work available before the next school day.

In order to be eligible to participate in after school activities, a student must be present for at least 3.5 hours of the school day. For example, a student will not be allowed to participate in an after school event(s) if he/she leaves before 11:30 or checks in tardy after 11:30. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on an individual basis by administration.

If a student is absent 18 or more days of school during the year for any reason, excused or unexcused, he/she will be identified as "Chronically Absent."

A complete copy of Marion County Attendance Policy is included in the back section of the student handbook.

Behavior Plans and Consequences:

Good classroom behavior is essential for maximum learning to take place; therefore, each student is expected to participate and cooperate in class activities. Classroom rules and standards of behavior are grade level specific and will be shared with students and parents. If problems occur, parents will first be contacted and expected to work closely with the teacher in helping the student adjust to the expected standards of behavior.

Students may be questioned by teacher(s) or principal(s) about any matter pertaining to the operation of the school and the enforcement of its rules without the presence of parent/guardian(s). If time permits, parent/guardian(s) will be notified, especially if there are discipline consequences.

If a student continues to have problems and is sent to the office, a variety of consequences may be enforced by administration, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. note home
- B. administration meets with student
- C. mandatory parent conference
- D. after-school detention
- E. paddling (If the need arises, a parent/guardian will be contacted for permission.)
- F. loss of privileges
- G. alternative school

Each student who participates in any Whitwell Elem./Middle/High School sponsored activity, on or off campus, is a representative of Marion County Schools and will conduct himself/herself as such. Students who violate regulations at these activities are subject to disciplinary action as defined in the Student Code of Conduct.

A student who is serving out of school suspension or alternative school may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activity on any day

that he/she is on suspension. This includes attendance at elementary and high school events.

GOLDEN RULES

- We will not mistreat others.
- We will try to help students who are mistreated.
- We will try to include students who are left out.
- If we know that somebody is being mistreated, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

ANY bullying, hazing, or harassment should be **IMMEDIATELY** reported to a staff member AND school administration. He/she will be asked to complete a Whitwell Middle School Complaint Form. Forms are available from any teacher and the school office.

IS IT BULLYING?

When someone says or does something
unintentionally hurtful
and they do it once, that's
RUDE.

When someone says or does something
intentionally hurtful
and do it once, that's
MEAN.

When someone says or does something
intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it
even when you tell them to stop or show
them that you're upset - that's
BULLYING!

*A complete copy of MCBOE Bullying/Hazing/Harassment Policy is included in the back of the student handbook.

Bus Conduct:

Bus transportation is provided for students living in Marion County. All students are subject to the authority of and discipline of each bus driver at all times.

*A complete copy of the MCBOE bus rules is included in the back section of this handbook.

Cafeteria:

All students are encouraged to participate in our school breakfast and lunch program. All meals are FREE. Students may bring a lunch from home, however, in order to comply with the National School Lunch Program and to ensure that each child receives a nutritious meal, no breakfast or lunch from outside restaurants will be allowed in the cafeteria. Canned drinks or drinks in commercial containers cannot be brought into the lunchroom.

MealpayPlus is an online service that offers you the convenience and information you need to manage your student's meal account. To create a new account or access your account, go to www.mealpayplus.com. Meal accounts are used to purchase extra and/or ala carte items. Students are encouraged to make all deposits in their account each Monday morning from 7:15–7:55.

Marion County Schools operate on a closed lunch period. Students are not permitted to leave campus for lunch.

Additional nutrition information is available in a handout included with the registration packet. Any questions or concerns about the cafeteria should be directed to Kathy Brown, the cafeteria manager.

In order to make the cafeteria a safe place to eat and to enjoy your lunch, the following guidelines will be in effect.

Cafeteria Guidelines:

- Enter the cafeteria and fill in all of the seats.
- Stay seated until your table is called to go through the lunch line.
- Upon getting your lunch tray, return to the table where you were seated.
- Eat your lunch without yelling or screaming at others.
- Stay seated until your table is dismissed. This is when you will throw away your trash and return your tray.
- The only time you are allowed to leave your seat is to purchase extra items.

Positive Rewards:

- Karaoke
- Verbal praise and compliments
- Games
- Sitting with friends

Negative Consequences:

1. Verbal warning(s)
2. Office referral
3. Isolated lunch
4. Silent lunch

Cell Phones:

Students are allowed to bring a cell phone to school, however, they are not permitted to use them without permission from a teacher or staff member. **Students may view them during arrival/dismissal times, so long as they are not a distraction. Cell phones are not allowed to be out at any time during the school day.**

If a student needs to make a call, they need to ask permission from the teacher(s) on duty. Land lines are always available for student use.

All phones must be given to a student's homeroom teacher upon arrival. Students will be assigned a number and a designated area in a cell phone organizer. Phones will then be locked in a student's homeroom

teacher's closet for the remainder of the day. Phones are returned to students at the end of the school day. Failure to give a homeroom teacher your phone may result in loss of privileges.

The Marion County Board of Education nor Whitwell Middle School will be liable for any devices lost, stolen or destroyed. Accountability and maintenance for the device will be the sole responsibility of the student, parents, or guardian.

Absolutely, under no circumstance will cell phones be allowed in restrooms and dressing/locker rooms. No cell phone videos are to be recorded without the express permission of the teacher or administrator. Arguing with a teacher or staff member about a phone may result in the student receiving a discipline referral to the office.

If a student violates the cell phone policy, the following consequences will be in effect.

- 1st Time violation = Phone is returned to student at end of school day.
- 2nd Time Violation = Parent/Guardian must pick up the phone.
- 3rd Time Violation = Student will be considered defiant which is a Category II offense, and could result in suspension.

Chain of Command:

We recognize that there are times that you become upset and have concerns about your child's academic or behavioral progress, or you simply need more information for clarification purposes. If you have such issues with your child's teacher, please follow the proper chain of command:

If the issue involves a **TEACHER**:

1. Speak to the teacher first either by phone, email, text, etc. Please do not call the principal or assistant principal first.
2. If the issue is still not resolved, speak to the principal or assistant principal.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, speak to central office personnel.

If the issue involves a **BUS**:

1. Speak to the transportation supervisor, Mack Reeves. His office number is 942-0945, Ext. 110.
2. If the issue is still not resolved, speak to the principal or assistant principal.

If the issue involves the **SAFETY** of your child or another student:

1. Speak to the teacher and/or principal and assistant principal.

If the issue involves the **PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**:

1. Speak to them first.
2. If the issue can't be resolved, contact central office personnel.

We ask respectfully that no matter how upset you may be, please refrain from posting on social media, until the chain of commands listed above are followed.

Change of Address or Phone Number:

If you change your telephone number or address at any time during the school year, please send a note to the secretary, Mrs. Sissy Tate, so that corrections can be made on your child's records. You may also email her at state@mctns.net.

Cheating:

Cheating shall be defined as one or more of the following actions:

1. To use the work of another person as your own.
2. To copy information from another student's test, examination, composition, quiz, homework, book report, or term paper.
3. To plagiarize: plagiarism means using another person's idea, expression, or words without giving the original author credit.
4. To prepare for cheating in advance. Such actions involve:
 - a. having in your possession a copy of a test to be given or having been given by a teacher
 - b. using the test or notes during a test or examination
 - c. talking while taking quizzes, tests, or examinations
5. To fail to follow test procedures or instructions announced by a teacher such as no talking, no turning around in the seat, raising your hand to ask questions, etc.

When a teacher determines to his/her satisfaction that an act of cheating has taken place, he/she will give the student a zero ("O"). The student may also be sent to the office and be subject to school discipline.

Chewing gum, snacks, candy, and restaurant/store food:

Chewing gum for students is not permitted. This includes bus and car duty. Students who continue to violate this policy will be addressed.

Occasionally students may be given candy or snacks as a reward or these items will be sold by the school. Students are not allowed to distribute snacks or candy without permission from a teacher or staff member.

Students are encouraged to eat breakfast at school. No food or drinks from restaurants/stores are allowed in the bus room. This includes coffee drinks, monster drinks, etc.

Classroom assignment of students (homeroom):

Students will be placed in a classroom that best meets his/her academic and/or social needs. These groups are subject to change based on student progress. Please do not request that your child be moved from one classroom to another unless you can provide appropriate documentation that supports this request.

Classroom Safety:

Unless a teacher directs a student to do otherwise, backpacks must be stored in lockers once a student comes to his/her homeroom. Backpacks on wheels are not allowed because they will not fit in lockers. Bags carried to class must fit on the back of a student's desk or chair. Toys, collectible cards, fidget spinners, etc. are distracting and are not allowed in class.

Communication:

The easiest and quickest way to communicate with teachers is by email. Phone calls will be returned at the earliest convenience of teachers, which may be the next school day during their planning times.

In case of early dismissal, every effort will be made to notify parents in a timely manner. Information will be sent via Remind, FB, Twitter, and Instagram. When there is a possibility that school will be canceled or delayed please stay tuned to local radio and TV stations.

Computer/Network Rules and Guidelines:

Teachers integrate technology into each classroom for instruction, assignments, projects, research, and assessment. For this purpose, each student will be issued a Chromebook device to use while in a classroom. These devices are owned by the Marion County School System and should not be removed from a classroom without permission from a teacher.

The device to be issued is an educational tool and should be used in that capacity. All devices will also be monitored by the teachers and administration using the GoGuardian program. Student accounts are monitored all day, each day. Should an inappropriate search term be recognized, students will be notified and warned. Should the behavior occur again, the student will face disciplinary consequences which could include losing privileges of using the device.

Student email should be used for appropriate, legitimate, and educational purposes. Email communication between parents and students is **NOT** allowed during the school day.

*A complete copy of the MCBOE Internet Policy is included in the back section of this handbook.

Conferences and Progress Reports:

Formal student progress reports are sent home every 4 ½ weeks with the exception of the last nine weeks. Student progress is available for continuous review by using ParentVue. You will be provided a password to access the program. Teachers enter grades weekly at their discretion.

Most of the time issues can be resolved with a phone call or email, but if you wish to schedule a conference, please contact your child's teacher. The entire grade level team is present at a parent conference and conferences take place during a team's planning time (listed below).

5th Grade: 12:05-12:55 PM CST

6th Grade: 10:35-11:25 AM CST

7th Grade: 1:10-2:00 PM CST

8th Grade: 9:30-10:20 AM CST

Tips for Making the Most of Everyone's Time During Parent Conferences:

1. Show up on time.
2. Don't disrespect the teachers during the meeting.
3. If you're not on good terms with your child's other parent, leave it at the door. (Don't drag your child or teachers into custodial issues.)
4. Stay in the present. (Don't reference something that happened three months ago or bad mouth a teacher from previous years.)
5. Come in with an idea of what you want to discuss.
6. Don't take information too hard. (The common goal for everyone is success for your child.)
7. Respect time limits.

*Adapted from: Go See the Principal, True Tales from the School Trenches by Gerry Brooks.

Counselor Services:

Whitwell Middle School has a full-time school counselor who is available for students during the school day.

Curriculum:

Whitwell Middle School closely adheres to the Tennessee state curriculum standards. These standards are available at the following web address:
<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards.html>.

4-H is a regular part of our curriculum and is a required activity for all of our students. Monthly meetings are held during the school day for the 5th and 6th grades. Most teachers give students extra credit for participating in 4-H projects. 4-H for 7th and 8th grade students takes place after school. Times will be announced when available.

Teachers will provide a course syllabus at the beginning of each course including information such as, but not limited to, the following: teacher goals/requirements and grading policies.

Delivery of Student gifts:

Because it is disruptive to the learning process, NO GIFTS MAY BE DELIVERED TO OR LEFT AT SCHOOL. This includes birthdays and holidays.

Dress Code:

All students are expected to adhere to common practices of modesty, cleanliness, and neatness that are not disruptive to the learning environment. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to adhere to the MCBOE dress code.

The entire MCBOE dress code is available in the back section of this handbook. Commonly asked questions are listed below:

Top 10 frequently asked student/parent questions about Dress Code

***Any clothing that is distracting to the learning environment will not be allowed.**

1. Do shirts have to be tucked in? No, but your shirt must be long enough to cover your stomach when arms are raised.

2. Are belts required? No, as long as pants are at normal waistline and are not sagging.
3. Can I have holes, rips, tears, etc. in my jeans? No, except below the fingertips.
4. Can I wear leggings? Yes, as long as the shirt is fingertip length.
5. How long do my shorts, skirts, dresses, etc. have to be? At least fingertip length (when a student stands up straight and puts hands at sides, shorts, skirts, and dresses must be at least to the end of middle finger or longer).
6. Are piercings allowed? Piercings are allowed.
7. Can I wear a “cold shoulder” shirt? Cold shoulder shirts are not allowed.
8. Are athletic shorts allowed? Yes, as long as they are fingertip length.
9. Can I wear tank tops or spaghetti straps? No.
10. Can I wear tank tops or pajama pants? No.
 - When a student violates the dress code, parent/guardian will be contacted to bring appropriate clothes or clothes will be given to the student from the WMS clothes closet.
 - If dress code violations become excessive, students will be sent to the office for a discipline referral.

Our school follows the MCBOE dress code. The dress code is not as strict as it has been in past years. Please do not abuse it or argue with teachers or staff about its requirements.

There will be dress down days for specific occasions. Modest dress is still required on these days.

If you are in doubt about whether you should wear an item, consult the Marion County Board of Education Dress Code Policy for full details or ask before wearing.

Drinks:

The Stanley brand and/or style cups are not allowed at WMS. However, clear water bottles that have a twist or flip top are welcomed.

Emergency/Medical/Hazards:

Fire, tornado, lockdown, and other multi-hazard safety drills will be held periodically during the school year. The signal for multi-hazard drills will be announced on the public address system, originating from the office. After the announcement, everyone should follow the appropriate drill instructions.

Family Privacy:

No information about students will be discussed or released over the phone. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance records, report cards, progress reports, custody, and personal information. This information will have to be obtained in person, through law enforcement, or through court services (lawyer, judges, etc.).

If you are allowed to request student information, you will be provided a Records Request Form to complete. Requests for information will try to be completed when you complete the form, but may take 1 - 2 days, depending on the workload of office staff.

*The entire Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) information is provided in the back section of this handbook.

Family Involvement and Engagement Plan:

Family involvement activities will be offered throughout the year. Information will be sent home and will also be posted on the school website, Facebook, Remind, Instagram, and Twitter.

*A complete copy of the WMS family/community engagement plan is included in the back section of this handbook.

Fees:

Whitwell Middle School charges a \$25.00 room fee to offset the cost of repairs to student Chromebooks.

Field Trips:

Field trips are used to enhance the school curriculum. Should your child's grade level or club/organization decide to participate in a field trip, you will be notified in a timely manner.

Fundraisers:

Fundraising is necessary if we are to conduct a quality program. Money raised will be used to purchase needed supplies and equipment. No funds for any WMS organization or club shall be raised in the name of or for the use of the Whitwell Middle School Program without the approval of the principal.

Grading Scale:

A: 100-90

B: 89-80

C: 79-70

D: 69-60

F: 59 or below

Students have opportunities to be recognized in the following ways:

- **Honor Roll:** 80 or above Average. Every final class grade is at least an 80 or above.
- **Principal's List:** 90 - 100 Average. Every final class grade is at least a 90 or above.
- **Highest Average Grade Level Awards:** For the student at each grade level who has the highest average in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science.
- **Perfect Attendance:** Each student will receive an award for not missing any time in a given grading period and throughout the entire year.
- **End of the Year Awards:** Students who are on Honor Roll and/or Principals List for the first three quarters of the school year will be

recognized. Students with the highest average in each subject for the first three quarters of the school year will be recognized. Students with perfect attendance will be recognized. (This is not an exhaustive list.)

Gym:

All students are expected to participate in physical education. While in the gym, students are to abide by the following rules:

- Be respectful of classmates at all times.
- No horseplaying, touching, wrestling, etc. of any kind, especially in the locker rooms.
- Tennis shoes only on the gym floor.
- Report all injuries to the gym teacher immediately.

Late Work:

Work is considered late if it is not submitted by the due date and time determined by the teacher. Work submitted late will not receive full credit. The only late work that might be considered for full credit would be for the following situations:

- The student arranged an alternate due date with the teacher well in advance of the original due date.
- Work is late due to extenuating circumstances.

Lockers:

Lockers are assigned by homeroom teachers. There are no locks used at Whitwell Middle School. Do not bring large amounts of money or valuables to school. Books and personal property left in the locker are the responsibility of the individual students and not the school. Magnetic decorations are allowed on lockers as long as they are not distracting. Locker shelves are also allowed. Due to the residue left on lockers, no stickers are allowed.

Locker breaks will be scheduled by the grade level teachers. The school reserves the right to enter any student locker without warning or consent from the student if administration feels there is reasonable cause.

Lost and Found:

Articles of clothing, books, backpacks, etc. are placed in the lost and found tubs which are located outside the gym, in the 5th/6th Grade hall, and in the 7th/8th Grade hall. Glasses, keys, wallets, jewelry, etc. will be located in the office. Students should search these locations for lost articles before and after school. Whitwell Middle School will not be responsible for personal items lost at school. Articles not claimed by the end of each nine weeks will be donated.

Tennessee law authorizes school systems to withhold diplomas, grades and transcripts as well as to postpone the taking of final exams if students have lost textbooks, uniforms, and equipment belonging to the school system or owe fines, tuition, or any other monies regardless of whether the student is on the free or reduced lunch program.

It is vital that students be responsible for books and equipment issued to them from the school. Every effort will be made to retrieve the lost items or the fines for cost of replacement for the items.

Medication:

No teacher can routinely dispense medication to students. All medication must be locked in the office, including over-the-counter meds.

Medications cannot be given to a teacher to administer. If a student is required to take medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal or the principal's designee will administer the medication in compliance with the school board policy (policy 6.405). For any school employee to administer medication of any kind a form signed by a physician must be on file in the office. The school nurse or secretary has a copy of the medication form.

No Nit/Lice Policy:

According to Marion County Board Policy, no student shall be denied an education solely by reason of head lice infestation, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the infestation.

*The entire MCBOE policy is included in the back section of this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signatures:

Often parent/guardian signatures are requested on various student information such as test papers, report cards, etc. Your signature indicates that you are aware of your child's progress. Only parent signatures will be accepted on such documents. Students are not allowed to sign for their parent/guardian, even with parental permission.

Parent phone calls, emails, and texts:

Parents should not contact students during school hours via phone call, email, or text. Students will not be called out of class to receive messages about alternate transportation, extra-curricular activities, practices, sleep-overs, etc. Messages will be communicated at the end of the day on afternoon announcements.

Partnership Promise:

We count on students, parents, and teachers to work together in a partnership with the goal of success for all students. A copy of our school's partnership promise is located in the back of this handbook.

Peanut-Free Zones:

Due to student allergies, our school has peanut-free zones. These "zones" are classrooms where students with these allergies attend.

Public Displays of Affection (PDA):

To show affection through physical contact on campus or at school activities is not in good taste for students. Inappropriate behavior of this nature may be cause for disciplinary action.

R.O.A.R. Expectations and Celebrations:

At Whitwell Middle School, we follow the ROAR way of life in all areas of the building and in our interactions with each other. The R.O.A.R. expectations are as follows:

R-Respectful

O-Organized

A-Ambitious

R-Responsible

We celebrate our students that demonstrate WMS R.O.A.R characteristics once per 9 weeks. A student is ineligible to attend the R.O.A.R. celebration if he/she:

- **Has (3) or more unexcused absences per 9 weeks**
- **Misses TGIF (3) or more times per 9 weeks**
- **Receives a consequence and/or punishment administered from Dr. Holtcamp and/or Mrs. Holder.**

For example, if a student receives one of the following, he/she is unable to participate in the R.O.A.R. celebration: Alternative School, Corporal Punishment, ISS, or After School Detention.

RTI (Response to Intervention):

All students participate in an intervention program 30-45 minutes each day. Students are divided into tier groups. These tiers are based on data from benchmark assessments given in August, December, and May of each school year, as well as weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring, depending on a child's tier.

Each 4½ weeks after the first nine weeks of school, teachers meet to review student progress and data and to shift students between tiers if needed.

School-wide procedures:

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS A GIVEN AND APPLIES TO ALL SITUATIONS AND PROCEDURES: Keep hands, feet, objects, and negative comments to yourself.

The following procedures will be introduced and rehearsed with students during the first weeks of school.

AM Arrival:

1. Report directly to the gym or auditorium unless you are eating breakfast. You will not be permitted to leave the gym or auditorium once you enter. Do not go to the restrooms, lockers, or office.
2. Sit by grade level and do not relocate.
3. When your grade level is called, use the bleacher exit procedure and go to homeroom.

Car Rider Line:

1. Watch for your ride. Do not go home with anyone else unless you have written permission.
2. Wait until your ride stops moving before you walk to it. Look both ways before walking to your car.

Entering the Cafeteria and Eating:

1. Sit at a designated table and wait until your table is called before going to the line.
2. Quietly talk to people at your table.
3. Clean up your eating area, including the floor.

Exiting the Cafeteria:

1. One person holds the door for the rest of the students.
2. Wait until your table is dismissed before exiting.
3. When leaving the cafeteria, do not run or scream.

Fire Drill:

1. Upon hearing the alarm, immediately stop what you are doing and listen for teacher instruction.
2. Follow the teacher outside in a single file line without talking or running.

3. Stay in line and wait for teacher instruction.

Going to the Restroom:

1. Go to the restroom at designated times.
2. Do not linger or visit with friends as others are waiting to use the restroom.
3. Flush toilets and wash your hands.

Lockdown:

1. Upon hearing code, immediately report to the nearest classroom without talking or screaming.
2. Remain calm and listen for teacher instruction.

Medical Situation:

1. Upon hearing the code, immediately report back to the classroom.
2. If you are in the location where the medical situation is taking place, exit the area in a single file line without talking.
3. Wait for teacher instruction.

Opening and Closing of Lockers:

1. Pull up on the latch when opening.
2. Make sure that all items are tucked inside the locker before closing.
3. Pull up on the latch when closing. This will prevent the locker from slamming.

Pledge and Morning Announcements:

1. When you hear the national anthem, stop what you are doing, stand, and show respect to our country.
2. Remain standing for the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence.
3. Sit down without talking and listen to morning announcements.

PM Dismissal:

1. Walk at all times when your buses are called.
2. Report to your designated area, in the gym.
3. If there are remaining students in classrooms at 3:00, students will walk with the teachers to the bus rooms.

Seating in Gym Bleachers:

1. When entering or exiting, use aisles as walkways. DO NOT walk on seats.
2. Sit in your designated area and do not relocate.
3. Put litter in trash cans.

Student Group Response to Faculty or Staff:

1. When attention signal ("If you can hear my voice, clap once. If you can hear my voice, clap twice. If you can hear my voice, clap three times.") is given, students respond by:
 - a. Stop talking.
 - b. Eyes on speaker.
 - c. Listen to instructions.

Tornado Drill:

1. Upon hearing the announcement, immediately stop what you are doing and listen for teacher instruction.
2. Follow the teacher to designated safe areas in a single file line without talking or running.
3. Wait for teacher instruction.

Traveling in Halls:

1. Walk to the right.
2. Listen to teacher directions.
3. Pick up trash.

While Visiting the Office:

1. Show your hall pass and let the office staff know your purpose in visiting.
2. Have a respectful attitude and show courtesy by saying please, thank you, yes/no ma'am, and yes/no sir.

School Visitors:

Any visitor entering our school must use the front entrance by the railcar and ring the bell to gain entrance to the office. Upon arrival, a government issued photo ID will be required to receive a visitor badge. Students are not allowed to open locked doors for anyone other than a Whitwell Middle School staff member.

Former students who desire to visit during school hours for any purpose, shall first secure permission from the school principal or designee.

ANY PERSON FOUND ON SCHOOL GROUNDS WITHOUT PERMISSION IS TRESPASSING AND IS SUBJECT TO ARREST BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Telephone Use:

There is only one telephone line available for use at school. This phone is a business phone. It is not to be used to make arrangements to go home with friends nor for other personal business. Any plans that students make which will cause a change in their afternoon destination should be made before their arrival at school.

Transportation Changes:

If you do not send a note in the morning with your child, all transportation changes for the afternoon must be made in person, by fax, or by email (wms@mctns.net). Please do not email your child's teacher or the principals, as this may delay the delivery of the message to the office. As a general rule, no changes will be accepted over the phone. Certainly there are times when an emergency may arise and a phone call is your only option. We understand this circumstance but **PLEASE DO NOT CONTINUALLY** ask the office staff to grant transportation courtesies by allowing you to make changes over the phone.

Withdrawal:

When a student is leaving WMS to attend another school, the parent/guardian must come to school to notify office staff. The student will then be issued a withdrawal form to take to his/her teachers, cafeteria, and library staff. This process usually takes about thirty minutes. Upon completion and when accounts are cleared, a withdrawal form will be given to the parent/guardian to take to the new school.

Marion County Policies

Plus, additional school information referenced in the front section of the handbook.

**A COMPLETE LIST OF ALL MARION COUNTY POLICIES IS AVAILABLE AT:
<http://www.marionschools.org/?DivisionID=10287>.**

Annual Notice to Parents

In compliance with state and federal law, Marion County school district will provide to each protected student with a disability without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected student with a disability, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected students who are disabled" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, contact the director of Exceptional Education Services at 423-942-3434.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. Continued unexcused tardiness and /or skipping school classes are considered a violation of compulsory attendance. Unexcused tardiness includes any late arrival when the student fails to bring an acceptable note upon arriving. Excused and unexcused absences are the only two (2) types of excuses recognized by the Marion County School System. Students and parents

must accept full responsibility for regular school attendance. It is the student's responsibility to monitor his/her unexcused absences and tardiness. Students not in attendance during at least 50% (3:50 hours) of the school day are not allowed to participate in afterschool programs. The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent/guardian.

Grades K-12

The building principal, in determining excused and unexcused absences, may use some discretion. The school office will need approved excused notes turned in and filed to aid the attendance supervisor in documenting attendance. All excuses must be turned in within 3 days of the student returning to school. For the purpose of record keeping, late check-ins and early check-outs are considered as tardies. Five (5) tardies will accumulate into one (1) day absent. More than six (6) parent notes for any reason per one hundred and eighty days (180) shall require a doctor's or dentist's excuse. These parent notes are accepted at the Principal's discretion. The following shall be accepted by any certified employee of the Marion County School System as an excuse for absences, tardiness and early dismissal.

Excused absences shall include:

1. Medical reason:
 - a. Only six (6) parent notes, whether consecutive or not, can be excused in the one hundred eighty day (180) school year.
 - b. All absences due to illness must be accompanied by a medical note.
2. Illness of immediate family member:
 - a. immediate family member refers to a person's parent(s)/guardian(s) or sibling.
3. Death in the immediate family
 - a. absences not to exceed three (3) days: (parent, guardian, step-parent, brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or any other family member that resides in the student's house.
4. Legal (court order, attorney, subpoena, summons, truancy board, etc).
5. A one day excused absence shall be granted for students whose parent or guardian is leaving for active military duty or returning from active military duty. Documentation must be provided to the student's school.
6. School Bus Transportation Issue
7. Religious observances
8. School-sponsored activities or school endorsed activities i.e. college visits and field trips
9. Other excuses for "good cause" shall be granted, provided prior approval is obtained from the principal. Anticipated absences shall be excused in advances by the building principal. Forms will be available from the principal's office.
10. The parent shall notify the school of the absence of the child before 8:30 AM each day the student will be absent.

Absolutely no absence will be excused without a parent or doctor's note. However, parent notes do not automatically "excuse" the absence for the student. Parent notes may be sent by email or fax as long as parent/guardian's contact information is included as follows:

- name of student
- the current date

- date of student's absence
- reason for absence
- working phone number
- parent/guardian's signature

A written excuse from a doctor, dentist, or dentist, or other medical professional must have the following:

- date and time of the appointment

Only dates specified on the note will be excused as medical. Only doctor's excused for the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses within the area of the doctor's certification will be accepted. Students who have office visits not involving an illness (ex; tests, physicals, visits to the dentist, or health department) are expected to return to school and will be excused for reasonable travel time.

The Principal or their designee shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excused are submitted for absences are verified;
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

Truancy:

Students shall be present at least fifty (50) percent of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students receiving exceptional Education services may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan.

If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s) and the school provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.

Students who are absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of School/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the student's absences. The Director of Schools /designee shall also comply with state law regarding the reporting of truant students to the proper authorities. If the student accumulates a total of five (5) unexcused absences, then he/she is subject to referral to juvenile court.

The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan:

Marion County Schools
Attendance Intervention Tiers

Tier I		3 Days (Unexcused)
School	<u>Action Level</u>	• Implement proactive attendance procedures that identify students with a chronic attendance issue. (letters, phone calls, home visits, meetings, conference). • Handbooks will provide parent/guardian/students written notice of the law at the beginning of each school year. • Monitor attendance data. • Establish a positive and engaging school culture. • Letters are to be sent home after 3 days of unexcused absence • Schedule a conference with parent/student. • Develop and sign a contract stating the specific expectations and additional penalties, if warranted. • Student Progress will be monitored on a regular basis and additional communication with the home (calls, meetings, home visits) will be scheduled as needed.
Tier II		5 Days (Unexcused)
School Community Resources/Agencies	<u>Action Level</u>	• Conduct an individual attendance assessment to identify the barriers impacting attendance. • Develop an intervention plan to address the barriers. • Refer the student to school based services which may include counselor, nurse or special education. (if needed) • Utilize Centerstone Service within the school setting where available. • Letter will be sent home at 5 days of unexcused absences. • Referral made to Truancy Board. • Possible Home Visits to check-on student welfare
Tier III		5 + Days (Unexcused and Excused)
School, District, Judicial	<u>Action Level</u>	• Letter will be sent home at 15 days of total absences. • Review the barriers identified in intervention plan. • Current intervention plan and contract submitted to the Office of Pupil Services. • Petition filed with Juvenile Court. • Coordinate with probation officer or service agency assigned by the court. • Make additional recommendation to parent(s) based on outcome of judicial intervention. • Make referral to Department of Children's Service, if attendance is impacting academic growth at the level of educational neglect. • Refer the student to district based services which may include Family Resource Centers, Coordinated School Health, School Psychologist.

****If doctors, dentist, or other medical professional notes appear to be excessive ten (10) days, this will result in referral of the student to the Truancy Review Board for further review. Because there are scheduled breaks throughout the year, i.e. fall break, Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, and spring break. **Family vacations and skip days will not be excused.****

Military Service of Parent/Guardian:

School Principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one day excused absence upon the return of the parent or custodian serving active military service.

Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his /her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during these absences.

School Based Extracurricular Activities:

State guidelines for students and schools; students are expected to be in school 93 percent of the school year, which only allows 13 absences per year. Students with more than 13 absences may be denied school based extracurricular activities. Examples; field trips, ball games, dances, and graduation activities, etc. These decisions will be decided on a case by case basis by a school-based team composed of Principal/Assistant Principal, school counselor, member of the Marion County Schools Attendance office, a student's teacher and SRO.

Make-up Work:

The length of time for completion of make-up work shall be two (2) days per day missed.

State-mandated assessments:

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled TCAP exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or must have been given an excused release by the Principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a makeup test. Excused students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam.

Students who have an unexcused absence shall receive a failing grade on the course exam which will be averaged into their final grade.

Credit/Promotion Denial:

Credit/ promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion. If attendance is a factor; prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. Student and the parent/guardian shall be advised if student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.
2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

Driver's License Revocation:

More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any ninety (90) days semester renders a student ineligible to retain a drivers' permit or license, or to obtain such if of age.

In order to qualify for reclaiming a driver's permit or license, the student must make a passing grade in at least three (3) full unit subjects of their equivalency at the conclusion of a subsequent grading period.

Attendance Hearings:

Students with excessive (more than 5) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the Director of Attendance and Principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the

committee. The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist or to determine if the student has meet the requirements that would allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send written notification to the Director of Schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of Schools/designee.

The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received. Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the board, and the board shall review the record. Following the review, the board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee. The action of the board shall be final.

Attendance & Postsecondary School Visits:

High school students participating in postsecondary school visits will be counted as present as follows:

1. High school students may have 2 postsecondary school visits during junior year and 2 during senior year.
2. The parent or legal guardian must notify the high school one week prior to the postsecondary school visit.
3. A signed letter or form from a campus official of the postsecondary institution verifying the students visit to the campus must be submitted to the high school after the visit.
4. All school work missed by the student during the postsecondary school visit must be completed in a timely manner.
5. Postsecondary school visits are not mandatory for any high school student.
6. Postsecondary school visits are the sole responsibility of the parent or the guardian of the high school student. The student's parent or guardian are solely responsible for facilitating postsecondary school visits and for ensuring the safety of students during the visit.

*** The Director of Schools /designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and disseminated to all students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrative staff.

Bullying/Hazing/Harassment Policy:

The Marion County Board of Education has determined that a safe, civil, and supportive environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. In order to maintain that environment, acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, hazing or any other victimization of students, based on any actual or perceived traits or characteristics, are prohibited.

This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parents. This policy shall cover employees, employees' behaviors, students and students' behaviors while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, this policy is in effect if the conduct is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process. Building administrators are responsible for educating and training their respective staff at the beginning of each school year as to the definition and recognition of violations of this policy, as well as strategies to address known violations. Also schools are to annually make available to students and parents information relative to bullying prevention.

DEFINITIONS:

Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment-An act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and the act has the effect of:

- Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
- Knowingly placing a student or students in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- Causing emotional distress to a student or students; or

- Creating a hostile educational environment.

Bullying, intimidation, or harassment may also be unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, national origin, color, gender, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment. Bullying/harassment of a student with a disability could constitute discrimination and violation of federal law and is prohibited. (IDEA, Section 504, ADA)

Cyber-bullying-A form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, text messaging, emails, social networking sites, instant messaging, videos, websites or fake profiles. Cyberbullying is a violation of TN law and charges may be filed when violated.

Hazing-An intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health or safety. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone or tolerate hazing activities. "Hazing" does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS:

Alleged victims of the above-referenced offenses shall report these incidents immediately to a teacher, counselor or building administrator. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal/designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy, to a school administrator. Written complaints may be requested. While reports may be made anonymously, an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or

legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation or to take necessary actions to resolve a complaint, and the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. The principal/designee at each school shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints. The principal/designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy, and such act shall be held to violate this policy when it meets one of the following conditions:

- It places the student in reasonable fear or harm for the student's person or property;
- It has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Upon the determination of a violation, the principal/designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. Within the parameters of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, a written report on the investigation will be delivered to the parents of the complainant, parents of the accused students and to the Director of Schools.

Bus Rules:

Rule 6, Rules and Regulations, formulated by the State Board of Education: "A pupil shall become ineligible for pupil transportation when his or her behavior is such as to cause dissension on a school bus, or when student disobeys state or local rules and regulations pertaining to pupil transportation."

1. Be on time at the designated school bus stop. Be at the bus stop prior to the bus arriving. This helps keep the bus on schedule.

2. Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter or leave the bus. Observe the ten (10) feet rule around the bus.
4. Do not, at any time, extend your arm, head, or any part of the body out of the bus window.
5. Do not leave your seat or move about while the bus is in motion.
6. No loud talking or yelling that could divert the driver's attention from operating the bus. Be absolutely quiet when approaching or crossing a railroad track or traveling up and down a mountain. No talking may be used at driver's discretion at any time.
7. No profane or immoral language, smoking or use of tobacco, drugs, or intoxicating beverages in any form or any improper conduct will be tolerated.
8. Keep books, packages, coats, and all other objects out of the aisles.
 - a. Do not, at any time, throw any object on the bus or throw anything out of the bus windows.
9. Do not, in any way, damage seats or anything inside of the bus. Person(s) responsible for damage of any kind to the bus will be made to pay for the cost of repairs and bus privileges will be denied. Student(s) will be held responsible for actual replacement repair cost in addition to other discipline actions. Writing or marking on seats has a cost of \$25.00. If marks or writing does not come off, then \$75.00 replacement cost will be charged to the student and bus service denied in accordance with School District disciplinary actions. Cutting of seats is an automatic \$75.00 replacement charge. Students will not be allowed back on the bus until damage is paid in full or a payment plan is implemented. Students are responsible for the seat in which they are sitting.
10. Pupils must obey the driver at all times and the bus driver has the authority to assign seats to pupils.
11. Pupils must not cross the road in back of the bus. Always cross in front of bus. If you cross the street, loading and unloading, wait for the driver's signal and cross well in front of the bus.
12. In case of a road emergency, remain in the bus until instructions are given by the driver.
13. No eating or drinking permitted while on the bus. No chewing gum.

14. Fighting is a major offense which will result in immediate removal from the bus.
15. Any other actions that disrupt the normal procedures of bus transportation or could result in any accident.
16. Cell Phones are not to be out or used at any time, unless the driver has granted permission for an emergency. Buses will also follow current cell phone policy.
17. Students placed in Alternative School are denied bus privileges, unless the transportation supervisor gives approval for modified service.

Disciplinary Actions: Minor Offenses:

- 1st Time: Bus driver talks to child about misbehavior
- 2nd Time: Bus driver sends Bus Conduct Report home with student to the parent(s)/guardian(s), and copy to the Central Office.
- 3rd Time: The Bus Driver will complete the bus conduct report and the principal suspends student from the bus for 5 days
- 4th Time: The Bus Driver will complete the bus conduct report and the principal suspends student from the bus for ten (10) days.
- 5th Time: The Bus Driver will complete the bus conduct report and the principal suspends student from the bus until parent/guardian request a DHA Hearing with the Marion County Schools Transportation Office. The number is 423-942-0945 Ext: 110. DHA Members will reconsider future bus privileges. Director of Transportation will not be a voting member of the DHA Committee nor Chair the Meeting, but will be there to support the driver and Contractor.

Major Offenses:

Rules #7, 8a, 9, 14, and 15 (with 15 being at the discretion of the principal).

- 1st Time: The Bus Driver will complete the bus conduct report and the principal suspends student from the bus 5 days.
- 2nd Time: The Bus Driver will complete the bus conduct report and the principal suspends student from the bus ten (10) days.
- 3rd Time: The Bus Driver will complete the bus conduct report and the principal suspends student from the bus until parent/guardian

request a DHA Hearing with the Marion County Schools Transportation Office. The number is 423-942-0945 Ext: 110. DHA Members will reconsider future bus privileges. Director of Transportation will not be a voting member of the DHA Committee nor Chair the Meeting, but will be there to support the driver and Contractor.

Once the discipline report is signed by the principal, the student will be off the bus and have to contact the parent/guardian for transportation home at the end of the school day.

NOTE: Any student denied bus privileges will be denied privileges on all other buses. Students placed in Alternative School are denied bus privileges, unless the Transportation Director gives approval for modified service.

Child Advocacy Group Contact Information:

In addition to the state and local resources available to parents and children, there are many agencies and organizations that offer support, information, training, and help in advocating for persons with disabilities in Tennessee.

A few of these organizations are listed below:

The ARC of Tennessee is on the Internet at <http://www.thearctn.org/>

44 Vantage Way, Suite 550 Nashville, TN 37228

Phone: 615-248-5878

Toll-free: 1-800-835-7077

Fax: 615-248-5879

Email: pcooper@thearctn.org

Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP) is on the Internet at

<http://www.tnstep.org/>

712 Professional Plaza Greeneville, TN 37745

East Tennessee:

Phone: (423) 639-2464

Email: karen.harrison@tnstep.org

Tennessee Protection and Advocacy (TP&A) is on the Internet at

<http://www.tpainc.org/>

416 21st Avenue South Nashville, Tennessee 37212

Phone: 615-298-1080

Toll-free: 1-800-287-9636

TTY: 615-298-2471

Fax: 615-298-2046

Tennessee Voices for Children is on the Internet at

<http://www.tnvoices.org/main.htm>

East Tennessee: (Knoxville Area)

Phone: 865-609-2490

These are but a few of the organizations available to help with information, training, and advocacy. For a more extensive list visit the Tennessee Disability Services -Disability Pathfinder Database:

<http://mingus.kc.vanderbilt.edu/tdir/dbsearch.asp>

On the web page, select your “county” and the “service” you desire from the drop-down lists and click “Submit.” This information is provided as a service to individuals seeking additional avenues for help and information. The Department of Education does not intend this as an endorsement or recommendation for any individual, organization, or service represented on this page.

Child Custody and Parent Access:

The Board presumes that the person who enrolls a student in school is the student's custodial parent. Unless a Tennessee court specifies otherwise, the custodial parent shall be the one whom the school district holds responsible for the education and welfare of that child.

Parents or guardians shall have the right to receive information contained in school records concerning their minor child. The Board, unless informed otherwise, assumes there are no restrictions regarding the non-custodial parent's right to be kept informed of the student's progress and activities.

If restrictions are made relative to the rights of the non-custodial parent, the custodial parent shall be requested to submit a certified copy of the court order which curtails these specific rights.

Unless there are specific court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent, upon request, shall be given access to all of the student's educational records including but not limited to the student's cumulative file and the student's special education file, if applicable.

No principal or teacher shall permit a change in the physical custody of a child at school unless:

1. The person seeking custody of the child presents the school official with a certified copy of a valid court order from a Tennessee court designating the person who has custody of the child; and
2. The person seeking custody shall give the school official reasonable advance notice of his/her intent to take custody of the child at school.

Code of Conduct:

Any principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal (herein called principal) may suspend/expel any student from attendance at school or any school-related activity on or off campus or from attendance at a specific class or classes, or from riding a school bus, without suspending such student from attendance at school (in-school suspension), for good and sufficient reasons.

Student offenses are in four categories as prescribed in Board policy. Most of these are listed below. Administrators responsible for discipline will classify any offense not listed below unless directed by the Board.

CATEGORY I:

Offenses to be administered by the school that may result in detention, loss of privilege, demerits, corporal punishment or suspension due to severity of incident.

1. Refusing to do assigned work
2. Tardiness (class or school)

3. Refusing to participate in required school activities (wellness activities, reading, instruction, etc.)
4. Minor violations of school or classroom rules
5. Conduct which disrupts the peace or good order of the school or the learning environment (impudence, profanity, disorderly conduct, and no regard for authority, etc.)
6. Inappropriate dress or appearance considered disruptive to the school.
7. Unauthorized use of a copying machine, computer, phones, or printers.
8. Loitering (no student should remain at school beyond last bus departure)
9. Inappropriate public display of affection
10. Open food or drink in school without permission

CATEGORY II:

Offenses that may result in suspension or referral outside the school. *** If any student is placed in TSS or is in OSS he/she will not be allowed to participate in any school function including field trips, athletic practices or contests.

- **First Time Category II Offense:** 5 days suspension
 - **Second Time Category II Offense:** 10 days suspension
 - **Third Time Category II Offense:** Referral to Board of Education for expulsion
1. Fighting (both parties, unless one was attacked for no apparent reason)
 2. Use of foul or abusive language
 3. Disrespect to teacher/staff/peer
 4. Harassment (verbal or physical)
 5. Assault (verbal or physical)
 6. Use or possession of tobacco in any form
 7. Use or possession of any incendiary device (i.e. lighter, matches)
 8. Insubordination (not following a directive from a teacher, administrator or other school system employee)
 9. Leaving school grounds or class without permission—including lunch period
 10. Repeated refusal to do assigned work
 11. Chronic disruption
 12. Failure to provide correct identity/address
 13. Dishonesty (copying, cheating, forging signatures, etc.)
 14. Misuse/destruction of school property

15. Extortion
16. Sexual misconduct (policy 6.304)
17. Participation in school disruption
18. Receipt, sale, possession or distribution of stolen property (reported to legal authorities)
19. Trespassing on school property
20. Prescription drug policy violation
21. Unauthorized possession or use of school keys
22. Gambling (i.e. pitching pennies, dice or other activity)
23. Computer hacking or tampering
24. Stealing (may be reported to the police)
25. Bullying, threatening, hazing or intimidating behavior
26. Defiance
27. Possession of a laser pointer

CATEGORY III:

Offenses in this category are not automatically considered zero tolerance but will be treated as such by the principal unless there are extenuating circumstances.

1. Pulling a fire alarm or otherwise causing one to sound when no fire or smoke is visible
2. Possession or detonation of an incendiary or explosive material (firecracker or greater as well as stink/smoke bombs, poppers, etc.)
3. Destruction of school property
4. Sexual harassment (as defined in policy 6.304)
5. Inciting disruption of school activities (i.e. stopping normal proceedings in school)
6. Repeated violation of school rules.
7. Verbal or physical assault of a student/employee

CATEGORY IV:

There shall be zero tolerance for the following offenses and these offenses shall be reported to the director of schools and the Board for expulsion and will also be reported to law enforcement officers.

1. Possession/use of alcohol and/or other drugs (shall be reported to law enforcement)
2. Possession/sale/distribution of drug paraphernalia (including rolling papers)

3. Arson
4. Bomb threat
5. Possession/sale/use or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substances
6. Possession and/or use of weapons or any instrument used as a weapon to injure someone intentionally or any instrument or toy intended to be a weapon
7. Indecent exposure which includes wearing, while on the grounds of a public school during the regular school day, clothing that exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent manner that disrupts the learning environment
8. Battery on a school employee

Dress Code:

1. **Rationale:** The principals, designated by the Board of Education as the educational leaders of Marion County Schools, are generally responsible for the attitude, manners, and conduct of the students and staff. Therefore, the principal, subject to confirmation by the Director of Schools and the Board of Education, has specific authority to determine a standard of dress and good grooming that will be compatible with a wholesome school situation. All students are expected to adhere to common practices of modesty, cleanliness and neatness; to dress in conformity with the accepted standards of the community; and to contribute in such manner to the academic atmosphere and not detract from it. No attempt will be made to dictate fashion styles as long as they are in keeping with Marion County Schools' policies. It should be noted, however, that it is the responsibility of the student and parent to adhere to the Dress Code. The Administrators of the Marion County Schools shall have the right to appraise any current fashion or fad and determine whether or not it is appropriate for school. Fashions that the principal deems a distraction to the educational process will not be allowed. In matters of opinion, the judgment of administrators will stand. In order to provide a safe and secure school, strengthen the educational focus, and establish an orderly learning environment while preparing students for success in the professional workplace,

students, parents and faculty at Marion County Schools have established the following standards for student dress and appearance.

2. **General Information:** Students are expected to adhere to dress code at all times while on campus during regular school hours. The school staff will correct any fixable violations, with repeated violations possibly carrying disciplinary consequences. If a student arrives at school and cannot comply with the dress code, he/she will not be allowed to attend classes. The student will be isolated, and a parent called to bring appropriate clothing. If there is a question regarding a questionable item, please obtain clarification from the school administration before wearing the item.
3. **All Apparel:**
 - a. Must be size appropriate, and free from holes, rips, tears, cuts, or frayed hems.
 - b. No article of clothing may be worn which implies or otherwise promotes alcohol, sex, tobacco, drugs, violence, gangs, racial or offensive language. This includes belt buckles and jewelry
 - c. Extraneous zippers, metal studs, or dangling cloth strips are forbidden.
 - d. Any item bearing the logo of any school other than the school the student attends is strictly forbidden. College, military or professional sports team logos are acceptable.
 - e. Solids and patterns are permitted.
 - f. No undergarments should be visible at any time.
 - g. No holes that show skin or undergarments.
4. **Bottom Wear:** Shorts and skirts length must be at or below fingertips. Slacks, shorts or skirts will be worn at or above the hip point and be able to stay up without a belt, NO undergarments are to be visible at any time. Leggings are required to be covered by clothing that extends to or below the fingertips.
5. **Dresses and Skirts:** For female students, dresses or skirts are acceptable if they meet guidelines for top/bottom wear. Dresses or blouses must have sleeves, no slender straps or tanks, no cold shoulders.
6. **Shirts:** Shirts must cover the midriff area and have a modest neckline. Any style or pattern is acceptable as long as it is modest and

appropriate. Unacceptable items include but are not limited to: items with a low neckline, made of see-through material, shirts with cutouts, or jerseys unless issued by school. Shirts must be worn under team jerseys.

7. **Shoes:** Shoes must be worn at all times. House shoes or slippers are not allowed. Shoes must have a back or heel strap and no flip-flops.
8. **Coats/Jackets:** Lightweight jackets including sweaters, vests, sweatshirts, or raincoats are permitted. No long or trench coats are allowed, no exceptions. Coats are not permitted to be worn in the school building (exception: when entering or leaving the building or when there is a defect in the heating system) Coats are defined as items that are normally associated with outdoor wear and/or worn over indoor clothing for protection from outside elements.
9. **Accessories:** Headwear is not to be worn by any student while in the school building. This includes hats, ball caps, wool hats, beanies, bandanas, do-rags and skull caps. Large, long and/or heavy chains, studded or chained accessories are prohibited including wallet or belt chains. Sunglasses indoors are prohibited.
10. **Special Situations:** If a student cannot comply with the standardized dress code based on religious belief, vertical disability or by the request of a doctor, a parent or guardian may write a letter explaining the situation to the principal with a copy to the Director of Schools. Each case will be evaluated on an individual case by case basis and if the parents and student are not satisfied an appeal may be sent to the Director of Schools.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, requires that Marion County school district, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Marion County school district may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Marion County school district

to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.
- Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.¹

If you do not want the Marion County school district to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing by the last Friday in August.

The Marion County school district has designated the following information as directory information: [Note: an LEA may, but does not have to, include all the information listed below.]

- Student's name, Address, Telephone listing, Electronic mail address, Photograph, Date and place of birth, Major field of study, Dates of attendance, Grade level, Participation in officially recognized activities and sports, Weight and height of members of athletic teams, Degrees, honors, and awards received, The most recent educational agency or institution attended.

¹ These laws are: Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-110), the education bill, and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002* (P.L. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the nation's armed forces.

Family/Community Engagement Plan for Whitwell Middle School:

Under the Federal Projects Director, with the assistance of the Family/Community Engagement Coordinators, the school system shall plan, design, and implement the Title I program which includes the following:

- Parent input into the planning, design and implementation of the Title I program;
- Meaningful consultation of parents in planning, design and implementation of the Title I program;
- Activities and procedures for the involvement of parents that are of sufficient size, scope and quality to give reasonable promise of substantial progress toward achieving the required goals.

To ensure that parents have an adequate opportunity to participate in the planning, designing, and implementing of the Title I program, the Whitwell Middle School shall:

- I. Convene an annual meeting, to which all parents are invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents about the following:
 - A. Parents will be a part of the Family/Community Advisory Council. WMS invites parents, teachers, and community leaders to become members of the Family/Community Advisory Council. This council meets at least once in the fall and at least once in the spring to determine what action needs to be taken, if any, to increase parental and community participation.
 - B. Parents and community members will be included on the School Improvement Planning Committee.
 - C. Parents will be surveyed in the fall to give input into the school year's family/community workshops.
 - D. Whitwell Middle School's Open House/Parent Orientation will be planned at the beginning of the school year where parents will be informed of policies, procedures, and parent activities being planned for the school year. This event takes place in the form of a Back to School Block Party. An additional orientation is held for 5th graders.
 - E. Whitwell Middle School has a Family/Community Coordinator who plans programs, activities, and procedures with consultation with parents.
- II. Offer a flexible number of meetings:
 - A. A parent survey will be sent in the fall pertaining to parent workshops. This survey will also ask the parents for the best possible or convenient times for meetings.
- III. Involve parents in an organized, ongoing and timely way in the planning and improvement of the Title I program and school level parent involvement plan:

- A. Parents will be invited to attend meetings to offer suggestions and planning of the school year.
- B. Parents will be asked to evaluate family involvement activities.
- C. Parents will be part of the Advisory Committee.
- D. Parents will evaluate the program in the spring.
- E. At the conclusion of each workshop, parents will be given the opportunity to evaluate the workshop and make comments for improvement. A google form will also be available in the case the event is held virtual.
- F. A Partnership Promise will be developed jointly with parents during the Family/Community Advisory Council meetings in the fall and spring.
- G. The Family/Community Engagement Plan will be developed jointly with parents during the Family/Community Advisory Council meetings in the fall and spring.

IV. Provide parents with timely information about the program:

- A. The WMS Family/Community Coordinator will send flyers by each student to the home concerning upcoming parent workshops and events.
- B. The WMS Family/Community Coordinator will send information of parent workshops and upcoming events via text message, social media, and information will also be posted on the school website.
- C. General information for the parent and community will be posted to the Whitwell Middle School (www.whitwellmiddleschool.org) website, i.e. school schedules, sports schedules, etc.
 - 1. School Performance:
 - a) Whitwell Middle School's report card will be posted on the Marion County Schools' website in the fall when it becomes available.
 - 2. Individual Assessment:
 - a) Each student's achievement scores will be sent home along with a booklet that shows the parent how to read these scores.
 - b) Mid-Nine Weeks Progress Reports will be sent home in addition to the regular report cards sent home at the end of every nine weeks.
 - c) Benchmark reports are available.
 - d) WMS report cards will show the student's attendance report every nine weeks.
 - e) Parents also have access to their child's progress via ParentVue of the gradebook program.
 - f) Opportunities for regular meetings to make suggestions, share experiences, and participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
 - 3. Timely responses to parents' suggestions:
 - a) Parent comments will be submitted with the school plan to the State Department of Education.
 - b) Whitwell Middle School shall submit any unsatisfactory parent comments, if any, when the school submits the ePlan (School Improvement Plan) to the State Department of Education.

- c) Whitwell Middle School will provide a copy of the ePlan in the office for parents to view and make comments.

- V. Provide parent-teacher conferences at the middle schools, at least annually during which the compact is discussed as it relates to the individual child's performance.
 - A. WMS teachers will have conferences by appointment with parents concerning the student's progress immediately before or after school or during the teacher's planning time in order to be more flexible to the parents' work schedules. Two scheduled conferences are built into the school calendar that provides a time from 3:15 P.M. until 6:15 P.M. to accommodate parents. The Partnership Promise can be used as a guide for the student, teacher, and parent during these conferences.
- VI. Provide frequent reports to parents on their child's progress.
 - A. Mid-Nine Weeks Progress Reports will be sent home in addition to the regular report cards sent home at the end of every nine weeks.
 - B. WMS report cards will show the student's attendance report every nine weeks.
- VII. Provide to parents reasonable access to staff and opportunities to volunteer at extra-curricular activities.
 - A. The WMS Family/Community Coordinator will send flyers home asking for parent volunteers.
- VIII. Provide to parents, who so desire, assistance in understanding such areas as, National Education Goals, state content standards, state and local assessments, and how to monitor a child's progress.
 - A. The skills and objectives for each subject area for each nine weeks are available upon request by the parent.
 - B. The Tennessee State Standards are available on the WMS website (www.whitwellmiddleschool.org)
 - C. Each student's achievement scores will be sent home along with a booklet that shows the parent how to read these scores.
- IX. Provide help to parents in working with educators to improve the performance of their children.
 - A. Tutoring may be provided to students through grants, pending acceptance and funding.
 - B. Each WMS student will receive and use a student planner folder to help organize homework assignments.
 - C. Teachers will use the student planner folder to communicate with the parent daily and/or weekly.
- X. Provide help to parents in learning how to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
 - A. WMS will provide meetings with incoming fifth graders and parents to make the transition from Whitwell Elementary School to Whitwell Middle School much easier for both parent and child. Whitwell

Middle School will plan other activities for the student to ease this transition.

- B. High school programs of study and graduation requirements will be reviewed by the WHS and WMS counselor and staff for eighth grade students in order to prepare them for their transition to Whitwell High School.

XI. Provide materials and training for parents.

- A. Whitwell Middle School will conduct at least four Family/Community Workshops per year with input from parents and family through surveys. Flyers will be sent home with the student to the parent informing the family when these workshops are available. The information will also be sent via text message, posted on the school website, and on social media.
- B. WMS will provide access to the Tennessee Electronic Library on the school website (www.whitwellmiddleschool.org) to find information in magazines and newspapers if they or their child needs to do research.
- C. The information that a parent has the right to access their children's official records is available in each student's Whitwell Middle School student/parent handbook.

XII. Develop appropriate roles and encourage the formation of partnership for the local businesses and schools.

- A. WMS invites community leaders and businesses to attend the Parent/Community Advisory Council in order to help make decisions.

XIII. Conduct other activities, as appropriate and feasible, such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parents to learn about child development and child rearing issues that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.

- A. Whitwell Middle School will conduct at least four Family/Community Workshops per year with input from parents and family through surveys. Flyers will be sent home with the student to the parent informing the family when these workshops are available. The information will also be sent via text message, posted on the school website, and on social media.

XIV. Ensure, to the extent possible, that information to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent in a language parents can understand.

- A. Whitwell Middle School uses Google Translate that translates any information needed when communicating with parents with limited English proficiency.
- B. Whitwell Middle School will work with the Marion County ELL Coordinator to provide services for ELL students.

- C. Parents can be sent pertinent updates and reminders by signing up for Remind, a free text messaging service. Simply send a text to (484) 893-4172 with the message @6c4gbb9864 in the subject line.
- XV. The school will work with the LEA to ensure requirements are met for homeless students and that homeless students receive the educational services to which they are entitled.
 - A. The principal and staff will work with the district's Homeless Liaison to identify homeless students.
 - B. The school will adhere to the Marion County Schools' policy on homeless students.
- XVI. The school will work with LEA to ensure the requirements are met for migrant students and the migrant students receive the educational services to which they are entitled.
 - A. The principal and staff will work with the district's Migrant Liaison to identify migrant students.
 - B. The school will adhere to the Marion County Schools' policy on migrant students.

Internet Use Policy:

The network is provided for students and teachers to conduct research and communicate with others. Independent access to network services is provided to students and teachers who act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility. Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

The following uses of the Internet system are considered unacceptable:

1. Personal Safety (for students only)

- a. Users will not post personal contact information about themselves or other people.
 - i. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, etc.
- b. Users will not agree to meet with someone they have met online without their parent's approval and participation.
- c. Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.

2. Illegal Activities

- a. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Internet system or to any other computer system, or go beyond their authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person's approval and participation.
- b. Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system performance or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.
- c. Users will not use the Internet system to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of persons, etc.

3. System Security

- a. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no conditions should a user provide their password to another person.
- b. Users will immediately notify the school principal if they have identified a possible security problem.

4. Inappropriate Language

- a. Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.
- b. Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- c. Users will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or a danger of disruption.
- d. Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- e. Users will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by a person to stop sending them messages, they must stop.
- f. Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

5. Respect for Privacy

- a. Users will not repost a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the pages.
- b. Users will not post private information about another person.

6. Respecting Resource Limits

- a. Users will use the system only for education and professional or career development activities and limited, high-quality, self-discovery activities.
- b. Users will not download large files unless absolutely necessary. This will be done, if necessary, under the direction of the classroom teacher or Internet instructor.
- c. Users will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming”. Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
- d. Users will check their email frequently, delete unwanted messages promptly, and stay within their email quota.
- e. Users will subscribe only to high quality discussion group mail lists that are relevant to their education or professional/career development.

7. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

- a. Users will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user.

8. Inappropriate Access to Material

- a. Users will not use the Internet system to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature). For students, a special exception may be made for hate literature if the purpose of such access is to conduct research and access is approved by both the teacher and the parent. School employees may access the above material only in the context of legitimate research.
- b. If a user inadvertently accesses such information, they should immediately disclose the inadvertent access in a manner specified by their school. This will protect users against an allegation that they have intentionally violated this policy.

Interrogations by School Personnel

Students may be questioned by teachers or principals about any matter pertaining to the operation of a school and/or the enforcement of its rules. Questioning must be conducted discreetly and under circumstances

which will avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the student being questioned. Any student answering falsely, evasively or refusing to answer a proper question may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension.

If a student is suspected or accused of misconduct or infraction of the student code of conduct any offense committed in a school during school hours or on school property at any time, the principal may interrogate the student, without the presence of parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians and without giving the student constitutional warnings.

If a student is a suspect or is accused of a crime not involving the operation of a school or if interrogation of a particular student is police instigated, a parent shall be notified and constitutional warnings shall be given to the student before interrogation begins.

INTERROGATIONS BY POLICE (AT ADMINISTRATOR'S REQUEST):

If the principal has requested assistance by the police department to investigate a crime involving his/her school, the police shall have permission to interrogate a student suspect in school during school hours.

The principal shall first attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the student of the intended interrogation, unless circumstances require otherwise. The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or his/her designee shall be present during the interrogation.

If criminal prosecution is contemplated by the police or the school principal, interrogation shall not commence unless a parent or guardian of the student is present. Prior to interrogation, the principal or his/her designee shall note that the police officer advises the student of the nature of the crime for which he/she is a suspect, that he/she has the right to remain silent, that anything he/she says may be used against him/her in criminal or juvenile court, and that he/she has the right to have an attorney present, or a court appointed attorney if the parents are

indigent, and a student or parent may stop the interrogation at any time.

The use of police women or female staff members is desirable in the interrogation of female students.

POLICE-INITIATED INTERROGATIONS:

If the police deem circumstances of sufficient urgency to interrogate students at school for unrelated crimes committed outside of school hours, the police department shall first contact the principal regarding the planned interrogation, inform him/her of the probable cause to investigate within the school.

The principal shall make reasonable effort to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the interrogation unless circumstances require otherwise. The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or his/her designee shall be present during the interrogation.

SEARCHES BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL:

Any principal, or his/her designee, having reasonable suspicion may search any student, place or thing on school property or in the actual or constructive possession of any student during any organized school activity off campus, including buses, vehicles of students or visitors (Notice shall be posted in the school parking lot that vehicles parked on school property by students or visitors are subject to search for drugs, drug paraphernalia or dangerous weapons), and containers or packages if he/she receives information which would cause a reasonable belief that the search will lead to the discovery of:

1. Evidence of any violation of the law;
2. Evidence of any violation of school rules or regulations or proper standards of student or faculty conduct;
3. Any object or substance which, because of its presence, presents an immediate danger of harm or illness to any person.

A student using a locker that is the property of the school system does not have the right of privacy in that locker or its contents. All lockers or other

storage areas provided for student use on school premises remain the property of the school system and are provided for the use of students subject to inspection, access for maintenance and search. Notice shall be posted in each school that lockers and other storage areas are school property and are subject to search.

A student may be subject to physical search or a student's pocket, purse or other container may be required to be emptied because of the results of a locker search, or because of information received from a teacher, staff member or other student if such action is reasonable to the principal. All of the following standards of reasonableness shall be met:

1. A particular student has violated policy;
2. The search could be expected to yield evidence of the violation of school policy or disclosure of a dangerous weapon or drug;
3. The search is in pursuit of legitimate interests of the school in maintaining order, discipline, safety, supervision and education of students;
4. The primary purpose of the search is not to collect evidence for a criminal prosecution; and
5. The search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student, as well as the nature of the infraction alleged to have been committed.

School officials may conduct hand-held or walk-through metal detector checks of a student's person or personal effects.

USE OF ANIMALS:

When necessary, dogs or other animals trained to detect drugs or dangerous weapons may be used in conducting searches, but the animals shall be used only to pinpoint areas which need to be searched and shall not be used to search the persons of students or visitors.

SEARCHES BY POLICE:

If public health or safety is involved, upon request of the principal who shall be present, police officers may make a general search of students' lockers and desks, or students' or non-students' automobiles for drugs, weapons or items of an illegal or prohibited nature.

If the principal has received reliable information which he/she believes to be true that evidence of a crime or of stolen goods, not involving school property of members of the school staff or student body, is located on school property and that any search for such evidence or goods would be unrelated to school discipline or to the health and safety of a student or the student body, he/she shall request police assistance; and procedures to obtain and execute a search warrant shall thereafter be followed.

Anything found in the course of the search conducted in accordance with this policy which is evidence of a violation of the law or a violation of student conduct standards may be:

1. Seized and admitted as evidence in any hearing, trial, suspension or dismissal proceeding. It should be tagged for identification at the time it is seized and kept in a secure place by the principal or the principal's designee until it is presented at the hearing. At the discretion of the principal, the items seized may be returned to the parent or guardian of a student or, if it has no significant value, the item may be destroyed, but only with the express written permission of the director of schools.
2. Any seized item may be turned over to any law enforcement officer. Any dangerous weapon or drug as defined in TCA 49-6-4202 shall be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement official after completion of an administrative proceeding at which its presence is reasonably required.

Whenever the possibility of uncovering evidence of a criminal nature exists, the principal or his/her designee may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer to:

1. Search any area of the school premises, any student or any motor vehicle on the school premises; or

2. Identify or dispose of anything found in the course of a search conducted in accordance with this Policy. The involvement of law enforcement officials is encouraged when there is reasonable cause to suspect that criminal evidence is about to be uncovered.

No Nit/Lice Policy

According to Marion County Board Policy, no student shall be denied an education solely by reason of head lice infestation, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the infestation. In all matters concerning pediculosis/head lice infestation, the following procedures will be followed:

- To prevent the spread of head lice infestations, school employees shall report all suspected cases of head lice to the office/or school nurse (if available in the building).
- Verification of head lice infestation must be made by a second employee.
- Upon confirmation of head lice infestation (either nits or live bugs), the student's parent/guardian shall be notified.
- The student may return to the classroom (with nits or live bugs) and remain at school until dismissal at the end of the day. The Principal or designee shall notify the student's parent/guardian and send home appropriate paperwork with the student.
- The parent/guardian will be given a copy of the district Pediculosis/Head Lice Policy and a checklist to complete before the student returns to school.
- Students found to have head lice should be treated promptly by their parent/guardian to minimize the infestation. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure correct application of the head lice product and follow through with treatment upon recommendation as provided by a pharmacist, physician, or school nurse.
- The student may return to school upon verification of treatment and signed completion of the Head Lice Checklist. The parent/guardian of the student must accompany the child to school and deliver the signed Head Lice CheckList to the school Principal or designee.

- The student's head will be rechecked to ensure that no live lice are found after treatment.
- Chronic or continual head lice infestation, and or failure to follow instructions for re-admittance to school may be reported to the Director of Health Services, Department of Human Services and/or juvenile authorities.

Partnership Promise for Whitwell Middle School

- As a student, I will...
 - ★ Always do my best in my work and behavior.
 - ★ Work cooperatively with my classmates.
 - ★ Show respect for myself, my school, my classmates, and my teachers.
 - ★ Take pride in my school by obeying the school and bus rules.
 - ★ Come to school prepared with my homework and supplies.
 - ★ Believe that I CAN learn and I WILL learn and ask for help when I need it.
 - ★ Use social media responsibly by not posting or passing on hurtful information about others.
 - ★ Take care of the technology tools issued to me. (Chromebook)
- As a parent/guardian, I will...
 - ★ See that my child attends school regularly and on time. EVERY DAY COUNTS!
 - ★ Make sure that my child has plenty of rest before each school day.
 - ★ Provide a home environment that encourages my child to learn and to read each night.
 - ★ Make an effort to come to at least one parent conference.
 - ★ Sign and return all progress reports and report cards.
 - ★ Support the school in developing positive behaviors and help my child to resolve conflicts in appropriate ways.
 - ★ Volunteer at my child's school as opportunities are offered.
 - ★ Talk with my child about his/her school activities each day.
 - ★ Show respect and support for my child.
 - ★ Provide a healthy and nutritious diet for my child.
 - ★ Monitor television viewing, social media, and gaming devices.
 - ★ Encourage my child's coach not to schedule practice and/or games before important assessments (TNReady, Writing Assessment, etc.).

- As a teacher, I will...
 - ★ Believe that each student can learn.
 - ★ Show respect for each child and his/her family.
 - ★ Be prepared to teach each day and demonstrate professional behavior and a positive attitude.
 - ★ Inspire students to be motivated and help each child grow to his/her fullest potential.
 - ★ Enforce school rules fairly and consistently.
 - ★ Help students develop a sense of community.
 - ★ Provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment.
 - ★ Hold celebration conferences during which this partnership promise document is discussed as it relates to a student's achievement.
 - ★ Provide parents with frequent reports on their child's progress.
 - ★ Provide parents with reasonable access to staff.
 - ★ When needed, provide parents with opportunities to volunteer. E.g. field day, picture day, after school dances, etc.

Tennessee Department of Education Contact Information

Answers to many questions and much helpful information may be obtained from the State Department of Education by calling 1-888-212-3162 or visiting <http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced/index.htm>.

Legal Services Division

Division of Special Education, Tennessee Department of Education

710 James Robertson Parkway

Andrew Johnson Tower, 5th Floor

Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0380

Phone: 615-741-2851

Fax: 615-253-5567 or 615-532-9412

East Tennessee Regional Resource Center

2763 Island Home Blvd.

Knoxville, TN 37290

Phone: 865-594-5691

Fax: 865- 594-8909

Unsafe School Choice Policy

There are no unsafe schools in Marion County. But, if a school is considered unsafe, parents or guardians of all students attending the school must be notified that the school has been designated by the Tennessee Department of Education as a persistently dangerous school and provide for all students to be given safe school choice as provided for under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Under Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School choice Policy, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under the Tennessee Code 40-38-111 (g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under the Tennessee Code Annotated 39-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information regarding this option may be obtained by contacting the school principal.

Parents have the right to request (in writing) their child's name, address and telephone number not be released to a military recruiter without the parent's prior written permission. (Usually, this information is not requested by the military recruiter until high school.)

Military Status Form

MILITARY STATUS OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Student Name: _____ Grade _____

School Attending: _____

To help school districts better understand the relationship between military life and student performance, state and federal legislation require all school districts to collect the military status of students' parents and guardians.

Please check the options below that best describe the military status of your child(ren)'s parents/guardians.

If parents or guardians have the same military status, check only one box.

_____ **Active Duty** – Student has a parent or guardian serving:

- full-time in the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard);
- full-time in the National Guard; or
- full-time in the Active Guard Reserve (full-time in the reserves of a branch of the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard)).

_____ **National Guard** – Student has a parent or guardian serving part-time in the National Guard.

_____ **Reserve** – Student has a parent or guardian serving part-time in the reserves of a branch of the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard).

_____ **Not Applicable** – The student's parents/guardians do not serve in the armed forces, National Guard, or reserves.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date _____