



Rising Starr Middle School

Panthers

2019-2020

183 Panther Path
Fayetteville, Georgia 30215
Telephone (770) 486-2721
Fax (770) 486-2727
RSMS.org

Kathy Smith	Principal
Deborah Rasnake	Assistant Principal/ ILT
Ron Rineer	Assistant Principal/ Athletic Director

Property of:

Address:

Phone #:

Email:

In case of emergency, please notify:

Name:

Phone #:

WELCOME TO RISING STARR!

Welcome to Rising Starr Middle School for the 2019-2020 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. This year, we will maintain that tradition of excellence.

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, teacher contact information, and planning which will help you keep your assignments in order and on time.

In addition to academic course work, 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!

Ms. Smith, Ms. Rasnake, and Mr. Rineer

Rising Starr Middle School *Vision Statement and Beliefs*

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 2019-2020 school year is as follows:

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT:	Kelly Kroskey & Natalie Kaiser (co-Presidents)
VICE PRESIDENT:	Jackie Bauer
SECRETARY:	Christie Hendrie
TREASURER:	LeAnne Smith

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

POPCORN/ICE CREAM:	Kelly Kroskey/Amy Thomas
HOSPITALITY:	Liah Lopez & Nicole Norris
SPIRIT WEAR:	Natalie Kaiser
BOX TOP:	Raewyn Galloway
8 TH GRADE PICNIC:	OPEN
8 TH GRADE DANCE:	Liah Lopez & Natalie Kaiser
WATCH D.O.G.S.:	Chad Norris

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 that you can provide.

In your welcome package, you will receive an envelope to collect the PTO Direct Drive. Through our PTO Direct Drive of \$35/STUDENT or \$45/FAMILY, the PTO can help RSMS with any financial needs not covered by the county without holding additional fundraising events. For your convenience, you can add the mandatory Locker fee of \$5 and the Agenda fee of \$5 to your check to the RSMS PTO.

For current and upcoming updates, we are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Search for **rsmspto** and follow and like us. Also, please feel free to talk to any one of us after the meeting or 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
2019-2020

EXCELLENT SCHOOLS DON'T JUST HAPPEN... THEY'RE CREATED!

RISEING STARR MIDDLE SCHOOL -- COURSES OF STUDY

<i>Sixth Grade</i>	<i>Seventh Grade</i>	<i>Eighth Grade</i>	<i>Connections</i>
- Literacy - Language Arts - Mathematics - Earth Science - Social Studies/ Americas, Europe, Oceania	- Literacy - Language Arts - Mathematics - Life Science - Social Studies/ Africa, Middle East, Asia	- Literacy or World Languages (<i>for qualified students</i>) - Language Arts - Mathematics - Physical Science - Georgia History & Government	- Family & Consumer Science - Technology - Computers - Band - Chorus - Orchestra - Spanish or German - Art - Music Technology - Career Exploration - PE/PA/Health - Academic Support Classes

**FAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR
2019 ~ 2020**

Students Report	August 5, 2019
First Semester	August 5 — December 19, 2019
Semester Exams (8 th grade)	December 16 - 19, 2019
Second Semester	January 7 - May 22, 2020
Semester Exams (8 th grade)	May 20 - 22, 2020
Graduation	May 22, 2020
Post Planning	May 26 - 27, 2020

HOLIDAYS

Labor Day	September 2, 2019
Fall Break	October 14- 15, 2019
Thanksgiving	November 25 - 29, 2019
Semester Break	December 20, 2019 — January 6, 2020
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 20, 2020
Presidents' Day	February 17, 2020
Winter Break	February 17- 19, 2020
Spring Break	April 6- 10, 2020

RISEING STARR MIDDLE SCHOOL
TEACHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Teacher	Subject	Email

BLACKBOARD/OTHER WEBSITE LOG IN INFO

Website	Username	Password

LOG IN for CHROMEBOOKS/SCHOOL COMPUTERS

Chromebooks: Login ID: Student ID number Password: LaMMDDYYYY	School Computers: Login ID: School email Password: LaMMDDYYYY
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STUDENT AGENDAS

Student agendas are available for each student at Rising Starr for \$5.00. Agendas are spiral bound notebooks that have spaces for homework assignments and comments from teachers for each school day. Students who do not use the paper agenda should use an electronic version to stay organized.

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	Service as a page in legislature
Death in immediate family	Court Order
Religious Holiday	Absence to vote in an election
Instances in which attendance could be hazardous as determined by the Fayette County School System	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

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** cumulative unexcused absences per semester will result in notification to the parents by first class mail of the unexcused absences and a summary of consequences. **Seven** cumulative unexcused absences per semester will result in notification of the parents by letter by the Attendance/ Residency Officer concerning the attendance/driver's license law and a summary

of consequences. **Ten** cumulative unexcused absences per semester will result in the notification by the Attendance/Residency Officer of the violations to the Student Attendance Protocol Committee 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 administration 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.
- Absences due to family or school-related trips entitle the student 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 Blackboard for assignments on a daily basis.

Arrival and Departure

Students are not to be on campus prior to 7:40 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 cafeteria/gym. **At no time should students be on campus prior to 7:40 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.

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 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 2:55 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

Although there is no longer a form for pre-arranged absences that requires approval in advance, parents should notify teachers prior to leaving. The student will be permitted to make up any assignments missed while absent. Arrangements to make up the assignments must be completed by the student no later than five days after returning from the absence.

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 records clerk to begin the withdrawal process.
2. All textbooks and books from the media center must be turned in.
3. All obligations and media center fines must be paid before records can be released.

CHROMEBOOKS AND BRING YOUR OWN TECHNOLOGY (BYOT)

Through an initiative approved by FCBOE, students are issued a Chromebook to use for school-related activities. Insurance is available for purchase. At this time, the Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) policy is under review. At Rising Starr, students are allowed to use personal electronic devices for **instructional purposes** on a limited basis under the direction and supervision of their teachers. Because each student has access to a Chromebook, the **student's personal devices should be turned OFF and kept in the locker during the school day unless use is requested by a teacher. 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.

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. We encourage all students to register their devices by going to **RSMS.org** and use the link to the "Bring Your Own Technology Registration Form." Headphones that cover the ears are not allowed. Earbuds are acceptable.

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 personal devices is restricted to approved classroom use; violations of Chromebook or BYOT 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 registered nurses 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
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 being used at inappropriate times or in inappropriate ways may be confiscated as disruptive items.

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 issues, please refer to the Fayette County School System Guidelines for Student Behavior 2019-2020.

DRESS CODE

Fayette County School System students are expected to dress and be groomed in such a way as to reflect neatness, cleanliness, and good taste. 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 following outlines **inappropriate** school dress:

1. shirts and/or dresses that do not cover the waist, shoulders and back (Sleeveless shirts must cover the entire width of the shoulders and closely under the arms. No low-cut necklines.)
2. tank tops (Camis are appropriate if under another shirt.)
3. pants, shorts, slacks, and skirts of inappropriate size and fit or jeans/pants which have holes above the knee (Pants and slacks must not touch the floor or be worn below the waistline.)
4. skirts, dresses, or shorts with the hems above the fingertips (Slits in dresses and skirts cannot be above fingertip length). **Shirts/sweatshirts/dresses worn with leggings underneath MUST be fingertip or mid-thigh length.**
5. exposed undergarments
6. clothing containing inappropriate language; advertisement of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or sex; suggestive lettering or pictures advocating/glorifying death and/or violence; gang related symbols
7. shredded shirts, shorts, or pants
8. hairstyles that create a disruption
9. sheer or mesh tops must have a shirt that covers the shoulders underneath
10. trench coats
11. apparel that is too revealing, including muscle shirts cut low under arms
12. clothing that is excessively form fitting (i.e. spandex)
13. sunglasses inside the buildings
14. shoes with wheels
15. wallet chains or other type of chains that may be dangerous or disruptive
16. hats, caps, or hoods
17. headbands or bandanas, head scarves or head rags
18. body piercing (Ear piercing will be allowed.)
19. pajama bottoms or bedroom slippers
20. Every student is expected to wear proper undergarments.

Consequences for Dress Code Violations

- 1st offense - Sent to office either to change or have parent bring appropriate clothing. If clothing is not changed, student 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.
- 4th offense - Student will receive **three** days of in-school suspension.
- 5th offense - Student 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:

- more than **five** teacher detentions per semester,
- **four** or more administrative after school detentions (or **eight** administrative lunch 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 are under review and 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 in to the building must be stored in appropriate containers. Drinks must have secure lids. 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.

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:

Gary Siliski: 6th Grade and 7th with last names beginning with A-K

Terese Benefield: 8th Grade and 7th 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 problem.

- 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 student 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 hall pass 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 Blackboard as the primary Learning Management System. All RSMS teachers/teams will clearly communicate to you and your student about procedures for accessing Blackboard. 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 for one hall 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 asked for a \$1 donation for locker rental.

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 student name.

LUNCH

Lunches 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 mylunchmoney.com to set up an account.

Students are not allowed to charge lunch. Loans for students who have forgotten a lunch or are low in their lunch account

are made available by the administration in order to ensure no student goes without a mid-day meal. These loans must be paid back to the administration at their lunch table the next school day. **Adding funds to a student lunch account does not cover this administrative loan.** Students who repetitively borrow money or neglect to repay the loan will be provided a cheese sandwich by the cafeteria.

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. Because of the small staff in the front office, the school will not guarantee receipt of non-emergency messages. ***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.)
- facilitate a PAWS group (weekly during a school quarter)
- join parent teacher organization (PTO)
- join booster club membership (academic, 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. 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 encouraged to purchase a P.E. uniform from the PE department. Those who do not purchase a uniform 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 sent home for parental review to be signed and returned. An interim progress report will be available via Infinite Campus for parental review. Students are expected to return any materials which require a parent's signature on the following day. ***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 guidance office.

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 meet tutoring requirements at parent expense 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 - 11:00 am.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Because much time and effort goes into the process of scheduling students for classes, schedule changes are rarely made. Occasionally, however, the need to change a class is justified. Students must complete and turn in a Schedule Issue form, including parent signature, describing the circumstances for requesting a change. 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 bus loop or Peebles 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 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* 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.

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: Camille Jammes* The Friday Lunch Bunch meets once a week in room 805 to foster friendship and interaction between students of all ability levels. Teacher must recommend students.

HOSA *Sponsor: Mandy Ridgeway* 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 the different areas of medicine.

International Club *Sponsors: Ana Johnson and 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: Melissa Knowles and Lyn Hubbard* 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.

KIVA Club *Sponsor: Vickie Anderson* KIVA is a non-profit organization with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. Leveraging the Internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, KIVA lets individuals lend as little as \$25 to help create opportunity around the world. We will research opportunities, collect money, make pledges, and watch our money at work changing lives across the world.

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: Vickie Anderson* 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.

Panther Partners *Sponsor: Gary Saliski* Panther Partners are the school ambassadors and peer helpers to all new students who enroll throughout the year. The goal is to help make the transition to our school smooth by pairing the new student with a peer buddy from their team. Panther Partners are positive role models and represent the school at various school and community service functions. Student application and teacher recommendation are required. This club meets once a month.

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 *Sponsors: Missy Leonard* 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 selected by homeroom teachers.

Yearbook Staff *Sponsor: Eric Todd* The Rising Starr Panthers Yearbook Staff is responsible for selling, developing, and distributing the school's yearbook. This elite 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.

PAWS ACTIVITY PERIOD

Once per week on Wednesday, the bell schedule is modified to provide students a period to pursue an activity to develop a personal interest, acquire a new skill, or engage in social-emotional development activities. Students register their 1st – 3rd choices each quarter and are assigned to a group. The PAWS schedule may be found at rsms.org.

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

Rising Starr Middle School will release to members of the public, 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 10 days from the first day of their child's enrollment.

The following categories are designated for directory information and will be released to the public:

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 Coordinator	Ms. Audrey Toney	(770) 460-3990
IDEA Coordinator	Ms. Rosie Gwin	(770) 460-3911
Title IX Coordinator	Mr. Oatha Mann	(770) 716-1209
ADA Coordinator	Ms. Erin Roberson	(770) 460-3535