

Staff Handbook

East Hoke Middle School

STAFF HANDBOOK



“EVERY STUDENT COUNTS”

So...

MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT

MAKE EVERY CLASS COUNT

MAKE EVERY MINUTE COUNT

Achieving Academic Excellence, One Day at a Time

2025-2026

Dr. Katrenna Rich, Principal

Tonja McGill, Assistant Principal

Bryan Kingsmill, Assistant Principal

WELCOME TO THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR AT EHMS

Dear Teachers,

I hope you are well and filled with excitement for the upcoming school year. As we embark on this journey together, I want to extend a warm welcome to both our returning teachers and those joining us for the first time. I am truly glad that you are here, and I am grateful to be a part of this amazing team at East Hoke Middle School.

The Staff Handbook is a valuable resource that will guide our work throughout the year. The handbook contains important information that you will routinely need, and it is designed to provide you with easy access to the policies and procedures that govern our school. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents, and feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or need clarification on any matter not addressed in the handbook.

At East Hoke, we are committed to excellence, and this year is no exception. Our School Improvement Plan will serve as our guiding light, focusing on continuous academic improvement. We believe that every student deserves the best quality instruction, and to achieve this, we will work together as a team. Our planned improvements will challenge and innovate, allowing us to grow professionally and enhance the educational experience of our students.

As the year progresses, there may be new issues that arise or modifications to policies and procedures. If this happens, I encourage you to check often for updates. This will ensure that we are all on the same page and have the most up-to-date information at our fingertips.

I want to assure you that your efforts on behalf of the students at East Hoke Middle School are greatly appreciated and valued. Together, we will make a difference. You have my full support, and I am committed to helping you succeed in your role as educators. Together, we will continue to grow and prosper, creating an environment where our students can achieve academic excellence one day at a time.

I am looking forward to an incredible year filled with learning, growth, and success. Let's make this the best year ever!

Yours in education,

Dr. Katrenna Rich
Principal



EAST HOKE MIDDLE

VISION

The vision of East Hoke Middle School is to provide an effective, differentiated learning environment where the achievement gap is bridged and all children are empowered academically, socially, and college and career ready.

MISSION

East Hoke Middle School's mission is to provide a safe environment where all students can thrive academically and socially, as they become ready to function in the real world.

BELIEFS

- We believe that learning is a lifelong pursuit and all students can learn according to their abilities.
- We believe in high expectations and success for all through individualized instruction.
- We believe that East Hoke Middle School is a caring environment that promotes academic growth.
- We believe that East Hoke Middle School will provide opportunities for our students to become productive citizens in a technological society.
- We believe all students will have the opportunity to learn in a safe, clean, and orderly environment.
- We believe that learning is a lifelong endeavor which is cultivated through the collaborative efforts of the school, home and community.

THE DAY AT SCHOOL

Workday

The Board of Education defines the minimum workday for staff members. Staff hours are 8am - 4pm.

Teachers are expected to be in their classrooms no later than 7:45 a.m. and to remain until the last period of the day or until the teacher has completed his/her professional responsibilities to students and the school. The student day ends at 3:30 p.m.; “professional responsibilities” obviously extend beyond this time. Examples of responsibilities include, but are not limited to, faculty and departmental meetings/planning, professional growth activities, open-house, parent conferences, special help for individuals or groups of students, bus duty, athletic duty, and care of school property and equipment.

- **Arrival: 7:45 a.m. and ready to receive students at this time. Students will be released from the buses and front doors will be open at 8:05 A.M.**
- **Departure:** The regularly scheduled end of the school day has already been defined. ***Before leaving school each day, check your mailbox and email for announcements.**
- **Absences:** No one can do your job like you can. If we are to make a positive difference in the lives of our students, we must be committed to being here as much as possible. In the event that you can schedule appointments during planning, it would be greatly appreciated. Except in emergencies, report absences in advance and complete the leave form. It is the responsibility of each teacher to secure a guest teacher. **If you are going to be absent, call, text, or email Dr. Rich at 910-308-9988. Send an email and copy all administrative staff and the bookkeeper, then contact a guest teacher from the approved HR list.** Also, contact the bookkeeper, in case of an emergency and you need help securing a guest teacher. All leave types require the proper documentation that may be obtained from the bookkeeper. If the leave form cannot be submitted in advance, it must be submitted on the first day of returning to school. Be sure to attach the doctor’s note to the form. When you are absent, email your lesson plans to administrators, bookkeeper, and a team teacher.

The counselor and social worker are available at 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. during instructional days. As with classroom teachers, additional professional responsibilities will require additional time on occasions.

Non-certified staff work an eight-hour day to support the needs of students and teachers. Secretaries’ schedules vary from location to location in order to ensure availability of clerical services as needed. Teacher assistants work 6.5 hours a day. Schedules will be made to meet the needs of the students served. Custodians’ schedules vary according to the needs at school. Cafeteria staff members’ schedules are staggered to assure adequate time for the preparation and serving of meals and cleanup afterwards.

On scheduled mandatory teacher workdays, the defined day for certified staff is from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., unless a special schedule is announced. On these days you are asked to sign in upon arrival in the office. If you do not sign in, it is assumed that you are absent, and you are charged with a day of leave.

Please do not bring children, family members or friends with you to school during the instructional day nor on optional / mandatory workdays. If there are extenuating circumstances, seek prior approval from Dr. Rich.

If you need to leave school before the end of the day, please make prior arrangements with Dr. Rich ONLY. This type of situation will be handled on an individual and limited basis. **It is permissible to leave campus on your planning; however, stop by the office and sign out.**

Expectations

The primary purpose of our school is to *teach, educate, and grow students*. Teachers are expected to be in their classrooms at all times that students are assigned to them. Teachers are expected to preserve instructional time and treat it as a sacred opportunity so that powerful teaching and learning is the ultimate goal. We will not have a hall pass revolving door practice at East Hoke Middle School. Failure to adhere to these expectations creates a special level of personal liability and will prevent us (as a team) from successfully accomplishing our primary responsibility of growing students. Planning time is provided to assure good preparation for teaching and learning, collaboration, and tracking data. All students have an individual schedule. The expectation is that all students are in their assigned class. DO NOT have students in your classroom who are not on your roster during the given timeframe.



Professionalism

If we expect our school to be the great institution we all want it to be, then one law must characterize our behavior - *professionalism*. ***Professional people possess excellent knowledge in their discipline; they conduct themselves in a manner which demands respect for their occupation and individuals who practice it; they are confident; they respect and support each other and can disagree without being disagreeable; they understand that the greater mission of the organization takes precedence over smaller individual preferences; and they behave in a manner which demonstrates their enthusiastic support for their organization and occupation.*** If we are to be the great institution we all want for ourselves, we need to manifest these qualities, and we need to do the "little things" which demonstrates to all our commitment to our profession.

- ***Do we demonstrate both our subject matter knowledge and our concern for our students at all times?***
- ***Do we come to work appropriately attired? Are we prompt in our arrival and diligent in the discharge of our duty all day, every day?***
- ***Do we conduct ourselves each day in a manner which brings credit to us and to our school?***

Professional people do all these things—and we are all professional people. Let us keep the PRO in professionalism.

Faculty/Employee Dress Code

All faculty and employees of the East Hoke Middle School serve as role models for the students with whom they work and as leaders in the community. Consistent with these roles, all faculty and employees should dress in a manner and have an appearance that is appropriate and professional in light of the environment in which they work, the duties of their jobs, and the impressionable youth they serve. All staff should avoid wearing jean pants and shorts during the days students are in the building, unless we have a jeans day. At no time can staff wear gym attire unless serving as a PE / Dance teacher.

Appropriate dress for female staff will include, but is not limited to:

- Dresses and skirts which are no shorter than three inches above the knee. Dresses and skirts which are ankle length and tight enough to hinder walking are not acceptable attire. The slit of a dress or skirt must come no

higher than three inches above the knee.

- Slacks and Capri pants may be worn in an appropriate manner. Capri pants must be below the knee. Leggings should not be worn unless you are wearing a shirt that is mid-thigh or longer.
- Physical education teachers may wear appropriate shorts. All other female staff will not wear shorts.
- No jeans or jean pants of any color are acceptable unless it is a designated jean day in which you will be notified.
- Low cut blouses, see-through clothing, off the shoulder, halter style, tank tops, or clothing which is revealing is not allowed. Sleeveless clothing must cover undergarments.
- Appropriate shoes and sandals without a back strap are acceptable. Old Navy style Flip-flops (shower shoes) are NOT allowed.
- Tattoos that are considered offensive, racist, vulgar, show scenes of violence, drug-related, contain strong sexual imagery, gang related or contain obscene phrases may not be visible.

Appropriate dress for male staff will include, but is not limited to:

- Men must wear a dress shirt/tie, or a collared sport/golf style shirt.
- Slacks and casual dress pants are acceptable. Physical education teachers may wear shorts. All other male staff may not wear shorts.
- No jeans or jean pants of any color are acceptable unless it is a designated jean day with a school shirt only.
- Tank tops or t-shirts are not allowed.
- Appropriate shoes and sandals without a back strap are acceptable. Old Navy style Flip-flops (shower shoes) are NOT allowed.
- Athletic shoes/sneakers are not allowed for nonphysical education teachers.
- Facial hair must be kept neat and clean. Hair length should not impair vision.
- Tattoos that are considered offensive, racist, vulgar, show scenes of violence, drug-related, contain strong sexual imagery, gang related or contain obscene phrases may not be visible.

Cell Phones

Staff members cannot use cell phones during the instructional day, unless it is work related. Cell phones must remain on silent or vibrate during instructional time. If we expect our students cell phones not to be seen or heard, please keep that in mind as you run your classroom. In addition, **bluetooth devices** are **not** to be worn in the building. **Cell phones are to be powered off during testing and instruction.**

Guest Teacher Notebook

Because one can rarely predict emergencies or illnesses, please leave your classroom every day as though a stranger may be in your place the next morning. ***Please create a guest teacher notebook.*** It should be accessible to the guest teacher in your absence. When you must be absent, you are to complete your lesson plan using this [document](#).

General Guidelines/Information from individual teachers to be included:

- Your daily schedule
- Your team teachers
- A note on the location of your hall passes and instructions for their use
- Notes on your discipline/management procedures
- Any necessary forms for students and teacher
- Security of room
- Class attendance rosters/grids (including homeroom)
- A description of lunch procedures
- A description of any extra duties assigned to you
- **Seating Charts (if applicable)**
- Any medical or physical problems of students

General Guidelines/Information from office

- cover letter
- A map of the school
- Leave instructions for your guest teacher to report to the bookkeeper during your planning period in case there are other needs in the building.

Emergency Lesson Plans Per Subject

Here is a [sample lesson plan](#). The plans will be pencil/paper. This will prevent problems in the event the Internet is not accessible. All copies should be made and stored in your classroom. Be sure to indicate location on the emergency lesson plans. Please do not have plans that require the use of a chromebook. Use the same [document](#) to explain your emergency plan. ***Please complete emergency plans by September 30th, 2025.*** In the event that emergency plans are used, the expectation is that you will replace the used day/days. The notebook will include the following items:

- Specific lesson plans for each class. (Plan enough work to utilize all the time students will be in your classes. Be sure the work is of the type which guest teachers can reasonably be expected to direct. Serious problems arise when students have nothing to do. Plan for at least **5 days**.)
- General instructions giving the location of any needed instructional materials and the names and room numbers of teachers who may be called on for routine information.

Discipline Procedures

- Copy of rules/procedures
- Referral forms

Safety Drills

- A copy of the fire drill procedures and other emergency information
- Map of emergency exit

Long-Term Absences Requiring a Guest Teacher

Here is a [sample lesson plan](#). The plans will be pencil/paper. This will prevent problems in the event the Internet is not accessible. All copies should be made and stored in your classroom. Be sure to indicate location on the emergency lesson plans. Use the same [document](#) to explain your emergency plan. ***Please complete emergency plans by September 30th, 2025.*** In the event that emergency plans are used, the expectation is that you will replace the used lesson plans day/days.

Materials and Supplies

All materials, supplies, and equipment will be secured on a requisition basis through department leaders. **Unauthorized purchases** (i.e., any purchase not in accordance with required procedures) will not be paid for by the school, nor will any faculty member be reimbursed. ***Debts incurred without prior written approval are considered unauthorized and the personal responsibility of the person making the purchase.***

Content Planning

Teaming is a systematic process in which we work together to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.

Advantages of Teachers Working in Collaborative Teams:

- Gains in student achievement
- Higher quality solutions to problems
- Increased confidence among all staff
- Teachers are able to support each other's strengths and accommodate weaknesses

- Ability to test new ideas
- More support for new teachers
- Expand pool of ideas, materials and methods

Each faculty member's daily schedule has been constructed in a manner that allows a significant amount of time for teams and subject areas to plan together. Teams are to plan together across grade levels, as well as, curriculum areas. This should be a time where you share ideas, brainstorm, success stories, and resources. This time also allows for organizing instructional materials, preparing materials, grading student work, planning common assessments, disaggregating data, and individual planning. It is expected that teachers review and utilize the mid-quarter, and end of quarter assessment to direct their instructional planning. Please view the weekly schedule:

Monday - Individual Planning: Prep and Data Gathering on your own MTSS

Tuesday - Content Planning in PLC Room 130 ([minutes required](#)). **CHOOSE RECORDER**

Wednesday - IEP/AIG & Parent/Teacher Conferences with Monthly Logs to Mr. Kingsmill

Thursday - Team MTSS meeting - Student Identification ([minutes required](#)) Share immediate concerns with administrators. **CHOOSE RECORDER**

Friday - Individual Planning (parent phone calls)

All teams must submit minutes after the meeting, to include but not limited to; who attended, discussions, concerns, etc. This information is to be placed on designated sheets linked above created by the Administrative team.

Comp Time

Things that you do that you are not required to do before or after school (not on payroll) are eligible for earning comp time. This does not include a personal choice to stay at school to plan or make phone calls. It includes activities that you choose to volunteer for (ex. game duty, Title 1 nights, curriculum events, 8th grade social, award's ceremonies, etc.). Time is accumulated to earn time off on optional workdays without using the leave you have earned. Be sure to [document](#) each activity in a timely manner.

Morning Duty: Students are not allowed to return to the cafeteria once they pass into the core class section of the building. Teachers, DO NOT allow students to exit your classroom to return to get lunch. They should get lunch prior to coming to class. Students will be allowed to exit the buses as they arrive on campus. All students should report to their classrooms beginning at 8:00 a.m., picking up their breakfast on their way to homeroom/first period.. Teachers on morning duty need to be at their duty station by 7:45 a.m. **It is your responsibility to supervise student behavior and to assure that students get breakfast and report to their assigned homeroom/first period class.**

Afternoon Duty: 8th grade teachers will be assigned afternoon car pool areas, hallway areas, and the bus lot. It is imperative that all assigned teachers are where they are asked to be in order to maintain a safe and orderly environment.

Cafeteria Use

Teachers are to escort students to the cafeteria and return to pick them up when their [lunch](#) is over. Teachers may remain with their class. Teachers who fail to return on time will be required to sit with their students during lunch. Please remind students of their manners. No tables should be moved. All trays should be taken to the proper area. All classes will eat lunch in the cafeteria. Teachers should not return to their classroom for lunch unless designated by administration. **Tables should be cleared, and no food/drinks should be taken from the cafeteria by students.** Teachers are expected to verify your section is clean prior to departure. DO NOT leave students behind to clean while taking the remaining class members to class. Clubs or student groups using the cafeteria should notify the cafeteria manager as soon as the activity has been approved by the principal and placed on the calendar. Teachers planning field trips or any events which affect student lunch participation should notify the cafeteria manager as soon as the event has been approved so she can plan accordingly. A minimum of 2 weeks notice is required by the principal.

Sacred Cafeteria Duty: See duty roster (administration and support staff)

Meal Prices

The Hoke County Board of Education has approved the following meal prices for grades 6 – 8 for the 2025- 2026 school year: meals will be at no charge. All schools in HCS are CEP schools meaning that all students will receive meals at no charge to the families.

Outside Food Deliveries

Staff is permitted to have food delivered from outside food establishments for personal consumption. It is the responsibility of staff to make payment prior to / or by leaving the required funds with the front desk receptionist. Staff may not, at any time, order food for individual students to be delivered to the school. Food deliveries for celebrations and/or rewards must be approved (with adequate advance notice) by the school’s administrative team prior to the day of the event. Staff is asked to refrain from making food purchases for students to ensure we are demonstrating consistency with the district’s Child Nutrition Program policy regarding students receiving outside food during regular school hours.

School Events

Staff members are expected to attend as many activities sponsored by the school as they can manage. These include PTO meetings as well as special scheduled programs. Not all meetings are mandatory, but specific ones will require the attendance of everyone. Any teacher who cannot attend a meeting, which he/she is expected to attend, should consult with the principal. Volunteering to work special events allow teachers to earn [comp time](#).

School night activities will not be scheduled except with the approval of the principal.

Use of the Gym or Athletic Fields

PE Department Chair will coordinate the assistance needed by groups who use the gym or athletic fields. Following the guidelines listed below will save time and will prevent misunderstandings.

Responsibilities of PE Department

- *Pull out bleachers that are requested.
- *Raise/lower basketball goals as needed
- *Cover gym floor as needed.
- *Help with preparations for concessions

Group Responsibilities

- *Obtain prior approval from the principal and Athletic Director at least one full week before planned activity so class schedules can be changed if necessary.
- *Move in, set up and promptly remove all chairs, tables, bandstands, etc. used for your activity.
- *Remove all banners, posters, etc.
- *Remove all paper and trash from athletic fields when used for picnics, field days, etc.
- *Ensure that no concessions are allowed inside the gym.

Assembly Policy

Assemblies are an integral part of the education of the children at East Hoke Middle School. They are a means for teaching social interaction in group situations as well as broadening the educational and cultural backgrounds of all students.

The content of all assemblies should be governed by appropriate taste and decorum that, at minimum, meet the community's standards. No student or group of students should be made to feel slighted, neglected, embarrassed, nor belittled, because of the content of any assembly.

Every assembly should be beneficial to all audience members.

Assembly Procedures

The following procedures will apply to all assemblies and should be discussed with students prior to the assembly:

- Each teacher will check the class roll and escort the students to the gym.
- **Teachers will sit with and supervise their classes during the assembly.**
- Upon completion of the assembly, teachers will wait with their students until their section is dismissed by word from the principal or designee.
- Teachers will supervise their classes going to and coming from the assembly.
- Emergencies in the assembly will be handled by the teachers in whose classes they occur, and the student(s) shall be removed via the nearest exit.
- In the event of teacher absence, the above procedures will be handled by the guest teacher. (Teachers will assist in the supervision of those classes whenever possible.)

Entry to the Building and ID Badges

It is imperative that we keep the safety of our building and students as our top priority. Therefore you should not be entering the building after school hours or before 7:00 a.m. as the alarm will be set. Keep in mind that your school : badge will give you access to enter the building between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Replacement fee for ID badges will be \$10.00. Let's model for students, ID badges should be worn at all times.

Non-Discriminatory Statement

The Hoke County School System is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, or national origin.

Professional Organizations

There are a number of professional organizations that serve educators. Many positive benefits come with membership and professional associations. The decision to join or not to join a professional organization is left to the individual.

Staff Workroom

Staff workrooms are located on the 8th and 6th grade hallways. They are for use by all faculty and staff. Please do not use the workrooms as conference rooms. ***Students are not allowed in the workrooms at any time. Staff members are not permitted to purchase students drinks and snacks from the workroom vending machines. Do not send students to the faculty lounge. If you see students in the faculty lounge, please report it to an administrator.***

Copiers

The following copy guidelines were established to stay within the budget and to hold service calls to a minimum:

- **Copiers may not be used for personal business.**
- **COPYRIGHT LAWS ARE CLEAR. PLEASE COMPLY WITH THEM.**
- Teachers are responsible for their own copying.
- Each teacher will receive a box of paper for each semester. Once your paper is depleted, you will be responsible for your own supply.

Licensure

Licensure is the responsibility of each individual. If you receive a new license, the “superintendent’s copy should be forwarded to the Human Resources Office of the Hoke County Public School System immediately.” Questions regarding your licensure status (including any renewal needed) should be directed to Amy Godwin in Human Resources at (875-4106). Should you have questions about your renewal cycle, questions should be directed to HR.

Guidance

Guidance is not a specific program confined to a few offices in the main building. It is an integral part of the relationship each teacher has with his/her students. All faculty members are part of the EHMS guidance program; please understand that you are a significant adult to countless students. Our school counselor and social worker are always available to assist you with special needs. If you feel that a student needs to see the school counselor or social worker, the teacher should communicate the need with the guidance department and follow procedures discussed prior to sending the student. The teacher should make sure that it is placed in the appropriate box or sent via email. **Do not send a student to the guidance office unless you have made contact, and it is an emergency situation. Make sure someone is in guidance before sending a student.**

Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings are mandatory and will be treated as sacred time (no practices, parent meetings, afterschool clubs, etc. are not to be scheduled). Faculty meetings will be called at other times as necessary.

Meeting Schedules (or as needed)

- This [schedule of meetings](#) is being provided for your convenience.
- School-wide [professional development](#)
- New Teacher professional development (new teachers, EPI, and anyone who wants to attend)

Code of Conduct/School Wide Rules

The faculty and staff of East Hoke Middle School are committed to helping each student become an effective and successful member of our community. This goal requires a cooperative effort from the staff, students, parents, and community. Our code of conduct defines the operating principles that govern us all. The goals are to make everyone feel capable of choosing responsible behavior and to create a positive and safe classroom environment. Each student at EHMS is expected to do the following:

1. Respect the rights and responsibilities of ourselves and others.
2. Respect your property and the property of others.
3. Follow your class schedule, be on time and bring all necessary materials to class.
4. Follow all directions when given.
5. Conduct yourself in a safe and orderly manner.
6. The faculty and staff of EHMS are expected to read and be familiar with the [EHMS student handbook and code of conduct](#).

Responsibilities and Expectations

Our Goal: The administration, faculty, and staff at East Hoke Middle School are committed to providing a safe and orderly environment so that all students have an opportunity to learn.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Attend school regularly with materials and be prepared to learn while conducting oneself in a manner conducive to learning.
- Follow the rules and expectations of teachers, school, and school system.
- Know the consequences if you do not follow the Student Code of Conduct.

Parent Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Ensure that your child understands and follows the Student Code of Conduct.
- Re-emphasize to your child self-discipline and respect for themselves and others.
- Communicate throughout the school year with your child's teachers through e-mail, a planner, phone messages, or conferences.
- Work closely with the school staff to help your child to learn and to be successful.

Teacher and Administrator Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Inform students and parents of teacher, school, and school system rules and expectations.
- Provide an opportunity for all students to learn and to be successful.
- **Communicate periodically through the school year with parents and students regarding academics and behavior (positive or negative). Emails and/or phone calls should be answered within 24 hours.**
- Discuss issues with the school counselor regarding students' progress and social-emotional needs.

Levels of Unacceptable Conduct

East Hoke Middle School

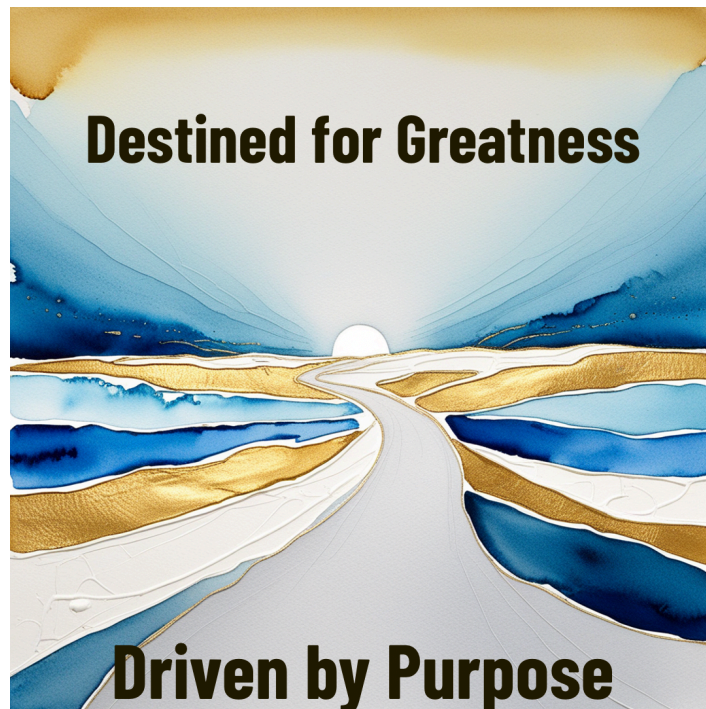
The following are examples of the Student Code of Conduct and unacceptable behavior. Consequences and disciplinary action levels are also outlined, **but are not limited to** the following:

Minor Infractions

- Inappropriate language-Low intensity instance of inappropriate language
 - * Cursing * This sucks * Crap/Shut up
- Defiance /Disrespect/insubordination- Brief or low intensity failure to respond.
 - * Talking back * Smacking lips/Eye rolling * Body language * Initial refusal to comply
 - * Arguing with the teacher * Tone/Facial expression
- Fighting/Physical Aggression- Non serious but inappropriate physical contact.
 - * Play fighting
- Disruption- Low intensity but inappropriate disruption.
 - * Making noises * Chair rocking * Talking out * Talking to your neighbor * Noise with materials
 - * Throwing items * Tapping/breaking pencils * Shooting rubber bands * Playing in desks
- Theft
- Lying/Cheating/Forgery
- Property damage/Vandalism
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Technology violation-Non-serious but inappropriate use of cell phones, camera and/ or computer and chromebook.
- Other- Minor problem behaviors that do not fall within the above categories

Major Infractions

- Inappropriate language - Swearing, name calling, use of words in an inappropriate way (Cursing, sexual words)
- Defiance / Disrespect / Insubordination- Refusal to follow directions, talking back, or socially rude interactions.
* Complete refusal to comply
- Fighting/Physical Aggression- Serious physical contact where injury may occur.
*Hitting / Punching / Scratching
- Theft- Possession of/ passing on of/ or being responsible for removing someone else's property.
- Harassment/Bullying- Disrespectful messages to another person including threats, intimidation, obscene gestures, pictures, negative comments based on race, religion and gender.
- Lying/Cheating/Forgery-Delivery of message that is untrue. Deliberately violating rules. Signing someone else's name without permission.
- Property damage/Vandalism- Activity that results in the destruction or disfigurement of property.
- Inappropriate display of affection-Inappropriate, consensual verbal &/ or physical gestures/contact, of a sexual nature to another student/adult.
- Technology violation-Inappropriate use of cell phones, camera, & or computer.
- Skip class- Leaving designated areas or missing class without permission.
- Weapons- Possession of knives or guns (real or look alike) or other objects readily capable of causing bodily harm.
- Arson/Bomb threat/Alcohol/Drugs- Planning &/ or participating in malicious burning of property. Student delivers a message of possible explosive materials. Possession of using tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.
- Others- Major problem behaviors that do not fall within the above categories.



Discipline Procedures Information

General Discipline

I. Teacher Actions Prior to Administrative Referral (possible interventions)

- Setting the clear expectations (Model and communicate)
- Warning / conference
- Parent contact
- Move student to different area in room
- 2nd parent contact
- Administrative Conference
- "Bounce" to another room (pre-arranged with another teacher in department)
- Teacher assigned detention (i.e. Lunch detention, after school detention)
- Guidance referral, Social Worker referral - have access to monitor students referrals and see "flags"

II. Administrative Discipline Referral Necessary

- a. Student commits offense
- b. Teacher/Staff enters the infraction in the discipline document/system and interventions used.
- c. Administrator assigns administrative actions according to discipline chart based on the Student Code of Conduct; prior intervention record; and any other pertinent information.

NOTE:

1. **All teachers must execute the discipline plan (which requires parental contact prior to an administrative referral).**
2. **No student is to be sent to the office after 3 pm. Move it until the next day.**

BEHAVIORAL GUIDE

Teachers will follow a strategic procedural process when a student violates East Hoke Middle Schools' classroom/school rules, policies, and/or procedures that incorporate parental involvement for support with behaviors/infractions.

The EHMS procedures groups violations into four levels--minor, intermediate, major, and severe. Each classification is followed by a procedure which is to be implemented by the faculty, staff, and administration.

Consequences/Interventions may include withholding a privilege, seat change, time out in another teacher's room, counseling, and/or written behavioral assignments. Parent contact will be made by a staff member at regular intervals based upon the level of the offense. In the event that a student continues to break rules and regulations a disciplinary referral written and forwarded to an administrator who will issue the appropriate disciplinary action upon evaluation of circumstances unless circumstance requires immediate action.

In-School Suspension (ISS):

In-School Suspension (ISS) is a program of discipline and guidance designed to provide assistance to students in an isolated setting. **Students are assigned to ISS by an administrator only.** When a student has accumulated a total of ten (10) days in ISS, further disciplinary action may result in out-of-school suspension. Students assigned to ISS shall **NOT PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES OR PRACTICES DURING THE ASSIGNED TIME BUT MAY REGAIN ELIGIBILITY THE NEXT DAY FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF ISS OR OTHER RELATED DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS.** Guidelines for ISS: 1. Students assigned to ISS will be marked present and earn credit for work completed. 2. Students will be given regular classroom assignments which will be graded by their teachers. 3. Students who are assigned to ISS and who refuse to follow the rules and complete assignments will automatically earn out-of- school suspension. 4. A student assigned to ISS must remain for the full duration of specified days (One full day equals 5 or 6 class periods.) even in the event of absences. **All absences must be made up.** 5. Students will not attend any school function nor participate in extracurricular activities if they are in ISS on the day of the activity.

The principal or assistant principal assigns students to ISS. Teachers will be notified of this assignment by the data manager on the afternoon prior to the day that the student is to enter ISS. The student's teachers will provide a sufficient amount of appropriate work for the time that he/she is in ISS. Students will receive full credit for the work done in ISS and may be assigned to ISS in certain instances for portions of the school day rather than the entire day. If students do not comply with the rules of ISS, they will be assigned additional days and/or suspended from school.

Students will participate in a restorative practice protocol with the dropout prevention specialist, counselor, social worker, or administrator. Students will also complete a reflection prior to release from ISS.

Out-of School Suspension (OSS):

OSS is a serious consequence. Students are suspended from school for serious violations (assault, theft, fighting, etc.) that interrupt the operation of school, that threaten the safety of anyone in the school setting, or for students with repeated referrals. Students under suspension are responsible for arranging to make up any work missed. Students are encouraged to make wise decisions regarding behavior. Students who are suspended may **NOT ATTEND ANY SCHOOL FUNCTION NOR PARTICIPATE IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES DURING THE DAY(S) OF OSS.** Students suspended from school may not be on any school campus during the suspension without the risk of being charged with trespassing.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Attendance Policy

A student must be in attendance at least one half of the school day to be considered present. A full day is 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Students leaving school before 12:00 p.m. will be considered absent for the day. On the day following the absence(s), the student is required to take his/her excuse note to the homeroom teacher so it can be sent to the data manager with the teacher's attendance folder. Every absence will be considered unexcused until a note from the parent/guardian is received. The note needs to be received within 2 days. If not, the absence(s) will remain unexcused.

2. Morning (Daily) Attendance (Homeroom – 1st period)

Attendance will be taken during 1st period for homeroom/daily attendance. During the first **10 days of school**, daily attendance will be taken by recording on a dated attendance grid sheet provided in the attendance folder. 1st day only, mark students E1, P or check mark who is in class when attendance is checked. **PLEASE** follow instructions given to you by the data manager for all attendance.

After the first 10 days of school: Record attendance on computer using Infinite Campus program (instructions will be given). Only mark absences. The office will take care of corrections, ISS, suspensions, tardies, enrollments and withdrawals, etc. Information must be provided to the Social Worker the day of the third accumulated absence. **Homeroom teachers are responsible for notifying the social worker when students have missed 3, 6, and 10 days of attendance.**

Entering this information should be done by 9:15 a.m. (DUE TO LATE BUSES) The attendance folders (for the first 10 days will include attendance sheet, after the first 10 days will only include corrections to attendance, student attendance notes & anything needing to go to the office). **DO NOT MAKE ANY CHANGES** once folder is turned in without notifying the data manager. A daily absentee report and a phone list to call parents (daily) are generated from this information, **so please make sure this information is recorded accurately.** Either email or send attendance corrections to the data manager for necessary changes. Handouts with more specific details will be provided prior to the opening of school.

Hoke County Online / Off-Site Attendance:

Off-site attendance: Teachers will refer to the HCS Online (offsite) attendance policy to ensure students are provided daily credit for attending school once students have logged into the online platform and/or completed daily assignments for grading. Two-way communication may be utilized as evidence for daily attendance.

Hoke Online Attendance: Teachers will refer to the HCS Online attendance policy to ensure students are provided daily credit for attending school once students have logged into the online platform and/or completed daily assignments for grading. Students must attend the synchronous assigned class for daily attendance credit during online learning.

3. Attendance for Field Trips

Prior to the field trip, the Field Trip Attendance form should be completed listing names of students going on the field trip. Also, listed should be the location of the students not going on the trip. The sponsoring teacher must take attendance and mark the students who are present and absent on the Field Trip Attendance sheet. This form must be submitted to the data manager before the teacher departs campus, depending upon the time of departure. If the field trip departs before school, email attendance to the data manager. **There will be no field trips taken after Spring Break (April 2nd)**

4. Students Missing Class

Send a note to the front office for any student who is missing from class. Keep accurate attendance for ALL class periods.

5. Tardy Students

Students arriving late (tardy) to school should report to the office for a note to class. Students arriving on a late bus, an announcement will be made over the intercom to admit these students to class. Students should report directly to class with a late bus pass. Excessively tardy students will be assigned an administrative action.

6. Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences are of two types-excused and unexcused. Excused absences are those for which completely legitimate reasons exist (i.e., illness, death in immediate family, etc.). Unexcused absences are those for which there is no legitimate reason (i.e., truancy, missed bus, etc.). It is the student's responsibility to make up work. All make-up work for excused absences must be completed within a time period of one day for each day absent (for absences from one to three days), or two days for each day absent (for absences exceeding three days).

GRADES AND GRADING

Our grades are one of the few official manners by which teachers inform parents of their children's progress in school. Grades are a necessary aspect of school life. They must never become an unfair weapon against the child. Be certain that in evaluating student progress, you first evaluate the manner in which you assisted each student with his/her learning. Maintaining and full evaluation of student progress should include consideration of all activities that have occurred during the period. Grade reports are sent to parents every nine weeks, and interim reports are issued at the midpoint of each quarter. In all instances, grades shown should accurately reflect the work, which the student has done, with consideration for what the student is capable of doing during the marking period. All reports should include daily work, homework, tests, extra assignments, etc. Food for thought: never assign meaningless busy work. Any student who completes assigned work should benefit from the assignment. The grading scale as defined by the Hoke County Board of Education must be reflected on all progress reports for all instructional programs:

90 – 100 = A

80 – 89 = B
70 – 79 = C
60 – 69 = D
59 and less = F

Teachers are encouraged to make contact over and above the formal reporting schedule (progress reports and report card schedules) to ensure that parents and students are aware of academic circumstances and behavior in class. Please take great care to record grades with as much accuracy as possible.

Teachers will maintain grades for students in Infinite Campus and **according to Hoke County Schools policies should be updated every Friday.** Grades for students will be clearly labeled (i.e., homework, tests, projects, classwork, quizzes, etc.) for the quarter, semester, and final grade. Grading scales for everyone will be the same and the scale will be as follows:

Classwork- 20%
Homework 10%
Quizzes/Formative Assessments- 20%
Tests-30%
Projects/Labs-20%

Long Term Assignments

Long-term assignments require planning ahead, budgeting time, independent research, or creative expression commensurate with needs and skills of the student as he/she progresses through the grades. Periodic checks must be made by the teacher to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress. Emphasis should be on a few well-done, long-term assignments.

An effort should be made at the beginning of the year among teacher teams to coordinate scheduling of long-term assignments so that they occur at different times during the year. The purpose of the assignment and its relationship to the present unit of study should be clearly stated. Products from previous years should be used as examples in assigning projects. Examples should be used to emphasize teacher expectations in regard to neatness, quality, grading criteria, and unacceptable work.

Specific dates should be clearly pre-established for periodic checks on student progress. Students' work should be given some kind of evaluation on these dates. Initially, time should be given in class for explaining the procedures and establishing ample ground rules for completion of the project. Time could possibly be given in class before the final due date for the purpose of organizing and analyzing the research materials. Students should know in advance the amount of work that is required to receive a specific grade. Rubrics should be used for grading projects and other assignments as appropriate.

TESTING CALENDAR

All dates are subject to change

❑ ELA, 6-8 Math, 8th Science : **NC Check-Ins 1** November 4th, November 5th, November 6th

❑ ELA, Math (6-8) and Math I, 8th Science : **NC Check-Ins 2:** January 27th, January 28th, January 29th

- ❑ ACCESS for ELLs - January 12-March 13
- ❑ ELA, 6-8 Math, 8th Science : **NC Check-Ins 3** March 24th, March 25th, March 26th
- ❑ **Science EOG** May 19th
- ❑ **Math EOG and NC Math 1 EOC** May 20th
- ❑ **Reading EOG** May 21st

Teacher PLCS and MTSS meetings

PLC meetings will include weekly planning and weekly data meetings on special days. On these days, students will attend the appropriate elective twice. These meetings will take place in the PLC room:

Monday - Elective teacher
 Tuesday - 6th grade
 Wednesday - 7th grade
 Thursday - 8th grade

Students will still see all core teachers on an abbreviated schedule.

Teacher Data Notebook

Each certified staff member is responsible for maintaining a data notebook. Data to include will include, but not limited to: attendance concerns, discipline concerns, and academic data.

Please keep in mind that the purpose of the staff data notebook is to assist us in facilitating effective student instruction and management.

Promotion Requirements

Following are the items considered for promotion: students must meet test proficiency standards and receive a passing grade (D or better) in (1) language arts in grades 6, 7, and 8; (2) mathematics in grades 6, 7, and 8; (3) either social studies or science in grades 6, 7, 8; and (4) half of all remaining courses taken.

FIELD TRIPS

Prior to attending a field trip, student fees must be paid (\$15). All school sponsored field trips must be approved in advance. The following procedures are to be followed:

- Each team and/or department leader will revise/update a projected list of no more than 2 field trips planned by members of their group for the school year.
- After final approval, permission slips must be signed by the parent of each student planning to go on the trip. All parental permission forms must be submitted to the assistant principal.
- Medical forms/medications are due prior to field trips.
- A list of all students on a team or in a particular class must be submitted to Ms. Harris in the data office. Every student needs to be accounted for on the Student Attendance Field Trip form. Daily attendance must also be submitted electronically prior to departing on a field trip.
- Field trips that result in students missing lunch require teachers to notify the cafeteria manager of the Field Trip Notification form at least **3 weeks** in advance of the planned trip.

- Complete the field trip form checklist and submit to Ms. McGill three (3) days prior to the field trip.
- Copies of all forms are located in your field trip folder in the back of your handbook.
- Remember, adults on the field trip are responsible for the well-being and safety of all students. DO NOT wander away from the group.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

Sound accounting procedures and policies demand that every teacher follow the guidelines below with regards to money collected – regardless of purpose – at school.

Contracted Service Report

A Contracted Services Report must be completed for any person who has been employed as an official for an athletic event, DJ for a dance, etc. The information requested on the form is necessary for processing tax information for the IRS.

Purchases from General Funds – Working Fund Account

Under no circumstances are purchases to be made without prior approval from the principal's office. Turn in a written note with the approximate amount of purchase to the bookkeeper or Dr. Rich. After the approved purchase has been made, attach the original invoice or receipt for purchase to (Request for Check) and give it to the bookkeeper. Your reimbursement check and check request form will be returned to you for your signature, verifying that you have received payment. Return the signed form, with receipts attached to the Bookkeeper. Check requests for payment to officials should be turned in at least 24 hours in advance.

- **REQUEST FOR PURCHASES**

Determine items needed, source, and exact price. Please complete the appropriate form, giving full information, including vendor's address, etc., and turn in for approval to your department leader. The department leader will submit it to the bookkeeper. Each department will come to a consensus of who will serve as the department leader.

School Organizational Chart

Grade Level Chairs

6th: Britney Sutton
 7th: Ashley Artis
 8th: Debbie McKenzie
 Guidance - Kenisha Jones

Electives: Daryl Evans
 EC: Paretta Mtunda

Instructional Facilitators

Social Studies - Deborah Blue
 Language Arts - Sadadu Oyo
 AIG - Nigel Scott

Mathematics - Ashley Artis
 Science - Jessica Hall

School Improvement Chairperson/Title I Contact - Nigel Scott and Raymond Pearson / Bryan Kingsmill

Student Support Team Chairpersons - Kenisha Jones and Sameria Wesley

Testing Coordinator - Bryan Kingsmill

Field Trip Coordinator - Tonja McGill
Dropout Prevention Specialist - Arthur Tripp
ISS Coordinator - vacant

Clubs (AYPYN) Coordinator: Ashley Artis

Athletic Department

Athletic Director – Jewel Jones
Football Coach – Kordell Bushrod
Assistant Football Coach – vacant
Volleyball Coach – Ashley Artis
Basketball Coach (Boys) – Kordell Bushrod
Basketball Assistant Coach (Boys) - Michael Modlin
Basketball Coach (Girls) – vacant
Basketball Assistant Coach (Girls) - vacant
Soccer Coach (Boys) – Michael Modlin
Soccer Coach (Girls) – vacant
Baseball Coach (Boys) – vacant
Softball - vacant
Cheerleaders – Tiera Adams
Wrestling – vacant
Track (Boys) – vacant
Track (Girls) – vacant
Cross Country - vacant

Teacher of the Month (TOM)

Each month a [Teacher Of the Month](#) (TOM) / [Staff of the Month](#) (SOM) will be recognized. The T.O.M. link should be shared in your canvas for students to vote, while teachers are expected to complete the S.O.M. All participants are only allowed one vote per month. Voting dates will be placed in the morning announcement for participants.

COMMUNICATION

Email

It is imperative that you regularly check your email. Check daily at least at the start of the day, lunch, and the end of the work day

Public Address Announcements

Matters of routine interest to students should be communicated to students through the [daily announcements](#). Only emergency announcements will be made in the afternoon. Every effort will be made to minimize intercom interruptions of instructional time. If you have items to post, please send an email to all administrators.

Telephones

Telephones are provided in each classroom and office throughout the campus. If you call a parent and leave a message, please leave your name in the message and a good time to return your call. It is the preference of the administrative staff that teachers answer their own classroom phones. If you choose to allow students to answer the classroom phone, please ensure adequate training has occurred and post the desired script in close proximity of the classroom phone.

Mail Service

- Mail may be sent through the designated baskets in the administrative office.
- In-system mail that is delivered through school by courier should have the name of the sender and school, in addition to the name and location of the addressee.
- Each faculty member has an assigned mailbox. Please check your mailbox when you report to school each day and before you depart. Both mail and messages received for you in your mailbox.

Announcements

If you have an announcement for the entire staff, send it to the administration for approval.

Bulletin Boards

The bulletin board near the teacher mailboxes is used to communicate various matters of significance, including information relating to staff development, school activities, etc.

The bulletin board in the office hallway, near the teacher's mailboxes is designated for sharing news, birthdays and information on staff.

Bulletin Board: (All hallways and front entrance)-All bulletin boards need to be changed at least every nine weeks.

Front Office hallway - Art display

6th grade bulletin board

- 1st nine weeks: ELA Group
- 2nd nine weeks: Math Group
- 3rd nine weeks: Social Studies Group
- 4th nine weeks: Science Group

7th grade:

- 1st nine weeks: ELA Group
- 2nd nine weeks: Math Group
- 3rd nine weeks: Social Studies Group
- 4th nine weeks: Science Group

8th grade:

- 1st nine weeks: ELA Group
- 2nd nine weeks: Math Group
- 3rd nine weeks: Social Studies Group
- 4th nine weeks: Science Group

Gym bulletin board: PE teachers (Must be changed each quarter)

ALWAYS STAY AWAY FROM OUTSIDE WINDOWS AND WALLS.

BUILDING EVACUATION

General Procedures for any Evacuation

Fire

Fire Drills

Bomb Threats

Evacuation Routes

Outside “Safe Areas”

Evacuation Location is at Celebration of Praise Church. Buses will transport to the High School

General Procedures for All Evacuations

1. Follow the evacuation route posted near the door.
2. Turn off lights and equipment.
3. Close all doors and windows.
4. Make sure everyone is 500 feet from the building in a “safe area.”
5. Take class roll. Notify administrator of missing individual(s).
6. Re-enter building only after being notified it is safe.

Monthly Fire Drills

It is required by NC General Statutes that each principal “conduct a fire drill during the first week after opening school and thereafter at least one fire drill each school month.”

Bomb Threats (NO CELL PHONE OR SCHOOL PHONE USE)

Teachers will be notified by Administration and SRO!

In the event of a “called-in” bomb threat, the recipient will immediately notify an administrator. An administrative decision will be made whether to evacuate the building. If a decision is made to evacuate, standard fire drill procedures will be followed. Be sure occupants are evacuated to a safe distance away from the building.

Evacuation Routes

Each classroom has a unique evacuation route. This route must be posted on the wall next to the door in each classroom. This route must be visible with the door open or closed. Each teacher should escort their students to the safe area noted on the map of the school also posted in the classroom. The unification place for pickup is the parking lot of

Celebration of Praise Church.

Fire Drills and Other Emergencies

It is the duty of all teachers to instruct their classes as to the method of evacuating the building in case of a fire or other emergencies. At the sound of the fire alarm:

- Obtain current class rosters
- Close exit window
- Close door
- Immediately exit building with students

This evacuation should take place in an orderly manner and at a brisk pace. All classes must exit via the exits as

defined on the sheet provided for each classroom. When the fire alarm sounds, do not take time to tidy furniture, etc. **Leave immediately.** Students should exit single file and continue to walk once outside the building until instructed by you to stop. Be certain, when stopped, your students are clear of drives and access ways to the building. After you have stopped, quickly check your class roster to be sure everyone is present. If a student is missing, immediately notify an administrator. Students should remain quietly in line until signaled to return to the building by an adult. Remember that the manner in which you behave will greatly influence the behavior of your students.

Tornado Drill

Each year we will participate in the statewide tornado drill. Given the weather-related devastation to a part of our community over the years, the importance of tornado safety cannot be over-emphasized. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures to help to prevent a tragedy.

If a tornado ***watch*** (**stating that tornadoes are probable**) is issued, teachers will be notified as soon as possible so they may review the severe weather procedures. Students should not be informed.

If a tornado ***warning*** (**stating that an actual tornado has been sighted**) is issued and;

A. If Time Permits:

1. The severe weather signal (a series of short tones in rapid succession) will immediately be sent via the intercom system. (If power is out, listen for a signal from an air horn and for instructions via the bullhorn.)
2. All students and staff will immediately proceed to a safe area and assume a kneeling position on the floor with their backs against the wall. If possible, open windows.
3. Take attendance. Inform an administrator of missing individual(s).
4. Remain in this position until the all clear announcement has been made.

B. If Time Does Not Permit:

1. All students and staff should take shelter under desks and tables. Use the inside wall for protection.
2. Open windows if possible.
3. Remain in this position until the all clear announcement has been made.

Under a tornado ***watch***, school will proceed as normal. Dismissal will be normal with bus drivers being informed.

Under a tornado ***warning***, bells and dismissal will be disregarded until conditions are safe.

1. Students in classrooms with no windows will remain in the classroom.
2. Students in classrooms with windows move to the hall.
3. Boys and girls in PE will move into the locker rooms.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Lockdown

1. Initiate Lockdown by using RAVE Panic Button.
2. Call 911
3. Personnel lock exterior doors; assume a tucked position out of view.
4. Teachers
 - a. Pull students in from hall
 - b. Lock doors,
 - c. Turn off lights,

- d. Close blinds,
 - e. Move students to most secure location in room seated in a tucked position (least visible from outside)
 - f. Take attendance.
 - g. Monitor Staff Assist within the RAVE APP for updates
6. Classes Outside—Stay outside and move class to the closest dugout
7. **If medical assistance is needed use RAVE APP - “staff assist” button to communicate with administration**
8. Everyone must remain in a safe place until “All Clear” is given. **DURING EMERGENCY ALL CLEAR IS COMMUNICATED FROM SRO.**

If a situation occurs that requires immediate and drastic security, the following procedures must be followed:

- All staff who are on their planning period should remain in the immediate secured area.
- If the situation occurs during lunch, all teachers remain with their students. Students will be moved into the kitchen dish room if they are in line when a disturbance occurs. If they are waiting in line outside of the kitchen area or seated in an area that is open they will immediately go to the nearest corner to duck and cover. If students are seated between 2 tables they will duck between the 2 tables.
- Physical education classes that may be outdoors will be notified by other PE staff members to move immediately to the nearest dugouts or take cover in the wooded area.
- No one is to leave any area for any reason until an announcement is made by an administrator canceling the risk situation.

Nurse Office

- Do not send students to the nurses office without first calling to ensure the nurse is on campus. Students are not to be sent to the front office to await the nurse prior to calling the front office.
- **Emergency-Blood-borne pathogen**
Blood-borne pathogen notebook is located in the nurse’s office. Every employee **must** know the location of the manual.

COVID-19 Precautions and Safety Procedures

East Hoke Middle School will follow all safety procedures and guidelines as set forth by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Hoke County School Board.

Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. -Steve Jobs

FACULTY HANDBOOK FORM

Name: Dorothy Patterson_____

Position: _PCA_____

I have read and understand the Faculty Handbook.

_Dorothy Patterson_____
Signature

8/7/2025 _____
Date

*Please print and complete this form no later than September 29th, 2024. It will need to be submitted to Ms. Murphy in the Main Office. By signing this form you acknowledge that you have read the handbook and are aware of your responsibilities.