

Whitewater Middle School Wildcats

2024 - 2025 Student Handbook

1533 Hwy 85 South

Fayetteville, Georgia 30215

Telephone: (770) 460-3450

Fax: (770) 460-0362

Website: <https://www.fcboe.org/wms>

Updated: 7/20/2024



WELCOME

Greetings Wildcat Families,

We are very excited for this new school year. We welcome you and your family to be part of the Wildcat Family. For our sixth grade students, middle school is the beginning of a new and exciting adventure. For our returning students, each year of middle school brings new responsibilities and opportunities, and for our new students and families, we welcome you warmly. Our dedicated staff has made a commitment to middle school children and the philosophy of meeting the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs that are uniquely special to children as they grow into becoming adolescents.

We encourage you to get involved in the “middle school way.” We welcome parents and students to participate in all the opportunities that we offer. This agenda helps to serve as a “field-guide” for building a successful school year. The handbook pages outline the expectations for good behavior at Whitewater Middle School along with other important information.

Family involvement is key to a successful education and offers possibilities to be more a part of Whitewater. We are fortunate to have great parental support, and our PTO offers both leadership and volunteer opportunities for parents and grandparents.

The calendar of activities found on our school website offers interaction times for students, time on the campus for our families, and plenty of volunteer experiences. Our academic and extracurricular offerings are top notch and offer a variety of opportunities for all students to be involved.

Please be sure to stay informed by regularly visiting our school website, reading email from the school and district, creating a login for Schoology, our Learning Management Platform, and creating a login for Infinite Campus, our Student Information System.

At WMS, we value a safe learning environment for each student, and we appreciate your efforts and dedication to helping our young Wildcats be respectful, be responsible, and be safe.

It takes a village to raise a child, and we are thrilled to be on this journey with you.

Brian Butera, Principal
Kimberly Broome, Assistant Principal
Stephanie Washington, Assistant Principal

MISSION STATEMENT

Educating minds, achieving goals, fostering responsibility

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students can learn, achieve, and succeed given a supportive and challenging learning environment.
- All students have the right to learn in a safe, non-threatening environment.
- All students will develop a strong work ethic that emphasizes student responsibility, accountability, and self-discipline.
- Technology improves student learning and is an important part of academic instruction.
- Students need to be active, independent learners who are involved in solving problems and producing quality work.
- The development of honesty, integrity, and respect are valued attributes of students who are striving to become productive citizens.

Fayette County Schools
 School Year Calendar
 2024 - 2025

Students Report August 5, 2024
1st Semester August 5 - December 20, 2024
1st Semester Exams (8th grade) December 16 - 20, 2024
2nd Semester January 6 - May 23, 2025
2nd Semester Exams (8th grade) May 19 - 23, 2025
Last day of school for students May 23, 2025
Post Planning May 27 – May 28, 2025

Holidays

Labor Day	September 2, 2024
Fall Break	October 14 - 15, 2024
Thanksgiving	November 25 - 29, 2024
Semester Break	December 23, 2024 — January 3, 2025
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 20, 2025
Winter Break	February 17 - 21, 2025
Spring Break	April 7 - 11, 2025

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. **Administrators are not typically available for drop-in conferences. Parents should call the school to schedule an appointment.**

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students not picked up within 15 minutes after the end of the game will not be allowed to stay after for any other games in that particular season.

- Students assigned ISS/OSS the day of the event may not participate in that day's after school event. Students that are not present for at least half of the school day are not allowed to attend any after-school activities.
- Students shall dress in a tasteful manner, in keeping with the **county dress code**.
- No refunds will be given if the student does not attend the event.

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 with 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 the following:

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;
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) 460-3990
Title IX Coordinator	Mrs. Audrey Toney	(770) 460-3990
ADA Coordinator	Mrs. Erin Roberson	(770) 460-3990
Sports Equity Coordinator	Mr. Oatha Mann	(770) 460-3990

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, stomping 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 the assembly conduct.

- Proceed to the assembly area and be seated quietly and promptly.
- Direct attention towards the speaker.
- Remain quiet.
- Applaud in a generous and courteous fashion.
- Remain seated until dismissed.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Students are not to be on campus prior to 7:25 AM. All students must enter the school through the gym entrance. No student, unless he/she is accompanied by an adult, may enter the school through the main entrance. If a student has a pass from the teacher to report to his/her classroom prior to dismissal to homeroom, he/she must report directly to that teacher's classroom. **At no time should students be on campus unless under the direct supervision of a teacher or another adult.**

Students should exit the building at dismissal time. Only students with a pass from a teacher will be allowed on hallways before the homeroom dismissal bell. **No student should be on campus after 3:10 PM unless under the supervision of a teacher.**

Late Check-in

Promptness to school is important. In the event that a student arrives to homeroom 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. Doctor's notes should be turned in to the front office upon arrival. Tardies will be considered excused for medical appointments or personal illness, both with proper documentation. **Traffic is not a reason for receiving an excused tardy.** Students with an ***excessive number (5+)*** of unexcused tardies will be referred to the office for disciplinary action. **Homeroom starts at 8:10, and any student who is not in homeroom by 8:10 is considered tardy.**

Check-out

If your child gets sick during the day, he/she is to go through the clinic to be checked out. **A student should not call or text parents from class to have parents come to pick him or her up early.** Parents will not be permitted to check students out after 2:45.

Early Check-out

If you know ahead of time that your student needs to check out during the day, please send a note with your child in the morning stating the time of check out. Students are to bring the note to the front office during homeroom to receive a pass. This will allow the student to be dismissed from class at the stated time so he/she will be up front when the parent arrives. **Please bring a photo ID when checking students out.** 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. Parents will not be permitted to check students out after 2:45.

Participation in Activities (Attendance Requirement)

Any student participating in any school activity must attend at least half of the school day.

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
- Death in immediate family
- Religious Holiday
- Court Order
- 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(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

It is important to note that students will receive school level consequences for tardies and parents and/or students will receive consequences from the court system for unexcused absences.

BETA CLUB MEMBERSHIP

The Beta Club is a Leadership-Service Organization for Grades 7 and 8. The purpose of the Beta Club is to stimulate effort and to promote those qualities of character that make for good citizenship. The qualifications for individual membership include worthy character, good mentality, credible achievement, and commendable attitude. A student must attain a Cumulative Grade Point Average of a 90 or higher in all classes to be considered for membership. The school's administrators must approve prospective members.

BOOK BAG POLICY

Students are permitted to use book bags to transport books and materials to and from school. Book bags must be stored in the lockers during the day. Phones are to be stored in the book bags all day. Students are allowed to bring protective cases/bags for electronic devices. Cases are to be size appropriate.

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

O.C.G.A. 20-2-145 Comprehensive character education program

Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year a comprehensive character education program for was implemented for students in K-12. This comprehensive character education program is known as the “character curriculum” and there is a focus on the students’ development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, respect for the creator, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue. The program also addresses methods of discouraging bullying and violent acts against fellow students.

CLINIC

All students will receive medical attention, if needed, in the school clinic. We are very fortunate to have a licensed nurse working at Whitewater. This allows us to provide a full time nurse on a daily basis in the school clinic. For the safety of your child, we ask that all medication used at school be taken to the clinic along with a physician’s signature and explanation of how the medication is to be given. School Medical Authorization forms are located at www.fcboe.org under School Health Services. If a child takes medication during the school day and the parent brings the medication to the child, the child shall take the medication in the front office and then the child will return to class/lunch. Parents shall not be allowed to go to the cafeteria/classroom for the purposes of giving a child his/her medication.

Clinic Procedures

1. The student should first check in with that period teacher and get a pass to go to the clinic.
2. The student should check in with the nurse immediately and enter from the main hall door.
3. Students may lie down in the clinic if they are sick enough to go home and are waiting for parents to come. Otherwise, they should return to class.
4. The parent or legal guardian must complete and sign a School Medication Authorization for all medications (prescriptions and over-the-counter) given at school. For prescription medications, a duly licensed physician must also complete and sign the School Medication Authorization. These forms are available in the clinic and must be on file in order for medications to be administered. **NOTE:** The school or clinic worker is not responsible for correct dosage. This is a student responsibility.
5. If a student is running a fever or is unable to return to class, the parent(s) must come and check the student out of school.
6. Prescription medications brought to the clinic must be in original containers (small bottles only please).
7. All medications must be brought to the school office or clinic before the start of school by a parent or legal guardian or other designated adult. School Medical Authorization forms should accompany medication.
8. Clinic cards are sent home the first day of school. Please fill these out and return to the homeroom teacher within 5 days. Current, accurate information will enable us to contact you. If any information changes during the school year, contact the school immediately.

Through an initiative approved by FCBOE, students are issued a Chromebook to use for school-related activities. Insurance is available for purchase. At Whitewater Middle, students are allowed to utilize electronic devices for **instructional purposes only** under the direction and supervision of their teachers. **Student use of technology is by invitation only. Only the teacher may issue this invitation.** 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 and/or wireless earbuds are not permitted to be used during the school day. Students should have wired earbuds for instruction, if necessary.

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.**

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In recognition of the importance of parental involvement in the educational process, parents are welcome to visit the classroom. For the protection of our students and the integrity of the instructional program, all parents must check in at the school office for classroom visitation.

- All observations must be arranged through the school principal, and arrangements will be made within one week of the request.
- Observations are limited to one adult observer at a time.
- Parents should respect the confidentiality of all students within the classroom setting; therefore, no personally identifiable information should be shared, and the observer is not permitted to take audio or video recordings.
- Parents should refrain from interacting with students (including their own child) and the teacher during the observation.
- Observations will be limited to 30 minutes, and a parent may not request to observe a classroom more than once per semester.
- The parent will be accompanied by an administrator to the classroom, and the administrator will remain in the classroom for the entire duration of the observation.

DANCES

Generally, there are two dances during the school year, and only WMS students may attend the dance.

At WMS, we want to ensure that our dances remain fun and socially acceptable to all students and all members of our community. With that being said, students need to be aware that there are certain types of dancing which are simply not acceptable at school-sponsored functions. In addition, the state of Georgia has a statute that makes some types of dancing in the presence of minors (any person under the age of 18) a violation of the law. The statute reads:

*16-608: "A lewd caress or indecent fondling of the body of another person."

*16-12-100: "Sexually explicit conduct" means actual or simulated. "Performance" means any play, dance, or exhibit to be shown or viewed by an audience. It is unlawful for any parent, legal guardian, or person having custody or control of a minor to engage in or to assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of any performance.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The administration, faculty, and staff of Whitewater Middle School desire to establish a comfortable and safe atmosphere conducive to good 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 which include but are not limited to the following:

1. Insubordination; an unwillingness to follow school personnel instructions,
2. Disrespect toward school personnel or any adult in the building,
3. Fighting, assault, or aggressive behavior which includes the threat to cause physical injury or harm to another person,
4. Theft,
5. Smoking, chewing, dipping, or possession of any form of tobacco, lighters, or matches, vaping equipment/products,
6. Destruction or defacement of school property,
7. Possession or use of weapons including knives, firearms, or explosives,
8. Truancy,
9. Possession or use of alcohol, drugs, (this may include illegal, over-the-counter prescription, or counterfeit drugs) or drug paraphernalia at school or any school-sponsored activity,
10. Racial remarks or slurs,
11. Harassment: sexual, verbal, or physical,
12. Gang activity or display of gang affiliation,
13. Use of profanity or otherwise objectionable language or gestures directed toward students or teachers,
14. Chewing gum,
15. Open displays of affection, including kissing, hugging, holding hands,
16. Rowdy behavior or horsing around,
17. Academic dishonesty,
18. Dress Code,
19. No aerosol cans or glass bottles are to be brought to school.

*** Students must keep their hands to themselves.**

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 of Whitewater should not be brought to school. Students found with disruptive 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.

Electronic Communication Devices

Students will not be allowed to use cell phones or smart watches during the day. These devices are required to be kept in the locker, and they must be turned off. **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.** Neither students nor parents are permitted to record with audio or video devices classroom setting, changing classrooms, lunch times, or any other time school is in session. **Student performances or athletic activities are exempt from this policy.**

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 Whitewater 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 including insubordination, vandalism, minor/major theft, vulgar or obscene language, harassment, or similar offenses. 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 Code of Conduct for Secondary Students 2021-2022.

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. Students must ensure that their dress does not distract or potentially cause disruption in the educational program or orderly operation of the school. School administrators will be responsible for determining dress code violations. The principal may interpret these provisions as he/she deems to be in the best interest of the school, students, or the educational process.

The following are the standards for school dress:

1. Students must wear clothing that includes 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 the 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 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 types of 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.

The dress code applies to ALL school functions.

E-MAIL ADDRESS

Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teachers via electronic mail. You may reach any teacher/staff member by typing his/her last name.first name@fcboe.org - E.G. smith.alice@fcboe.org

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 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.

EXAMS

Eighth grade students are required to take semester exams. These semester exams count 15% of the semester grade. Eighth grade students enrolled in Acc Coord Alg/Geom A or Algebra I will take an End-of-Course Test (EOC) in the spring, and the grade shall count as 20% of the semester average. Students enrolled in Physical Science for high school credit and/or a World Language for high school credit will take a final exam and the exam shall count 20% of the semester average.

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 time for after school activities is announced and should be communicated by the students to the person responsible for picking them up prior to the event. **Failure of students to be picked up in a timely manner will 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 extra-curricular activities must pass all academic subjects. Eligibility is based on the preceding semester average. Fayette County middle school policy states that if a student is suspended or in ISS, he/she will not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activity on that day. **If the student is not present for at least half of the day of the activity, the student may not participate.** Participation in athletics does not allow one to be excused from participating 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.

Sports

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.

FIELD TRIPS

Permission slips will be sent home. 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 involve transportation expenses.

Students are expected to pay for those costs and event fees if they wish to attend. Students will be excluded from field trips for the following behaviors:

- 5 or more days in in-school suspension
- Any in-school suspension assigned for the day of a trip
- Any out-of-school suspension, whether assigned on the day of the trip or prior to the trip
- 7 or more absences during a 9-week period or single class period or 12 or more days up to day of the trip
- Inappropriate behaviors on previous field trips
- Lack of proof of insurance for overnight field trips

Refunds are not guaranteed if a student is removed from the field trip opportunity.

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.

FIRE DRILLS/TORNADO DRILLS

The immediate evacuation of the school building during a fire drill is important. Upon the sound of a fire alarm, a student must proceed quickly and quietly to designated exits. A tornado drill is signaled by a different alarm sound. Students will report to the areas indicated on maps posted throughout the building.

FOOD/DRINK ITEMS

Due to the high number of students with food allergies or other medical concerns, parents are not permitted to send in food items such as cookies or cupcakes for a child's birthday or any other event. **"Fast food" items are not allowed at school. If a parent brings a student fast food for lunch, the student will remain in the front office to eat the lunch.**

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.** If water bottles become a distraction, teachers may require students to keep the water bottle in the locker. No food may be ordered by students to be delivered during the school day.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS AT HOME

Whitewater Middle will not interrupt classes to deliver forgotten items (lunch, homework, projects, clothing, uniforms). Students that have forgotten items will be called up to the office before their lunch period to pick up forgotten items. Therefore, no child will miss out on a lunch that was left at home or as a result of forgetting lunch money.

HALL PASSES

Authorization to leave a classroom must be given by staff personnel. Teachers have hall passes, and students are expected to use a hall pass during the day.

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 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, the child must be withdrawn from 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 of this insurance are:

1. School day coverage from bus pick up until bus drop off.
2. 24 hour coverage for 12 months.

Students attending over night field trips must show proof of insurance prior to paying for the trip, or they will not be allowed to participate in the field trip.

INTERNET

BE SAFE ON THE NET

- **DO NOT** give out personal information (phone numbers, addresses, passwords)
- **DO NOT** send a picture of yourself or someone else
- **DO NOT** agree to meet someone
- **DO NOT** take pictures of other students or teachers at school or on the bus
- **DO NOT** access unapproved sites
- **TELL** a teacher or a parent if you get a message that makes you feel unsafe
- **TELL** a teacher or a parent if you see bad language or threats online

REMEMBER: DO NOT ACCEPT ALL ONLINE INFORMATION AS THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH. BE CAUTIOUS.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Fayette County Schools use Schoology as the primary Learning Management System. All WMS 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.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

All legal documents that you need for the school to be aware of should be given to our Student Information Specialist. Documents should reflect the most updated information and those documents will be uploaded into Infinite Campus.

LOCKERS

A \$10.00 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 locked at all times. The school is not responsible for lost books, notebooks, gym clothes, etc. Locker problems should be reported to the office immediately. **There are to be NO decorations inside or outside of lockers at any time.**

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found area will be maintained by the school. Please check there for lost and found items. At the end of each semester, remaining items will be donated to charity.

LUNCH

Prepayment can be made at any time, and you may apply as much money as needed. All money goes into the student's account. If the parent chooses for his/her child not to have a la carte, this option can be blocked from their account. **Each child will have a unique 6-digit ID number.** He/she will enter the number into a keypad, and the computer will keep a running total of his/her account. Parents may come in and check the account at any time.

Middle school students may not charge a lunch. If a student does not have money in his/her account, he/she will receive a cheese sandwich and a choice of milk. **The cost of a student lunch is \$3.25.**

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.

LUNCHROOM CONDUCT

Students are required to keep the lunchroom clean. In order to accomplish this, the following rules must be followed:

- Students are to place disposable articles in the waste containers.

- Food/drink should not be taken out of the lunchroom.
- Students who spill food/drink are expected to clean up any mess.
- Tables and chairs are not to be removed without permission.
- Be orderly, courteous, and respectful in the serving line.
- Students are not permitted to sit on table tops at any point during the day.
- Students are to go to restrooms before, during and after lunch.
- **Carbonated drinks are not allowed during lunch.**
- Glass containers are not permitted at school.

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.

- A student is allowed one day to make up work for each day of an absence.
- Provided prior approval has been obtained from the principal, absences due to family or school-related trips entitle the student to obtain assignments prior to the absence provided the work is submitted upon the student's return to school. The absence is unexcused.
- Students assigned out-of-school suspension (OSS) will be allowed to make up any missed assignments.
- 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.

****Students or parents should check Schoology, Infinite Campus, or email teachers to request assignments that were missed due to an absence.****

MEDIA CENTER

The Whitewater Middle School (WMS) Media Center is a resource area for book distribution, research, individual and group student project assistance, and leisure reading. Media passes are required at all times for a student to use the media center when he/she is not with his/her class. Student ID cards and/or barcodes in the student agenda are required for checkout. Proper checkout procedures must be used for all books and materials leaving the media center. Books may be checked out for a two-week period. One renewal is allowed for an additional two-week period. A student is responsible for all materials checked-out in his/her name. Replacement costs for severely damaged and/or lost items, processing fees, and any fines associated with each item (10¢ per day per item) will be totaled and communicated with students and parents. Payment is expected and required to be paid upon receipt. Students with fines or overdue items will receive a notice via their homeroom teacher. In addition, checkout privileges may be restricted and limited until the account is reconciled. Notices are also emailed to the student's parent/guardian and serve as reminders for the student to return or renew their books and pay their fine(s) if applicable.

The WMS Media Center hours of operation are 7:45 am - 3:10 pm. Students may stay later only with parental permission and permission from one of the media center staff members. The student should ask permission to stay the day before the requested date and NOT on the day needed.

The WMS Media Center has items available for purchase: poster board, construction paper, earbuds, and copies in black and white or color.

Please check out the WMS Media Center Schoology site for our complete handbook, additional, helpful links, and important information.

2024 - 2025

- The loan period for books is two weeks. Students may renew books up to two times.
- Students are able to renew their books using their Destiny account. Students wishing to renew their book at the circulation desk in the media center must present the book when requesting a renewal.
- Students may check out two items at a time. Special circumstances may allow a student to check out more than two items with the approval of the media staff.
- Students must pay for lost or damaged books before checking out any other items. If the charges for the book have been paid and the book is found at a later date by the student, the student may keep the book or request a refund if found within 30 days of the original due date of the book.
- An additional, non-refundable processing fee of \$3.00 will be added to the cost of lost materials to cover shipping and processing for their replacement. The student is additionally responsible for any late charges associated with the lost or damaged item.
- ***Students who have overdue items or charges on their account may not check out a new item until the balance is cleared.*** Our honor book section allows a student to take a book 'on their honor', and they are expected to return the book in a timely manner.
- Notices of overdue materials will be printed and distributed, as needed, to homeroom teachers to identify students who need to reconcile their library accounts. Students and parents will receive periodic emails about overdue materials and/or fees.

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. ***Please 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. **Parents please do not call or text your child's cell phone during the day. If a student needs to call home during the day for an emergency, the student must come to the office with a signed note from a teacher to use the office phone. Students are not to use cell phones during school hours to make calls.** Students will only be allowed to use the phone in the front office for transportation changes, forgotten items, and dress code violations.

NOTICE FOR LANGUAGE AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE FOR THE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

If you have difficulty communicating with us or understanding this information because you do not speak English or have a disability, please let us know. Contact (770-460-3535 ext 1058). Free language assistance or other aids and services are available upon request:

Español:

Si tiene dificultades para comunicarse con nosotros, o para entender esta información porque no habla inglés o tiene alguna discapacidad, por favor infórmenos. Comuníquese con (770-460-3535 ext 1058). Tenemos disponibilidad de servicios gratuitos de ayuda en otros idiomas y otro tipo de asistencia y servicios cuando lo solicite.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer), (AD-3027) found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Students who are assigned out-of-school suspension are not allowed to attend any school related activities. Students who are assigned OSS will be allowed to make up any missed assignments.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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

- Parent volunteers at the school site
- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Booster Club Membership (academic and athletic)
- Committee Participation
- Chaperones (field trips and extracurricular activities)
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Mentoring

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are encouraged for better communication. If a conference is desired, please call the counselor or your child's teacher or team leader to set up an appointment.

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.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education and health classes are offered to all students at WMS. Students who are in P.E. will be required to participate unless they have a doctor's excuse. Students are asked to have shorts and shirts for these classes and tennis shoes with white soles. The student's name should be on each article of clothing, preferably on the outside where it can be seen. If a student is ill, the parent must write a note explaining the reason for not participating in P.E.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

Whitewater Middle School implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - a framework that seeks to improve and integrate data, systems, and practices that affect student outcomes. PBIS takes a positive, proactive

behavior approach by focusing on and recognizing students for behavior that is exhibited in the educational setting. PBIS places an emphasis on teaching and modeling appropriate behavior as well as reinforcing the positive behavior of students. Every teacher and staff member in the school is aware of the behavioral expectations and works to ensure students are hearing the common behavior language, regardless of their setting or the adult they encounter daily.

QUIET REFLECTION LEGISLATION

1994 GEORGIA SENATE BILL 396

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

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

During each nine week grading period a report card and an interim progress report will be available for parental review through Infinite Campus. Students are expected to return report cards and any other materials which require a parent's signature on the following day. **Eligibility for participation in competitive interscholastic events will be based on passing grades 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 seventy (70). Communication with parents is encouraged through school visits and scheduled conferences. To schedule a conference, parents may contact the guidance office or the teacher. 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	

Promotion Policy

Any student failing an academic subject in the 6th, 7th, or 8th grades will be required to attend summer school. Failure to attend summer school may result in retention.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

Saturday School is an opportunity for students to make up missing work. Students will be recommended to attend Saturday School by a teacher or administrator. Dates and times for Saturday School will be announced at a later date.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Fayette County Board of Education to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It is a violation of this policy for students to harass other students through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Touching, grabbing or pinching body parts-could be sexual battery
- Pulling off your own or someone else's clothes
- Showing sexual drawings or pictures
- Spreading sexual rumors about a person
- Making sexual comments, gestures or jokes
- Writing sexual graffiti
- Assault

Students who commit acts of sexual harassment will be subject to strict disciplinary action and possible prosecution. Please keep your hands to yourself.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Because of the time and effort that is put into the process of scheduling students for classes, schedule changes are rarely made. Occasionally, however, the need to change a class is justified. The only legitimate reason for requesting

a schedule change is if the student has been misplaced in the class and his or her ability level requires a change of schedule.

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

Connection classes are randomly selected by the computer scheduler. Students are not given the opportunity to choose connection classes.

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

- Requests for a change of teacher/team,
- 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 Whitewater Middle School as a school resource officer.

THREATS

For all students to learn and grow, school must be a safe environment. Current events suggest that ensuring such an environment is a task which requires a strict, no-nonsense approach to any words or deeds which reflect the violence of our times. WMS will regard all written and/or verbal threats, implied or directed toward students, staff members, or school and staff property as acts of malice and endangerment. The school's discipline action will be immediate and severe. Incidences may be reported to the police and/or sheriff's department depending on the specific jurisdiction.

TRANSPORTATION

The driver of a school bus carries a heavy burden of responsibility. Students and parents should be aware that the sole purpose of the school bus is to transport students safely to and from school. **Any student disobeying the transportation rules may be removed from the bus.** Any inquiries regarding transportation or delayed buses should be directed to the director of transportation at 770-460-3520.

TRANSPORTATION-CAR

All car riders need to follow safety procedures as they enter and exit the school. Morning drop off is in the gym parking lot near the bus loop. Afternoon pick up is in the bus loop after buses have departed. All car riders must load and unload at the curb. **Students are not to be picked up in front of the school, unless they are being checked out early from the office. For the safety of our students, students will not be allowed to meet parents in the parking lot.**

TRANSPORTATION-RIDING A DIFFERENT BUS HOME

If a student rides a different bus home, he/she must have a note from a parent or guardian. ***This note must be brought to the front office during homeroom.*** The note should include your child's name, the date, bus number, and the child's name with whom your child is riding home. At this time a bus pass will be issued. The bus pass is necessary if the student needs to ride another bus. Bus passes may be restricted due to overcrowding. If a student needs to go home on a different bus, parents may email wmsfrontoffice@fcboe.org. **Due to end of the day responsibilities, transportation changes will not be accepted via email or phone after 2:30.**

BUS ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Morning

- All students will enter through the gym at the bus loop.

- Sixth and Seventh grade students will remain in the gym until dismissed.
- Eighth grade students will remain in the commons until dismissed.
- There are no locker privileges before dismissal to homeroom.
- All car riders must be dropped off at the curb closest to the gym, no earlier than 7:25am. Students are not to be dropped off at the front door or in the parking lot.

Afternoon

- Students will remain in their last period class until dismissed for the buses.
- When dismissed, students must go directly to their buses.
- Car riders will be dismissed and need to go directly to the pick-up area.
- *All car riders must load from the curb; students will walk to the far right of the sidewalk to load cars. Parents are not to park and ask students to cross the line of traffic to meet them at the curb.*

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

VISITORS

Visitors to the building should first check in at the front office to register 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. They must sign in with the office and document the reason for the visit. Friends from other schools or relatives visiting the area will not be allowed to visit classes during school hours.

WITHDRAWING A STUDENT FROM SCHOOL

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

Parents or guardians should contact the school to sign the withdrawal form.

1. Student should come by the guidance office, before homeroom, on the morning of his/her last day to pick up the withdrawal form.
2. The student should take the withdrawal form to the media center to begin withdrawal procedures.
3. The student should take the withdrawal form to each class. All textbooks are turned in and the withdrawal form is signed by each teacher.
4. Student returns to the guidance office no later than 3:00 p.m. to bring the completed withdrawal form to the counselor and to get it signed by the administration.
5. It is very important that parents leave a forwarding address so that we can send the yearbook, if ordered. When the yearbooks arrive at the end of the year, your child's yearbook will be mailed directly to him/her.

WHITEWATER MIDDLE SCHOOL MATRIX

Positive Behavior Support Guidelines

	Cooperate	Act With Appropriate Attitude	Take Responsibility	Show Respect
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow directions the 1st time *Stay on task *Speak appropriately *Follow rules *Stay in assigned area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Show eagerness to learn *Speak positively toward both teachers and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Bring all needed materials *Be prepared *Complete all assignments on time *Keep classroom area clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Leave property of others alone *Respect personal space
Assemblies Extracurricular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Be attentive to the program *Follow directions *Participate when asked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Exhibit school pride and spirit *Demonstrate good sportsmanship *Use only positive responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Be on time, keep area clean *Keep hands and feet to yourself *Move orderly and quietly *Stay in assigned areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Listen/focus on speaker *Follow directions *Respect others' space
Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Be on time *Be ready to participate and enjoy the field trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Show school pride in community *Show self-respect by being clean and dressing neatly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Notify parents of pick-up time *Turn in paperwork on time *Follow all bus rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow directions the 1st time *Keep hands, feet, and objects to self *Be attentive when someone is speaking
Gym/Locker Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dress out daily *Participate daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep hands to yourself *Keep belongings secure *Turn in lost items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use and take care of equipment as intended *Be in roll call on time *Keep locker room clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow directions the 1st time *Leave property of others' alone *Encourage peer participation
Cafeteria/Patio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stay in line *Chew food with mouth closed *Food goes from plate to fork to mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use quiet voices *Clean your area *Choose healthy foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep area clean *Keep food and drinks in the cafeteria *Know your number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Quickly and quietly through the line *Leave area neat and clean *Take and eat only your food *Stay in your assigned area
Restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dispose of paper towels in trash container *Choose it, use it, flush it *Wash hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Mind your own business *Return to learn *Report acts of vandalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have a signed agenda/pass *Keep restroom clean and floor dry *Return to class ASAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Leave others alone *Be quick and quiet
Media Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use quiet voice *Have permission to go 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have a purpose *Wait patiently for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Bring signed agenda/pass *Return books on time *Bring needed items *Ask for help if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Sign in and out *Take care of all materials *Use appropriate language *Follow directions the 1st time
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself *Leave room for others to pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep hallway clean *Keep lockers and walls clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have a signed agenda/pass during class time *Stay in designated area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep hands, feet, and objects away from others, walls and displays *Use quiet voices *Walk on right side of hallway
Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *State purpose politely *Exit when business is completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *State purpose politely *Wait patiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have signed permission to come to office *Walk directly to the office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wait your turn *Ask permission to use the phone *Be polite to office staff
Arrival/Dismissal For Car and Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Walk directly to designated area *Follow directions the 1st time *Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Be courteous to other riders *Follow directions the 1st time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stay in designated area *Stay seated at all times *Follow bus rules *When late to school, an adult must sign you in at the office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use quiet voices *Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself *Have permission to leave the assigned area
Locker Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Go straight to locker *Get to class on time *Follow directions the 1st time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wait your turn *Be helpful when needed *Concentrate on designated task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Get necessary items for each class *Keep locker neat and organized *Move quickly from locker to class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Be polite *Keep area clean