

Rising Starr Middle School

Panthers

2023 - 2024

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RSMS.org

Kathy Smith
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Principal
Assistant Principal
Assistant Principal

Property of: _____

Address: _____

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In case of emergency, please notify:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Welcome to RISING STARR!

Welcome to Rising Starr Middle School for the 2023-2024 school year! It is always exciting to begin a new school year with new and returning students. We look forward to building a strong relationship with students and parents at RSMS. We are fortunate to have a beautiful facility and an exceptionally talented staff who strive to provide powerful learning opportunities for our students. Rising Starr students and staff have a long tradition of hard work, dedication, and personal best in every area of our school community

Our goal is to inspire and prepare every student to succeed in whatever endeavor is undertaken. The middle school years are a time of exploration and discovery -- a time for clarifying beliefs, interests, and capabilities. To assist in these developmental processes, we provide opportunities for students to pursue personal interests in many ways, such as project- or passion-based learning, service learning, clubs and activities, etc. We are dedicated to serving our students not only as educators, but also as encouragers, cheerleaders, learning coaches, and role models. We won't ask any effort from our students that we don't ask of ourselves. Attitude and effort during the middle school years will reap great rewards as students move on to high school and beyond!

Familiarize yourself with this agenda, and plan to use it as an effective tool for your success. General policies and procedures are defined along with our expectations for behavior at Rising Starr. Please read them and understand that these policies are implemented for everyone's well-being while at school. You will also see pages for password keeping and planning which will help you keep your assignments in order and on time.

In addition to academic coursework, the Rising Starr community has so much to offer our students. Find a club, team, or area of interest to pursue. These opportunities lead to some of the best times and memories of middle school career and may even lead to a career or lifelong interest.

Again, we welcome you to Rising Starr and to our wonderful learning community . . . a place alive with much energy, enthusiasm, and a high standard of excellence. It is, indeed, a place where opportunities abound! Here's to an AWESOME new school year as we work together to continue to make our school a great place to work and learn each day!

Go Panthers!

Mrs. Kathy Smith
Principal

Rising Starr Middle School VISION STATEMENT

Rising Starr Middle School inspires and prepares students to succeed.

BELIEFS

We believe a quality education

- continually refines our understanding of learning,
- fosters an environment that builds confident lifelong learners,
- communicates clear goals and high expectations,
- empowers individuals to achieve excellence, and
- prepares students to become responsible global citizens.

WELCOME PANTHER PARENTS!

Welcome to the Rising Starr Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Our Board for the 2023-2024 school year is as follows:

EXECUTIVE BOARD

CO-PRESIDENTS: Jennifer Cleland & Bryan Foerster

VICE PRESIDENT: Mike Stevens

SECRETARY: Michelle Kent

TREASURER: Mysha Lewis

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

POPCORN/ICE CREAM/ DUTY FREE LUNCH: Krista Heim & Ashley Holm HOSPITALITY:

Merrin James & Phoebe McKelvey SPIRIT WEAR: Adriane Kovar-Oifoh

8TH GRADE PICNIC: Danielle Curley & Julie Davidson

8TH GRADE DANCE: Jennifer Cleland & Mysha Lewis

Getting involved in your child's school has long-lasting positive effects on both their academic performance and their overall attitude about school. PTO is a strong backbone of a school that can create a positive learning environment and help promote a welcoming and supportive school culture. We need all the support you can provide.

In your welcome package, you will receive an envelope to collect the Direct Drive for the RSMS PTO. Through the PTO Direct Drive of \$40 per family, the PTO can help RSMS with any financial needs not covered by the county without holding additional fundraising events.

For current and upcoming dates, we're on Facebook & Instagram. Search for **Rising Middle School PTO** and follow and like us. Feel free to send an email to risingstarrpto@gmail.com if you have any questions.

The PTO of Rising Starr Middle School, as well as the faculty and staff, look forward to another great year and hope that you will become an active part of your child's school.

Rising Starr PTO Board

2023-2024

Excellent schools don't just happen... they're created!

Rising Starr Middle School -- Courses of Study

Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	Connections
Language Arts Mathematics	Language Arts Mathematics	Language Arts Mathematics	Family & Consumer Sci Computer Science

Earth Science Social Studies/ Americas, Europe, Oceania	Life Science Social Studies/ Africa, Middle East, Asia	Physical Science Georgia History & Government High School classes (For qualified students) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Language (Spanish or German) • Algebra I • Accelerated Algebra/Geometry 	Technology Band Chorus Orchestra Spanish Art Music Technology PE/PA/Health Academic Support Classes
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Fayette County Schools School Year Calendar

2023 - 2024

Students Report	August 3, 2023
First Semester	August 3 - December 15, 2023
1 st Semester Exams (8th grade)	December 11 - 15, 2023
Second Semester	January 3 - May 24, 2024
2 nd Semester Exams (8th grade)	May 20 - 24, 2024
Last day of school for students	May 24, 2024
Post Planning	May 28 – May 29, 2024

Holidays

Labor Day	September 4, 2023
Fall Break	October 9, 2023
Thanksgiving	November 20 - 24, 2023
Semester Break	December 18, 2023 — January 2, 2024
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 15, 2024
Presidents' Day	February 19, 2024

Winter Break	February 19 - 23, 2024
Spring Break	April 1- 5, 2024

LOG IN for CHROMEBOOKS/SCHOOL COMPUTERS

Chromebooks: Login ID: Student ID number Password: LaMMDDYYYY (first two initials of last name with first letter capitalized)	School Computers: Login ID: School email Password: LaMMDDYYYY (first two initials of last name with first letter capitalized)
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Student Agenda/Lockers

All students at RSMS should purchase and use the RSMS Student Agenda. Agendas and lockers are available for each student at Rising Starr through MySchoolBucks.com. Agendas are spiral bound notebooks that have spaces for homework assignments and comments from teachers for each school day. Agendas are also used as hallway passes. Students should use the agenda to stay organized. Agendas and locker rental should be purchased through MySchoolBucks.com for \$10.00.

Rising Starr Middle School

General Policies and Procedures

ADMINISTRATION

Our administrative team welcomes communication with parents and students. The quickest way to contact us is via email. If, however, a meeting is necessary, please be aware that administrators are very busy with student supervision and other duties at the beginning and end of each school day. Therefore, meetings during the school day with an administrator should be scheduled for any time after 8:30 am or before 2:45 pm. Special arrangements can be made for other times.

Assemblies

Assemblies, aligned with curricular objectives, are educational as well as entertaining experiences and provide one of the few opportunities in school to learn formal audience behavior. Regardless of the type of program, courtesy demands that the student body be respectful and appreciative. Talking, stamping of the feet, and booing are inappropriate behaviors for formal assemblies. Pep rallies allow for positive participation from the audience. Behavior demonstrated should enhance the assembly. Listed below are the procedures for assembly conduct:

1. Do not take books or coats to the assembly unless otherwise instructed.
2. Proceed to the assembly area and be seated quietly and promptly.
3. Attention should be directed immediately to the speaker.
4. Conversation during the presentation is not permitted.
5. Applause should be generous and courteous.
6. Do not leave assembly until dismissed.

Attendance

Research shows a direct correlation between student achievement and school attendance; therefore, it is imperative that a student be present at school unless legitimate circumstances require an absence. **If an absence occurs, a parent or guardian must provide the school with a written explanation within three school days.** Georgia law recognizes a student absence as excused for the following reasons only:

Absences – Lawful absences (excused) as defined by State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student Attendance:

• Personal illness	• Court Order
• Death in immediate family	• Absence to vote in an election
• Religious Holiday	• Up to five (5) days excused absences per year to students whose parents are in the military and are being deployed or are on leave
• Instances in which attendance could be hazardous as determined by the Fayette County School System	

In order to be counted present for the day a student must be in school for **210 minutes**, not including lunch. Noting that regular school attendance is critical to learning, the Board of Education has instituted a mandatory attendance policy.

Five(5) unexcused absences per semester will result in notification to the parents by first class mail of the unexcused absences and a summary of consequences.

Ten (10) unexcused absences will result in School Operations notifying by letter parents/guardians of students who have accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences per semester and will report violations to the Student Attendance Protocol Committee with the District Attorney's Office to determine if court action will be pursued for formal intervention.

Consequences for Unexcused Absences (O.C.G.A. 20-2-701)

Any parent, guardian, or other person who has control of any child who, on the tenth unexcused day of absence per semester and after the child's school system has notified the parent, guardian, or other person who has control of any child, upon each day's absence/tardy from school shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and court action may be pursued for formal intervention.

Penalties:

Fine – not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00

Imprisonment – not to exceed 30 days

Community Service or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court

Learner's Permit

Students applying for a learner's permit or driver's license must obtain from their school a Certificate of School Enrollment. All students who intend to get their learner's permit or driver's license over the summer months **must** receive this certificate from the school administration prior to the end of the school year. This certificate is **required** when applying for either license. Please check with your school's front office secretary during the month of May.

Make-up Work

School attendance promotes student development in the areas of responsibility, self-discipline, and character; however, when it is necessary for a student to be absent, the following guidelines should be adhered to for completing missed assignments:

- Students are responsible for making up work missed while absent.
- Excused absences afford the student the opportunity to make up work upon the student's return to school provided prior notification is given to classroom teachers.
- Students assigned out-of-school suspension (OSS) will only be allowed to make up missed assignments during Saturday School.

- Tests, quizzes, or other class assignments should be made up **before** or **after** school. If alternate arrangements are necessary, the parent should consult the teacher.
- It is the student's responsibility to obtain make-up work and to submit completed assignments to his/her teacher in a timely fashion. • Failure to make up work in a timely manner will result in loss of credit.

Please contact teachers via email to request missed assignments when your child is absent due to illness. You may also refer to Schoology for assignments on a daily basis.

Arrival and Departure

Students are not to be on campus prior to **7:45 AM**. If a student has a pass from the teacher to report to his/her classroom prior to dismissal to homeroom, they must report directly to that teacher's classroom. If the teacher is not there, the student must report to the gym. **At no time should students be on campus prior to 7:45 AM unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.** Students should exit the building at dismissal time and proceed to the student pick-up area or to their buses unless they are remaining for an after-school club/activity. **No student should be on campus after 4:00 PM unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.**

Late Check-in

Promptness to school is important. In the event that a student arrives at school after 8:10 AM, he/she should report to the office accompanied by a parent/guardian or authorized person. Students returning to school from medical appointments must report to the office to sign in before returning to class, accompanied by a note from the doctor. Tardies will be considered excused for medical appointments or personal illness, both with proper documentation from the doctor's office.

Students with an **excessive** number of unexcused tardies per semester will be referred to the office for appropriate disciplinary action. Parents will be notified in writing after the 5th unexcused tardy.

Early Check-out

Should it be necessary for a student to leave school during the day, a written excuse by the parent/guardian should be taken to the office **at the beginning of the day**. This excuse must include a parent contact phone number. **Prior to the release of any student, the parent or guardian must sign the student out and show a valid photo I.D.** Please call ahead to notify of checkout if you cannot send a note. Due to congestion in the carpool line, all early check-outs must be confirmed before **2:45 pm**.

Participation in Activities (Attendance Requirement)

Any student participating in any school activity must be in attendance one-half of the school day of the activity, verified medical appointments excluded.

Pre-arranged Absences

A pre-arranged absence written request must be made by the parents to the principal requesting permission for their child to be absent from school in order to take an educational related trip. A pre-arranged Absence request must be completed and approved three (3) days prior to being absent. **Approval does not make the absence Excused, but does give the student the opportunity to make up missed work.**

Withdrawing a Student from School

The following is a list of procedures to follow when withdrawing a student:

1. Parent or guardian should contact the school Student Information Secretary to begin the withdrawal process.
2. All textbooks and books from the media center along with the Chromebook and charger must be turned in.
3. All obligations and media center fines must be paid before records can be released.

Chromebooks and Connected Classroom

Through an initiative approved by FCBOE, students are issued a Chromebook to use for school-related activities. Insurance is available for purchase. At Rising Starr, students are allowed to utilize electronic devices for **instructional purposes only** under the direction and supervision of their teachers. Because each student has access to a Chromebook, the **student's personal devices, including cell phones and smart watches should be turned OFF and kept in the locker during the school day. Parents who need to contact a child during the day should call the front office.**

Students may use their phones for the purpose of communicating with parents only BEFORE and AFTER school hours or at the direction of a staff member. Any personal electronic device that interferes, distracts or interrupts classroom instruction will be confiscated and held in the front office for parent pickup. Violations of Connected Classroom policies are subject to school discipline.

Students are NOT required to bring their own devices. When technology is necessary for instructional purposes, we will continue to ensure that all students have equal access. **The school is not responsible for technology that is lost or damaged.** Headphones that cover the ears are not allowed. **Earbuds are acceptable when used during instruction. Earbuds are not allowed during the school day unless they are necessary for instruction.**

An appropriate use agreement can be found in the Secondary School Student Code of Conduct on the FCBOE website; the code of conduct also goes home in hard copy form at the beginning of the year. **Again, the use of electronic devices is restricted to approved classroom use; violations of Chromebook or Connected Classroom policies are subject to the school discipline policies. Administration reserves the right to determine additional appropriate use.**

Bus Passes

Any student needing to ride a bus to which he/she is not regularly assigned must obtain a bus pass from the office **during homeroom**. Bus passes will only be issued through a written note by a parent. The note must contain a contact number of a parent for verification. Students will not be allowed to ride a different bus without an office bus pass. County policy only allows **two** guest riders per bus per day.

Clinic

All students will receive medical attention, if needed, in the school clinic. We are fortunate to have a RN working at Rising Starr. For the safety of your child, we require that all prescription medication used at school be taken to the clinic with a completed School Medication Authorization form signed by the physician and the parent. It is required that ALL medication be in the original container. Over-the-counter medications may be administered with a completed School Medication Authorization form on file signed by the parent. The School Medication Authorization forms are located at fcboe.org under Departments- School Health Services. All overnight field trips will require a completed School Medication Authorization form for any prescription medications that a student needs to take during the trip. **Students should NOT call parents from cell phones to be picked up due to illness without going to the clinic first.**

Discipline Guidelines

The administration, faculty, and staff of Rising Starr Middle School desire to establish a comfortable and safe atmosphere conducive to effective learning that will ensure a greater opportunity for each student to learn and grow as an individual. Our goal is to encourage all students to act in a mature, reasonable, and responsible manner. Failure to comply with behavioral expectations will result in a disciplinary referral for inappropriate actions. The Code of Conduct contains a list of disciplinary offenses; however, in middle school, our most common offenses include:

1. horseplay
2. inappropriate computer/personal device use including cell phones
3. academic dishonesty
4. disruption of the learning environment
5. inappropriate language, gestures, drawings, etc.
6. physical aggression
7. inappropriate social media posts that result in school disruption

Please refer to the Fayette County Student Code of Conduct for more detailed information.

Progressive Discipline Process

Our discipline procedures are age-appropriate and designed so that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the consequences. The previous discipline history of the student being disciplined and other relevant factors will be taken into account, and all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed.

Disruptive Items

Any item which disrupts the educational process at Rising Starr should not be brought to school. Students found with such items will have them confiscated and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Digital devices, including cell phones and smart watches, being used at inappropriate times or in inappropriate ways may be confiscated as disruptive items. Parents will be notified to pick up the device.

Students may not bring items to school to sell. This includes gum, candy, games, shoes, clothes etc. Any item deemed disruptive will be confiscated until a parent can pick the item up.

Searches

According to Georgia Laws and Board of Education policy, schools have access to student lockers, automobiles, and personal belongings while on the school campus when there is reason to suspect that the welfare of students and other personnel may be threatened. The search shall be made in the presence of at least one witness except in emergency situations or if dangerous or illegal materials are in plain view. Discovery of dangerous or illegal materials shall be reported to proper authorities. Delegated search officials are the principal or the assistant principals (during school hours and/or any function under school jurisdiction) and certified employees who are responsible for students who are away from school before, during, or after regular school hours.

In-school Suspension (ISS)

The in-school suspension program at Rising Starr Middle School is designed to give a student an appropriate consequence for unacceptable behavior. The program enables the student to remain in school and receive appropriate education supervised by a certified paraprofessional while also separating him/her from his peers to allow for reflective thought about appropriate behaviors. ISS is assigned for inappropriate behaviors as outlined in the FCBOE Student Code of Conduct. ISS may also be assigned when previous intervention strategies have not been effective in the modification of a behavior.

For more detailed information on discipline, please refer to the Fayette County School System Student Code of Conduct 2023-2024.

Dress Code

Fayette County School System students are expected to dress and be groomed in such a way as to reflect neatness, modesty, cleanliness, and respect for your school. Student dress should not distract or cause disruption in the educational process of the school. School administrators will be responsible for determining dress code violations. The administration reserves the right to amend any provision that is deemed to be in the best interest of the student or the educational process. The dress code applies to ALL school functions. The dress code will be enforced.

The following are the standards for school dress:

1. Students must wear clothing which include both a shirt with pants or a skirt, or the equivalent (ex. dresses, leggings, shorts) and footwear. Undergarments must not be exposed.
2. Garments will cover the waist, shoulders, back, torso, and chest in all situations. No skin may show at the waist.
3. Pants, shorts, slacks, shirts, dresses and skirts will be of appropriate size and fit. Holes in pants or shorts must be below the fingertips. Pants, shorts and skirts must always be worn on the waist. The entire buttocks and upper thigh must be covered.
4. Clothing must not symbolize, suggest, display or reference: tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, profanity, hate, promotion of violence, illegal activities, and/or pornography. Clothing should respect the intent to sustain a community that is positive and promote a positive learning environment.
5. Sleepwear may not be worn.
6. Footwear must be worn at all times. Footwear that may cause damage to floors (ex.: cleats, skates, etc.) are not allowed.
7. Sunglasses may not be worn inside the buildings.
8. Wallet chains or other type chains, or any jewelry that may be potentially dangerous or disruptive are not allowed.
9. Hats, caps, non-religious head coverings, visors or hoods may not be worn inside the building.
10. Gang related clothing, bandannas, signs, flags, symbols, and tattoos are not allowed.

Consequences for Dress Code Violations

- 1st offense - Sent to office either to change or have parents bring appropriate clothing. If clothing is not changed, students will be sent to In-School Suspension for the remainder of the school day.
- 2nd offense - Student will receive one day of in-school suspension.
- 3rd offense - Student will receive two days of in-school suspension.
- Three or more offenses in one school year - Students will receive three days of out-of-school suspension.

Field Trips

Permission slips will be sent home with students for parent signatures. No student will be allowed to participate in a trip unless the permission slip is signed and returned to school by the time specified by the teacher. Field trips usually involve transportation and admission expenses; students will be asked to contribute for these expenses. Students who are unable to contribute will not be denied the opportunity to participate as long as the need is made known and verified with the guidance office through the teacher.

Students will be excluded from field trips for any of the following behaviors within a school semester:

- **four** or more administrative after school detentions.
- **three** or more days of in-school suspension,
- any In-School Suspension assigned for the day of a trip,
- any Out-of-School Suspension,
- **seven** or more unexcused absences during a 9-week period, or
- inappropriate behaviors on previous field trips that resulted in disciplinary action.

The school dress code will be enforced on all field trips. Parents are expected to pick students up on time when field trips extend beyond normal school hours. Participation guidelines may include attendance and grade criteria for participation.

Fire Drills/Tornado Drills/Lock-down drills

The immediate evacuation of the school building during a fire drill is paramount. Upon the sound of a fire alarm, a student must proceed quickly and quietly to designated exits. Tornado and lockdown drills are signaled by a different alarm signal. Students will report to the areas indicated on maps posted throughout the building or as directed by their teacher.

Food and Drink

All food and drink brought into the building must be stored in appropriate containers. **Water bottles must be clear and only contain water.** No metal or glass water bottles will be allowed. **No beverages from outside restaurants in cups with straws will be permitted due to ongoing problems with spilling. No food may be ordered by students to be delivered during the school day at RSMS.**

Occasionally students forget to bring lunch. Parents may drop off lunch at the office. Secretaries will write the name on the lunch and deliver it to the Administrators table in the cafeteria. Students should check this table in the lunchroom to pick up their lunch. Classrooms will not be interrupted to notify students of a lunch being dropped off.

Gifted Education Program

Students placed in the gifted education program will be eligible for a minimum of one gifted academic class. Requests for gifted class placement will occur in the spring of the preceding school year. Placement requests will be considered, but are not guaranteed. **Class placements are final, and teacher choice will not be considered in the placement phase.**

Guidance and Advisement

The RSMS Counseling Department supports the academic, emotional, and social aspects of the student. Students are assigned a

counselor as shown below. The counselor will work with her/his students to ensure a smooth transition throughout the middle school years. The assigned counselors are:

Ms. Sharon Barrow – Students with last names beginning with A-K

Ms. Jeri Hudgens: Students with last names beginning with L-Z

Parents and students are encouraged to see the appropriate counselor with their concerns.

Student Support Programs

The following is a list of student support resources/programs that are available to parents and students in the Fayette County School System and at RSMS:

- **STEP** - Systematic Training for Effective Parenting is a ten-week course offered at night with a focus on praise vs. encouragement, punishment vs. discipline, goals of misbehavior and ownership of problems.
- **Parent Resource Center** - Books, audio tapes, video tapes, etc. which are purchased by C.A.R.E. (Children at Risk in Education) and managed by the school C.A.R.E. team.
- **Community Mentors** - Individuals recruited and trained by the Community Schools mentoring program called FRIENDS. Mentors must meet with students regularly and work to develop a supportive, nurturing relationship.
- **Panther Partners** - A peer program which assists new students in making the necessary adjustment to transition into a new school setting.
- **Issue-oriented Support Groups** - Small groups to address specific topics and issues.

Hall Passes

Students must have a **RSMS Agenda hall pass signed by a teacher** when out of their classroom.

Immunization

Georgia Law states that all students in a public school must be immunized against diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, mumps, polio, chicken pox, rubella, tetanus, and hepatitis (if you were born after 1/1/92). If a student fails to have all immunizations before entering school or by the end of a **30 day grace period (90 days if you have moved in from another state)**, the child must leave school. The only accepted proof of immunization is a Certificate of Immunization which must be approved by a private physician licensed in Georgia or an appropriate official of a local board of health.

Insurance

Primary insurance is offered at the beginning of the year for students who would like the coverage. The two choices are • school day coverage from bus pick-up until bus drop-off, and 24 hour coverage for 12 months.

Chromebook insurance is also available.

Learning Management System (LMS)

Fayette County Schools use Schoology as the primary Learning Management System. All RSMS teachers/teams will clearly communicate to you and your student about procedures for accessing Schoology which is used for feedback on assignments. Infinite Campus (IC) is used for student information items, such as grades and attendance. It is also used for communicating with parents via recorded phone messages, email, or text.

Lockers

A \$5.00 rental fee will be collected at the beginning of the school year through MySchoolBucks.com for one locker per student. All lockers have combination locks. Locker combinations should be kept confidential, and lockers should be **closed** and **locked** at all times. The school is not responsible for lost books, notebooks, clothes, etc. Report locker issues to the office immediately. Additionally, students assigned to PE classes are required to store items in a locker in the locker room. Students should use their assigned lock for their PE locker.

Lost and Found

A lost and found area will be maintained in the cafeteria. Please check there for lost and found items. At the end of each quarter, remaining items will be donated to charity. Be sure to label valuable clothing, shoes, bags, etc. with the student name.

Lunch

Lunch brought to school by a parent should be labeled with the student's name/team and dropped off in the front office. Students may pick up their lunch at the administrator's table in the cafeteria. Any beverage must be in a secure container, not a fast food cup.

For your convenience, Fayette County Schools offers the opportunity for you to create an online account and deposit lunch money for your student. Please visit MySchoolBucks.com to set up an account.

Students are not allowed to charge lunch. Students will be given a sandwich by the cafeteria if they have no lunch money.

Silent Lunch - Silent lunch is assigned as a consequence for various infractions. Students are expected to sit in the silent lunch area during lunch to eat lunch and must remain seated throughout the lunch period. Students on silent lunch are also excluded from the opportunity to purchase additional treats, such as ice cream and popcorn.

Media Center

The media center is a resource area for book distribution, research, student project assistance, and leisure reading. Passes are required at all times for a student to use the media center. Check-out procedures must be used for all books and materials leaving the media center. Books may be checked out for a two week period. A student is responsible for all materials checked out in his/her name and will be required to pay the replacement cost of any lost or severely damaged items as well as 25 cents/day overdue fines.

Messages and Phone Calls

Classes will not be interrupted for messages, deliveries, or phone calls (except for verified emergencies) during the school day. **Make your arrangements with your children before they leave for school.** Any deliveries sent to the school for special occasions may be picked up at the main office after school.

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in their student's educational experience. The following is a list of ways to participate:

- volunteer at the school site (front office, media center, classroom activities, etc.)
- join parent teacher organization (PTO)
- join booster club membership (athletic, fine arts)
- participate on a committee
- chaperone field trips and extracurricular activities
- participate in parent/teacher conferences
- mentor a student

(Note: For some volunteer positions, training and/or background checks will be required.)

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are encouraged for effective communication. If a conference is desired, please contact your child's teacher or team leader to set up an appointment. We offer face to face or virtual conferences. Because middle school students are organized into teams, most conferences involve the entire team.

Permanent Records

Your child's permanent record folder is kept on file. If a parent/guardian wishes to see these records, call the school and arrange a conference with a counselor. Achievement test results will be sent home as soon as they become available.

Physical Education

Physical education and health classes are offered to students at RSMS. **Students who are in P.E. will be required to participate unless they have a doctor's excuse.** If a student is unable to participate in P.E. for any other reason, the parent must send in a note explaining the reason.

Students are expected to have dark colored shorts, light colored shirts (or Panther T-shirt), and tennis shoes with white soles. No jean shorts or khaki shorts are permitted. The student's name should be on each article of clothing, preferably on the outside where it can be seen.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

During each nine week grading period a report card will be posted in Infinite Campus for parental review. Interim progress reports will also be available via Infinite Campus for parental review. Information on how to set up an Infinite Campus account is available at RSMS.org. If you have questions, please call the front office or email chontos.renae@fcboe.org for assistance.

Eligibility for participation in competitive interscholastic events will be based on passing grades in all academic classes for the semester preceding the activity. To pass a subject area for the year, an average of both semester grades must equal a minimum numerical grade of 70. Communication with parents is encouraged through school visits and scheduled conferences. To schedule a conference, parents may contact the student's team teachers.

Fayette County School report card grades are designated numerically; however, the letter grade equivalent for numerical grades is designated in the following scale:

A: 90-100 B: 80-89 C: 71-79 D: 70 F: Below 70

Access to Infinite Campus, the online grade book, can be found at FCBOE.org under the Parent Information tab. We encourage parents to use this communication tool to view their students' assignments and grades.

Exams

Eighth grade students take semester exams which account for 15% of the semester grade. Per state rule, the scores achieved on state End-of-Course assessments (EOC) for some high school level courses available in middle school will account for 20% of the semester average.

Promotion Policy

Any student failing a core academic subject in the 6th, 7th, or 8th grades will be required to successfully complete summer school or may be subject to retention.

Saturday School

Saturday School is an opportunity for students to make up work due to unexcused absences, out-of-school suspension, or excessive late work. Students will be recommended to attend Saturday School by a teacher or administrator. Dates for Saturday School are to be determined and students are required to be in attendance from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Parent must sign student in and out of Saturday School.

Schedule Changes

Because much time and effort goes into the process of scheduling students for team classes, schedule changes are rarely made. Fine Arts classes are scheduled for the entire year. Changes in class period may be made as needed..

An opportunity to request a Connections class change may be provided by administration. This must be completed within the first five days of each semester.

If an error has been made, the classroom teacher will work through the administration in making the changes necessary. **The student must remain in his or her scheduled class until he or she is notified that the schedule change is complete.**

Quarterly connection classes are randomly selected by the computer scheduler. Students are not given the opportunity to choose connection classes; however, some 8th grade semester courses are available by application.

Some common requests for schedule changes that **will not be granted** are

- requests for a change of teacher/team, and
- requests to move into classes with friends or out of class with students one “doesn’t like.”

School Resource Officer

For the safety of students and staff, a Fayette County sheriff’s deputy has been assigned to Rising Starr Middle School as a school resource officer.

Textbooks

Each student will be issued state-owned textbooks and will be responsible for the proper care of each book. Due to the recent increase in the price of books, losing or abusing textbooks can be very expensive. Lost book reimbursement is dictated by the replacement cost of the textbook. Compensation for damaged books is mandated by the county as follows:

1st Year - 100% of cost

2nd Year - 80% of cost

3rd Year - 60% of cost

4th Year - 40% of cost

5th Year or more - 20% of cost

Transportation

Students are to arrive and depart by bus, car, bike, or golf cart only. Other modes of transportation are not allowed. Students should be dropped off and picked up **only** in the front circle, not in the parking lot. **Use of the bus loop or Peeples Elementary access road and campus, which includes the parking lot, are not to be used for RSMS student drop-off or pick-up.** Traffic is very heavy during morning arrival and afternoon pick-up. Please allow adequate time to follow the drop-off and pick-up procedures. **Middle school students are not allowed to drive themselves to school on a golf cart, regardless of age.**

Visitors

Visitors to the building must first check in at the front office to register, document the reason for the visit, and receive a visitor’s pass to be displayed at all times. At no time are visitors permitted in the classrooms without prior consent from the teacher. Friends from other schools or relatives visiting the area will not be allowed to visit classes during school hours.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Students are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored clubs, athletic programs, and extracurricular activities. Participation, however, requires a student to meet the guidelines established by the No Pass, No Play policy. A student must be in school and counted present for at least half of the day to be allowed to participate in a school-sponsored activity after normal school hours. All games, practices, tryouts, dances, concerts, competitions, etc. are classified as school-sponsored events.

After School/Extra-Curricular Activities Student Pick-Up

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements prior to the school day for transportation from after school activities or field trips. The ending times for after school activities are announced and should be communicated by the students to the person responsible for picking them up. Failure of students to be picked up in a timely manner may result in the student not being allowed to attend future after school activities.

No Pass, No Play Policy

Students wishing to participate in athletics, clubs, and extracurricular activities must pass all academic subjects. This is a Fayette

County policy for middle schools.

If a student is in ISS, he/she will not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activity until after the end of the last school day of the disciplinary action. For students serving a suspension, extra-curricular activities may resume after the student's first day back to school. If absent the day of the activity, the student may not participate. Participation in athletics does not allow one to refuse to participate in P.E.

Board policy states that students have one year of eligibility for athletics in the 7th grade and one year in the 8th grade.

Student Organizations and Clubs

*For the most current information regarding Student Organizations and Clubs, please refer to **RSMS.org**.*

Academic Team *Sponsor: Bonnie Garrot/Jilly Daniel* The Academic Quiz Bowl is a competitive academic organization of selected Rising Starr students. Students are selected based on scores obtained from preliminary testing and simulated competition tryouts. Open testing and try-outs for all interested students are held at the beginning of the school year. Students will compete with other schools throughout the district during the school year. Meetings are held after school.

Book Club *Sponsor: Christopher Harper* The RSMS book club meets monthly in the Media Center to discuss student-selected books and share the love of reading and books.

Fellowship of Christian Students and Athletes: Cold Pizza *Sponsors: Natalie Fields and Vickie Ward* - Cold Pizza is a combination of Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Any and all students, regardless of religious affiliation or denomination, are welcome to participate. Cold Pizza meets every Friday morning before school, and it is a time for students to enjoy food, fun and fellowship. Each week a motivational speaker comes to visit and share words of wisdom in a way that is both fun and inspirational. It's a great way to meet new people and enjoy time with old friends.

Friday Lunch Bunch *Sponsor: Sarah Maisey* The Friday Lunch Bunch meets once a week in room 805 to foster friendship and interaction between students of all ability levels. Teachers must recommend students.

HOSA *Sponsor: Mandy Ridgeway/Meehan Murphy* HOSA is a club for students who are interested in Health Occupation Careers. This club is aligned with the high school HOSA program and is perfect for both students who may join in high school or those who just want to explore different areas of medicine.

International Club *Sponsors: Gabrielle Humphrey* This is an organization for students who speak a language other than English or who are learning a new language. The club promotes multicultural awareness and provides a common ground for our international students.

Junior Beta Club *Sponsors: Lyn Hubbard, Tiffany O'Neil, Gabrielle Humphrey* High achievement, outstanding character, and scholastic leadership are attributes of the Beta Club member. Junior Beta Club is the middle school version of the National Beta Club, a service-leadership club for students in grades 5-12. Beta Club sponsors activities that promote academic excellence and citizenship such as peer tutoring, school assistance programs, and community projects. Membership in the Beta Club is by invitation only and requires a student to have and maintain semester averages of 90 or above in all classes, including Connections. Eligibility for membership is assessed at the end of each semester.

LEGO Robotics Team *Sponsors: Taran Swanson and Jamie Carson* The Robotics Team is a team of 10 students selected at the beginning of the year to compete in the First Lego League. The students must learn to program and build the robot, be able to work well with other people, and be prepared to work on a large project relating to the Robotics Challenge released for the year. Meetings take place one or two days after school and some mornings. The competitions are held on Saturdays.

Math Team *Sponsor: Mark Sanders* The math team is a competitive academic organization of selected students who are recommended by their math teacher. Members compete against other area Middle Schools at the Griffin RESA Middle School Math competition usually held in January or February of each year.

Radio Club *Sponsor: Bob Didier* Students who join Radio Club help to manage the Campus Radio Station WRSM 100.1FM Panther Radio from the Technology Lab. They will research music and artists, record intros, PSAs, and Panther News from Peoples, Rising Starr and Starr's Mill. They will also create playlists of songs that the station plays 24 hours a day. It is a fun group where you get a chance to be yourself ON AIR and be a voice for Panther Radio.

RSMS Panther News *Sponsor: Christopher Harper* This club produces the morning broadcast, Channel 17 Action News, and other video related projects. Auditions are required and occur each January.

Science Olympiad *Sponsor: Whitney Rider* Science Olympiad is a competitive academic team focusing on various scientific disciplines, such as chemistry, forensics, earth science, biology, engineering, and technology. Each competition is like an academic track meet with 23 different events requiring teamwork, ingenuity, and problem-solving skills. Students will meet with their event coaches each week from October to March to prepare for competitions. The team competes in academic and building events at the regional level, progressing with continued success to state and national levels.

Sports *Sponsors: Coaches* Seventh and eighth grade students are invited to try out for the following sports during the year: football, cheerleading, basketball, volleyball, and track. Sixth graders may not participate in athletics; however, an intramural sports program is offered.

Student Council *Sponsors: Jennifer Doyal, Vickie Ward* - The Rising Starr Student Council is a team of representatives from each grade who will provide input for decisions regarding school related items. Students are elected for each homeroom.

Yearbook Staff *Sponsor: Kristen Brady* The Rising Starr Panthers Yearbook Staff is responsible for selling, developing, and distributing the school's yearbook. This staff is chosen from literally hundreds of applicants and is responsible for designing, selling, advertising, and photography. Yearbook staff have meetings and work sessions after school as needed.

Quiet Reflection Legislation: 1994 Georgia Senate Bill 396

To comply with the provision of Bill 396, immediately following the school day's morning announcements, the student and faculty will be asked to observe a moment of silence to reflect on the anticipated activities of the day.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Rising Starr Middle School will release to appropriate institutions/agencies, upon request, directory information concerning any student enrolled in this system. Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents have the right to refuse permission for any of these categories of information to be released concerning their children.

Any parent who refuses permission for information to be released to the public may do so by informing the school principal in writing within five days from the first day of their child's enrollment.

The following categories are designated for directory information and will be released by request from appropriate institutions/agencies: *student's name, address, phone number, student's photo, date and place of birth, student's participation in official school clubs and sports, weight and height of student if he or she is a member of an athletic team, dates of attendance at the Fayette County School System, awards received during the time enrolled in the Fayette County School System, grade level and email address.*

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of the Fayette County Board of Education not to discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, natural origin, sex, or handicap and to provide a free and appropriate public education for each student and an appropriate work environment to each employee within its jurisdiction.

The intent of the Fayette County Board of Education is to ensure that students and employees who are categorized as handicapped by definition of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 will receive free and appropriate treatment within the educational system.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title IX regulations outline the provisions for identification, evaluation, and implementation of appropriate educational services and/or working conditions. Students and employees may be defined as handicapped under any of the above listed laws or regulations.

Parental Rights and Responsibilities

A parent of a handicapped child, as defined by Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, has the right to

1. written notice prior to any special evaluation or change in educational placement of his/her child;
2. attend any Student Support Team or other placement meetings held by the school;
3. notification of appropriate instructional and assessment strategies for his/her child;

4. the opportunity to examine all relevant records regarding his/her child's identification, evaluation, and placement in educational programs;
5. disagree with the identification;
6. an impartial hearing on the matter of disagreement;
7. representation by counsel at the hearing; and
8. request a review by a state hearing officer to the findings of the impartial hearing.

Parental concerns may be directed to the following coordinators:

Section 504 and ADA Coordinator	Ms. Audrey Toney	(770) 460-3990
IDEA Coordinator	Ms. Rosie Gwin	(770) 460-3911
Sports Equity Coordinator	Mr. Oatha Mann	(770) 716-1209 X 221
Title IX Coordinator	Ms. Audrey Toney	7770-460-3990