

**Fort Mill Middle School**  
**200 Springfield Parkway**  
**Fort Mill, SC 29715**

**Principal: Tony Caricari**

**Phone: (803) 547-5553 Fax: (803) 548-2911**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Student:

Fort Mill School District believes it is very important to inform you and your student of the expected codes of conduct we require in the Fort Mill Schools.

Your student has been provided this Fort Mill Middle School Student-Parent Planner which also serves as the agenda/handbook outlining the expectations, guidelines, rules, and consequences regarding student academic and behavioral expectations. Please read the handbook section carefully and discuss its contents with your student.

We feel, as you do, that school should be a safe, orderly place to learn. This is part of our attempt to provide your child with the best education possible. With your help, we continue to strive for excellence and we embrace the challenge together of making the most of each and every day.

Once you have reviewed the handbook pages with your student, we ask parents/guardians to complete and sign below to acknowledge your receipt and understanding. Additionally, please complete and return page two. Your student should return these two pages to his/her homeroom teacher by **Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup>**.

While reading over the handbook, we ask that you pay close attention to the cell phone policy (pages 9-10), the dress code policy (page 11), and our school policy regarding food/beverage containers/consumption outside the classroom (page 13).

**If your student is a bus rider, we ask you to pay special attention to page 8.**

We have read the Fort Mill Middle School handbook; and although we may not agree with all the regulations, we understand that each student must adhere to these rules while at school or in attendance at school sponsored activities. In the event that we are not entirely certain of some aspects of school policy, we will contact the principal for clarification within one week after receipt of this policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Homeroom Teacher's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET**  
Return to your homeroom teacher by August 28<sup>th</sup>.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
                    LAST                                    FIRST                                    PREFERRED

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

WITH WHOM DO YOU LIVE? \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WORKPLACE \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WORKPLACE \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

LOCKER # \_\_\_\_\_ COMBINATION \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_\_

BUS NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ CAR RIDER \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT INFO PAGE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_

Locker # \_\_\_\_\_ Combo \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch # \_\_\_\_\_

Logins/Passwords for school registered accounts.

Account Name & Login Information	Password

## WELCOME

The administration, faculty, and staff welcome you to Fort Mill Middle School. Our programs are designed to help you make the successful transition from elementary school to the independence of high school. Middle school is a time of change. The workload, levels of responsibility and social adjustments are greater than at the elementary school. All students are expected to attend regularly, be prepared daily, perform in class, develop effective study habits, and behave appropriately. This handbook has been prepared to acquaint you with Fort Mill Middle School, our expectations, guidelines, and activities. Please read all items carefully. You are responsible for knowing the contents of this handbook. Let us all work together for a successful and rewarding school year.

## FORT MILL MIDDLE SCHOOL'S MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to nurture and educate our students while providing a successful transition between their elementary and secondary years.

## FORT MILL MIDDLE SCHOOL'S BELIEFS

We believe:

- All students can learn and experience success.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique needs that must be met.
- Teamwork is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place.
- Students can develop self-discipline and accept responsibility for their behavior and learning.
- Students, faculty, and staff have the right to feel safe, secure, respected and valued.
- The school, home, and community all have the responsibility of providing a supportive learning environment.

## STUDENT-PARENT PLANNER

Each student receives this student-parent handbook/agenda. It contains our school policies and is to be used as a homework assignment notebook. The teacher writes homework assignments daily or weekly on the board and provides time for students to write down the assignments in this agenda. **We ask that this agenda be taken home each day, reviewed by the parent, and returned to school the next day.** This will help students strengthen their organization and study skills, and it will help prepare them for success. If an agenda is lost, then it will cost \$5.00 to replace.

## PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION

It is vital that we have your current address, email, and phone number on file at all times. This information is especially important in case of emergency. Please notify the school office immediately if this information changes. You must provide residency verification regarding address changes.

## PERMITTED COMMUNICATION METHODS

Students may make calls from the office at the teacher's discretion, but these should be limited to transition and lunch times if possible. Students must have a completed pass in their agenda to use the office phone during instructional time. Students reporting to the office to use the phone without an

agenda or pass will be sent back to class. Students and parents should plan ahead so that it will not be necessary to make calls. Please discuss transportation plans, homework, lunch money, medicine, projects, etc. with your student in the morning to reduce the need for the student to make personal phone calls. If you must reach your student regarding a change in transportation plans or an emergency, you may call our main line at 803-547-5553.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Middle school students should not miss more than 10 unexcused days a year. Satisfactory attendance will be a factor in determining if a child is promoted to the next grade. **A student must be in school at least 3 ½ hours to be counted present.** If a student is tardy more than 3 times each nine weeks, or if a student is tardy more than 6 times during the school year, he/she will not be considered for an attendance award for the year. If a student is dismissed early more than 5 times, he/she will not be eligible for an attendance award.

**Tardy:** A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives for homeroom after **8:10 a.m.** Tardies to school may jeopardize a student's efforts to maintain perfect attendance, and excessive tardies can be treated as truancy. Students will receive in school consequences after three (3) unexcused tardies to school. The fourth and each subsequent unexcused tardy per quarter will result in lunch detention. The lunch detention will be served in the ISS room. **Tardy accumulation will start over at the beginning of each quarter.** Also, any student who is signed out early may be counted as absent for those classes that are missed. Students are also expected to be on time for each class period. Consequences for classroom tardies will be determined by each grade level.

**Early Dismissal:** Students may not be dismissed from school between 2:50-3:20. Accumulated early dismissals affect attendance awards at the end of the year. In order to avoid interruptions in the educational program, we ask that students not leave school before 3:20 p.m. When possible, medical and dental appointments should be made after school hours. **A student will not be called from class until the parent arrives to pick him/her up.** We will then request that your child be sent to the office to meet you. Parents must sign their child out on the computer in the office. The person must present picture identification. Emergency situations will be handled on a case by case basis by the administrative team and our school resource officer.

**Absences:**

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

*According to South Carolina Code of Laws 59-6, 5-50 and South Carolina Board of Education Regulation students are required to attend school 170 days out of the 180-day school year. It is important to remember that attendance is a critical factor used in the promotion/retention decisions for grades 6 - 12.*

**Any student enrolled in a high school credit course must attend at least 170 days of instruction to receive credit.**

An absence from school is considered either "**lawful**" or "**unlawful.**"

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by a parent/guardian, or a medical excuse. If this excuse is not turned in within **FIVE** days of the absence or return to school, the absence will be determined as unlawful.

**Lawful absences** are absences made necessary by the situations listed below:

- A. A student who is ill and poses a health threat to others may be excused on a temporary basis. Any student who suffers from a chronic or prolonged illness should provide a statement from a physician upon return to school. In addition, students suffering from chronic health conditions must have physician statements updated each year. The maximum number of days that will be recorded as lawful absences with parent notes for illness which does not require a visit to the doctor will be **five**.
- B. A student may be excused temporarily in the event of a serious health concern or a death in the **immediate family**. The Fort Mill School District requires a clipping of the obituary or a program, if possible, to be attached to the student's written excuse. **Immediate family** is defined as mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, great-grandparent, guardian, aunt, uncle, or cousin.
- C. Students may be excused to observe a recognized religious holiday with the approval of the principal.
- D. Students may be excused for up to five days per year in order to participate in school sponsored activities. Any absence beyond the fifth day will require a report from each teacher on the student's academic standing, classroom attitude, and attendance. The principal must also review and approve the absence in advance.
- E. The student is suspended out of school.
- F. A student may be excused for necessary appointments when proper documentation is provided upon return to school. Examples: dentist, physician, court, counselor.

**Excusing an absence does not mean it is erased.** Excusing the absence means there is a legal/valid reason for the absence, but the absence remains on the student's record.

**Unlawful absences** are absences involving situations where a student accumulates absences without acceptable cause with or without knowledge of his or her parents or guardians.

After **three** consecutive or a total of **five** unlawful absences, a student is considered **truant**. By law, an intervention plan must be developed with the parents of the truant student. This plan states the reasons for the unlawful absences, actions to be taken by parents to resolve the issue, and actions to be taken by the school if unlawful absences continue. Court intervention may be used if a student age 12-17 does not comply with the intervention plan and records two or more additional unlawful absences.

#### **Truancy:**

The State Board of Education recognizes that truancy is primarily an educational issue and that all reasonable, educationally sound, corrective actions should be undertaken by the school district prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

- A. Truant – A child ages 6 to 17 years meets the definition of a truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences.
- B. Habitual Truant – A **“habitual” truant** is a child age 12 to 17 years who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences. This child may need court intervention and an initial truancy petition may be filed. The written intervention plan, and documentation of non-compliance, must be attached to the truancy petition asking for court intervention.

- C. Chronic Truant – A “**chronic**” **truant** is a child age 12 to 17 who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a “habitual” truant, has been referred to Family Court and placed on an order to attend school, and continues to accumulate unlawful absences. Should other community alternatives and referrals fail to remedy the attendance problem, the “chronic” truant may be referred to the Family Court for violation of a previous court order. All school intervention plans existing to this point for this child and family must accompany the Contempt of Court petition as well as a written recommendation from the school to the court on action the court should take.

Students who participate in extracurricular activities must be in attendance **at least one-half of the school day** on the day of the event or he/she will not be allowed to participate on that day.

- **Perfect Attendance** is defined as having NO ABSENCES during the school year including absences from ANY class period. (Three tardies to school equals one period absence.)
- **Outstanding Attendance** is defined as having no more than three absences from all class periods during the school year. (Three tardies to school equals one period absence.)

**Make-up Work:** Assignments that are missed due to absences must be arranged and approved for acceptance by the academic teacher. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate his/her need for makeup work with his/her teachers. Parents may seek assistance from the principal after consultation with the student’s teacher(s) if requests for make-up work are unsatisfactory.

**Student Withdrawal:** In order for a student to withdraw from FMMS, the parents(s) or legal guardian(s) must sign a withdrawal form. These forms are located in the guidance office.

### SCHOOL DAY

**The school day for FMMS students is from 8:10 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.** Students who arrive **prior to 7:40 a.m.** are **not permitted to enter the building.** All students must stay outside until a school employee approves for them to enter the building. Students report to their grade level hallways when they enter the building unless they are going to the cafeteria for breakfast. Students wishing to visit our media center in the morning before homeroom **must have a pass.** Students wanting to meet with a teacher on another hallway in the mornings, including related arts teachers, **must have a pass.**

### DISMISSAL

All students are to exit the building immediately after they are dismissed. All students should be picked up by **3:50 p.m.**

### TRANSPORTATION AFTER SCHOOL

**Car Rider Bell/Announcement:** Students who ride home in cars must go directly to the designated area and sit with their grade. They should exit the building through the main doors at the front of the school. Students are not permitted to re-enter the building and must **remain seated** in their assigned areas. Parents are asked to pull their cars up as far forward as possible before discharging students in the morning and before students enter the cars in the afternoon. Please follow the directions of the teachers on duty for the purpose of safety and respect. All students are to be dropped off and picked up in the designated area. This is the only loading area in which we provide supervision for car riders. Teacher and bus parking areas are off limits for drop off and pick up purposes.



**Bus Riders Bell(s)/Announcement:** When the bus dismissal bell rings, bus students report to their buses by exiting the doors at the bus lot. There may be more than one bus bell for bus riders at the end of the day.

Transportation for students attending school in SC is provided subject to the approval of the transportation office. School officials have no authority to alter bus routes or stops without the proper approval. All bus drivers are properly certified and licensed by the SC Highway Department. Only those students who are eligible for school bus transportation may ride the bus. A bus rider will not be allowed to ride a bus other than the bus assigned to him/her. Students, who may need to ride a bus other than their assigned bus, or get off at another stop other than their assigned stop, must have prior written approval. Approval is granted or denied by the transportation department in conjunction with administration and may take up to 24 hours or longer. **Please do not wait until the day the request is needed to make arrangements.** Our goal is to assure that all school buses provide safe transportation for all students and that all students who ride the bus exhibit good citizenship while on the bus. Students who are disruptive on the bus may be denied the privilege of riding the bus.

Enforcing the safety and welfare of all student bus riders is a coordinated effort between district transportation and school administration. While the transportation liaison is the primary investigator and disciplinarian regarding bus incidents/infractions, the school administration reserves the right to issue further disciplinary actions.

For safety reasons, students are not permitted to carry large items (such as large musical instruments, balloons, flower arrangements, sports equipment, and cumbersome school projects, etc.) onto the bus. Food and drinks are not permitted on the buses.

#### **EARLY SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Please inform your student about the procedure you expect him/her to follow regarding transportation in the event that bad weather may force us to close school early. Let your student know beforehand how you expect him/her to get home, and how you expect him/her to get into the house in the event weather forces us to close early. This will reduce any confusion for all of us, but especially for your student. Be sure to have updated information in the school messenger system regarding your contact phone numbers and emails as the district sends out closing information via an automated calling system. **Be certain you have not blocked messages/calls from our alert system.** Listen to the news on T.V. or radio if there is indication of inclement weather for notification that schools will dismiss early or if they will open at all on those days.

#### **LOCKER, LOCKS, & TEXTBOOKS**

Each student is assigned a locker. Students must have a lock on lockers. These must be purchased by the student/parent. Homeroom teachers must be provided the combination to the lock. Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to inspection by school personnel at any time. The school does



not assume responsibility for the contents of a student's locker if items are stolen or lost. However, a student is financially responsible for the textbooks he/she is issued throughout the year. Students are expected to ensure that their textbooks are returned in the condition in which they were issued. All textbooks are assigned a state barcode which serves as the identifying mark of the textbook upon issue to the student. If the barcode is removed, damaged, and/or determined to be unreadable by the scanner, the student may be charged a state barcode replacement fee of \$10.00 provided no other damage to the book is noted. In some cases, students may be charged the book replacement fee as determined by the state. Students are advised to place a book cover on all textbooks as a layer of protection for the textbook and state assigned barcode. Students can be issued book fines for excessive damage to a textbook, especially if the book is newly adopted. If a student loses a textbook, then he/she is responsible for payment to replace the book. The student should let their teacher or office know if his/her textbook is lost. When the textbook is paid for, the student will receive another textbook. Money can be refunded if the lost textbook is recovered. Students are always responsible for their textbooks. Lockers should be kept locked; combinations should be kept confidential; books should never be left unattended or loaned to others.

### **CLASS INTERRUPTIONS / FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

Class interruptions shall be limited only to real emergencies (Section 59-1440, SC Code of Laws, 1976 as amended). Any outside interference with continuous progress of teaching and learning shall be considered an interruption. Deliveries of flowers, balloons, or gifts, visits from salespersons, students, or other unauthorized persons are prohibited. **Items brought by parents will be held in our front office for student pick-up. It is your child's responsibility to retrieve these items.**

### **UNNECESSARY OBJECTS**

Unnecessary objects brought to school may be confiscated until picked up by a parent or until the end of the school year. In addition, students may receive a school consequence based on the frequency and severity of the violation.

### **CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Cell phones may be brought to school and used before or after school to communicate with parents. They must be turned off during the school day from **7:40 a.m. until dismissal**. A cell phone may not be used during the day unless an employee at FMMS gives permission. The student may NOT use a cell phone to call parents during the school day without an employee's permission. Devices may be used in the classroom for educational purposes while under the supervision and permission of a teacher.

- 1st violation – warning and confiscation of the phone until the end of the day.
- 2nd violation – lunch detention and confiscation of the phone until the end of the day.
- 3rd and 4th offense – 1 day of ISS and confiscation of the phone until the end of the day.
- 5th offense and beyond – 1 day of ISS for each offense and a plan for future cell phone use at school involving a conference with the parent.

\*Violation and refusal to give school employee the electronic device will result in additional punishment of no less than one day of in-school suspension.

Cell Phone Policy Disclaimer - Students will be given more serious consequences for the following inappropriate uses of electronic equipment: Inappropriate use of an electronic device to take pictures or videos, inappropriate texting or messages, any use which may be seen as threatening to anyone or anything at Fort Mill Middle School, or any major violation of our district's acceptable use policy. An act or acts which are not covered by these regulations and which are of such nature as to pose a threat to the physical or mental welfare of the students, the teachers, and other school personnel or which create a disruption in the orderly operation of any phase of the school program may result in suspension or expulsion as well as law enforcement involvement.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES**

We have many activities in which students may be involved including special interest clubs, sports, band, theater, and academic activities. Students must be in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade to participate in sports and maintain good academic standing as determined by the school administration. An athletic fee will be assessed to students participating in sports. Students will not be allowed to dress out or participate as a member of a team until fees are paid. All sports are governed by the SC High School League (SCHSL). Eligibility is determined by the SCHSL in conjunction with school board policy.

### **GRADING SCALE / ACADEMIC RECOGNITION / AWARDS**

Students are graded as indicated: **A** 100-90; **B** 89-80 ; **C** 79-70; **D** 69-60; **F** 59-0.

**Academic Excellence:** Students earning a **95.0%** yearly average or above when combining all classes completed will be recognized as having achieved **Academic Excellence**. This award will be given at the conclusion of the school year.

**Nine Weeks Academic Recognition:** At the end of each quarter, students having earned all A's and A/B Honor Roll will be recognized at lunch.

**Awards Programs:** At the conclusion of the school year, parents will be invited to an awards program for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students receiving awards. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents will be invited to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade Promotion Ceremony where awards will be presented.

### **INTERNET ACCESS AND USAGE**

Internet accessibility is provided to FMMS students to support the instructional program. Every effort will be made to provide appropriate instruction and student supervision. However, the district/school cannot completely guarantee that a student will not access inappropriate material. Therefore, parents and students are asked to exercise responsibility for the appropriate direction and use of internet resources as well. In addition, written parental permission is required and will remain on file in order for the student to be granted access to the Internet at school. Failure to comply with this expectation may result in a denial of access to the internet and/or disciplinary action.

### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES/CELEBRATIONS – ACCEPTABLE FOOD GUIDELINES**

Effective with the 2014-2015 school year, homemade or home baked foods are no longer allowed to be distributed to students within the classroom or applicable classroom setting. Acceptable food for distribution are those items that were prepared in a commercial and/or licensed kitchen, and most importantly, are packaged with a label clearly listing the contents and ingredients of the food item. With the continued rise in severe and often life-threatening food allergies, this policy is designed to provide consistency and minimize allergy risks in all classrooms district-wide, while maintaining a safe

and positive learning environment for all students. It is important to note that the policy does not apply to the student's personal lunch. The policy is a larger, comprehensive Food Allergy Guideline approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2014, which can be found on the district's website or under "Board Policies." Further questions can also be directed to the principal, school nurse, or by contacting the district office at 803-548-2527.

## STUDENT DRESS

The Fort Mill School District's Student Policy JICA Student Dress/Uniforms states "Although the responsibility for the dress and appearance of students rests with each student and his/her parent/guardian, students are expected to show pride in themselves and their schools by having their dress and appearance in accordance with good acceptable standards. The school administration and board discourage extreme styles of dress and grooming. Students will dress in appropriate attire. Students are expected to dress in clothing that abides by the district dress code policy. Logos or clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, racism, hate, gang affiliation, nudity, or profanity is not allowed. No clothing or accessories are allowed to disrupt the educational process. **The administration reserves the right to determine what is appropriate for school.**

Fort Mill Middle School students are expected to adhere to these administrative dress guidelines:

- Proper shoes must be worn at all times for safety reasons. Shoes with cleats may not be worn. Bedroom shoes/slippers are not appropriate for school.
- Students may wear shorts, dresses, skirts, etc. whose length is no shorter than four inches above the knee.
- All tops/shirts must have sleeves that cover/conceal the underarm area.
- Tops/shirts must be long enough that they can be tucked into pants or shorts and shall cover the belt line when the arms are raised above the head.
- Tank tops, halter tops, crop tops, strapless tops, and see through garments are not appropriate for school.
- Sports jerseys must be worn with a sleeved shirt underneath that covers/conceals the underarm area.
- Underwear must not be visible.
- Pants or jeans with holes, tears or tattered to the extent that skin or underwear is visible above the knee are not appropriate for school.
- Pants are to be worn around the natural waist line (no sagging).
- No headwear (hats, bandanas, caps, hoods, etc.) or sunglasses may be worn in the building by students upon arrival until dismissal.
- Long chains and jewelry which could be deemed a safety hazard or a distraction to the learning environment should not be worn.
- Accessories that distract from the learning environment will not be allowed.

If there is a disagreement between students and/or parents/legal guardians and the staff regarding the appropriateness of clothing, the principal will use his/her discretion to make the final decision. Disciplinary action regarding the enforcement of this policy is listed below:

Violations will result in the following:

- First offense – change clothes/in-school suspension (ISS) until clothes are brought
- Second offense – parent conference/ISS remainder of day, regardless; change clothes
- Third offense – ISS and/or detention, regardless; change clothes
- Subsequent offenses – suspension

## STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The Fort Mill Middle School faculty and staff have the best interests of our students in mind. Therefore, we believe in maintaining a secure, supportive, and safe learning environment for all of our students that promotes high expectations for student achievement and behavior. We believe in a school that provides productive, mutually respectful relationships among staff and students. Our teachers provide positive learning experiences that encourage these relationships and reinforce appropriate behavior. Disruptive behavior is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action. Rules are a matter of common sense and courtesy. FMMS students should be well behaved and contributing members of our community that take pride in their school. Students, faculty, and staff have the right to feel safe, secure, respected, and valued. Students are encouraged to inform their teachers, counselors, or administrators of any situation which may cause harm to themselves or other students.

**Risk Assessments:** Should a concern arise about a student being a danger to him/herself or others, district protocols for conducting a risk assessment (suicide and/or threat) will be followed to the extent appropriate. These assessments may include interviews with students and staff, a review of student records, and consultation with district mental health staff, local law enforcement, or other community agencies that help support our schools and students. If, as part of its assessment and response, the district determines there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose personally identifiable information from education records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

**While at FMMS you are expected to be:**

**Polite** - Always treat adults who are in our building with respect. This includes teachers, staff, and visitors. The impression you make on our visitors is the opinion they will have of our school.

**Prepared** - In order to be an effective student you must be prepared for class. Make sure you bring your books, materials, and homework to class.

**Prompt** - You cannot learn if you are not there. Every time you are late to class you miss valuable instruction. Be there and be on time.

**Positive** - There are not that many people who like hanging around negative people. Put-downs and criticisms will not be allowed or tolerated.

**Participatory** - Be an active, positive part of your classroom. The more you participate, the more you will learn.

**In General, show *respect*...**

Good discipline centers on respect. Respect for **other people** (teachers, staff members, visitors, your fellow students), respect for **our school building** (pick up paper and other trash, walk in the halls, do not damage or deface the school or furnishings), and respect for **yourself**. Before you can really respect others, you must respect yourself. You are at an important point in your life. Learn what it means to have self-respect. It may be the difference between whether you achieve your goals or not.

**Attendance: Come to school on time, prepared, and ready to engage in learning.**

Failure to attend class after reporting to school may result in school level interventions including lunch detention (LD), in school suspension (ISS), or out of school suspension (OSS). An unauthorized walkout from a classroom, the school building or school grounds may result in ISS and/or OSS.

**Food/Beverages: All food and beverages must be consumed in the cafeteria or other designated area as determined by administration.**

**WATER** that is not colored or flavored is the only permissible beverage to be consumed outside of the cafeteria during the regular school day. It must be in its original container or in a non-tinted transparent/reusable container that has a screw top lid. Students who violate this rule will be asked to dispose of their food/beverages.

**Disruptions: You are entitled to a learning environment that is free of unnecessary disruptions.**

Any physical or verbal disturbance within the school setting or during related activities is prohibited. Disruptions include, but are not limited to excessive noise, propelling objects, horseplay, harassing others, refusal to remain seated, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, biting, etc. Consequences for disruptions include but, are not limited to: warning/conferences, recovery room visits, detentions, other appropriate teacher interventions, and referral to school administration. Serious disruptions may result in ISS or OSS.

**Disrespect: All students will behave in a respectful manner toward teachers, staff, visitors, and other students.**

Examples of disrespectful behavior include, but are not limited to walking away when a staff member is talking to you, verbally responding to a staff member in a rude or discourteous manner, refusal to properly identify self, displaying uncivil/rude/curt/impudent behavior, and challenging authority. Consequences for disrespect include appropriate teacher level interventions (see consequences for disruptions), ISS and/or OSS.

**Inappropriate displays of public affection (PDA):**

The expression of feelings of affection toward others is a personal concern between two individuals and not of others surrounding them. Therefore, let good taste and respect for others be a guideline for public displays of your feelings toward others. The school environment is not the place for displays of this kind of affection. We do not expect our students to be holding hands, hugging, touching, or kissing while on campus or at a school event. Students engaging in this type of behavior will be referred to administration. Consequences for public displays of affection include lunch detentions or ISS. Repeated offenses may lead to OSS.

**Threats/Fighting/Assault:**

Fighting involves two or more parties striking each other for the purpose of causing harm. Conveying to cause bodily harm through gestures, notes, or comments is considered a threat. Blackmail or intimidation of students or staff is also prohibited. Instigating others to fight through actions, comments, or written messages is also prohibited. Consequences for the above offenses may result in suspension or expulsion. Law enforcement may be called by administration if needed. Any student who attempts to assault or assaults school personnel, including spitting, will be subject to permanent expulsion.

**Theft/Attempted Theft:**

Students will not steal or attempt to steal property. Furthermore, students will not possess or attempt to possess stolen property. It will be considered attempted theft if a student goes into/through another person's belongings. Minor thefts or first offenses will be handled at the discretion of the principal. Serious or repeated thefts will result in suspension, expulsion, or referral to the alternative school. Law enforcement may be called if needed.

**Distribution of Unauthorized Materials:**

The principal must approve and authorize student distribution of any materials.

**Student Disorder:**

A student or group of students who is involved in student disorder, which includes seizure of a building or grounds, or attempted control of such, or any type of disorder which disrupts the activities of the school by sit-ins, walk-outs, boycotts of classes, etc., will be subject to suspension or expulsion.

**Tobacco:**

Students are prohibited from the use and possession of tobacco products, lighters, and matches on school property or during any related activities (field trips, school bus, and extracurricular activities). Students violating this policy will be subject to suspension.

**Chemicals/Drugs/Alcohol:**

Possession of alcohol, marijuana, other illegal drugs, look-alike drugs, inhalants, electronic cigarettes, drug paraphernalia, or any substance represented as a drug while on school property or engaged in school sponsored events is prohibited. The distribution (sale, gift, sharing, taking orders, or arranging for sale) of chemicals/drugs/alcohol on school property or at school sponsored activities is also prohibited. Students violating this policy may be subject to expulsion from school and law enforcement will be notified.

Students **MAY NOT** carry any type of medication during school -- even a *Tylenol*®. If you take medication or regularly need to take a pain reliever, your parents must complete forms provided by the school nurse. The school nurse must store this medication and log each time it is taken.

**Weapons:**

The possession or representation of a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, operative or inoperative, on school property or during any school activity is prohibited. Possession includes bringing a firearm to school or storing a firearm on school property. Firearms include pellet guns, BB guns, CO air pistols, or any other device which meets the definition of a firearm in the Code of Laws. Possession of look-alike weapons is also prohibited. The principal will determine if the look-alike is considered a weapon. Violation of this rule results in expulsion from school and notification of law enforcement.

- A. Other Weapons: Students are prohibited from possessing knives, brass knuckles, blackjacks, razor blades, box cutters, heavy chains, clubs, pepper gas, mace, or martial arts objects on school property or at school sponsored activities. Consequences include suspension or expulsion from school and notification of law enforcement.
- B. Bombs: Any device brought to school that contains combustible material is prohibited. Consequences include suspension or expulsion.

- C. Possession of bullets, shells, or objects that appear to be ammunition is prohibited. Possession of fireworks or any small explosive or smoke producing device is prohibited. Consequences include suspension for the first offense and expulsion for repeat offenses.

**Profanity/Obscenity:**

Cursing or using abusive language is considered obscene. Also included are displays and actions of an obscene nature, clothing/jewelry/items with suggestive or offensive messages, and signs or writing containing obscene material. Obscene or pornographic material in any form is prohibited. Consequences may result in ISS, OSS, or Expulsion. Any student who directs profane language or gestures at a staff member will be subject to suspension, expulsion, or referral to the alternative school.

**Gum:**

To keep our campus free from litter caused by discarded gum, students will refrain from chewing, eating, or bringing gum to school. In addition, gum should not be present in the car rider or bus areas. In other words: **NO GUM PRODUCTS ON CAMPUS.** The consequence for chewing gum is an office referral. Multiple office referrals for gum violations will result in lunch detention(s), ISS, and/or OSS.

**Insubordination:**

Students will obey directions from staff members during school time or while participating in school sponsored activities. Examples of insubordination include, but are not limited to: failure to follow reasonable directions, refusal to do work in class, failure to report to lunch detention or the recovery room (STOP), failure to report to ISS in a timely manner, and violating ISS policies and procedures. Consequences include appropriate teacher interventions, ISS, or OSS.

**Bullying:**

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harrassment, intimidation, or bullying (including cyberbullying/electronic bullying) is encouraged to file a complaint in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially. Reports by students may be made anonymously.

The district prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The district also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

The school board expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner. Any student who is found to have engaged in the prohibited actions outlined in this section will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Students may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The district will take all other appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

**Defacing/Destroying School Property:**

Damaging, defacing, or destroying school property, other students' property, or any other private property while under the school's supervision is prohibited. Students or parents will be financially responsible for such actions. In addition, students may be subject to suspension or expulsion. Law enforcement may be called if needed.

**Sexual Harassment:**

Fort Mill School district prohibits sexual harassment of students by employees, other students, or third parties. Students must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct when the following occurs:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either expressly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education.
- b. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's education or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.
- c. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for any decisions affecting a student.

**Repeated Minor Violations:**

In cases where a written record substantiates repeated minor violations by a given student, such student may be suspended, expelled, or referred to the alternative school program for placement.

**Accumulated Suspensions:**

A student subject to OSS a third time in any given year may be recommended for expulsion or referred to the alternative school program for placement.

**Forgery:**

The consequences for forgery are as follows:

The **first** offense will result in a conference with the SRO and school administrator. The parent will be notified and documentation of the incident will be placed in the student's file. In addition, a first offense will result in a minimum of a lunch detention.

The **second** offense will result in a minimum full day of ISS. The parent will be notified and a documentation of the incident will be placed in the student's file.

**Academic Honesty:**

Students are expected to do their own work.

The FMMS policy of cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying or lending assignments (allowing someone to copy your work); communicating test information in any way during a test; using notes in a situation where notes are not acceptable; stealing or obtaining test materials/information before tests; plagiarism (the intentional or unintentional failure to give clear credit to the author of any word/ideas not your own). This policy is in regards to assignments in/of any format. The consequences in each class for cheating are as follows:

The **first** offense will result in an office referral and a 0 for the assignment (for all individuals involved or claiming credit ) with no possibility of make-up. The parent will be notified by the referring teacher. The student will receive an office referral to be placed in the student's file.

A **second** offense will result in an office referral and a 0 for the assignment (for all individuals involved or claiming credit) with no possibility of make-up. The parent will be notified by the referring teacher. The student will receive an office referral to be placed in the student's file, and the student will serve a minimum full day of ISS.



A **third** offense will result in an office referral and a 0 for the assignment (for all individuals involved or claiming credit) with no possibility of make-up. The parent will be notified by the referring teacher, and an office referral will be placed in the student's file. The student will serve a minimum of two full days of ISS. Administration may also request a guidance counselor to meet with the student.

**Other:**

Any acts that are not covered by these regulations and that are of such nature as to pose a threat to the physical or mental welfare of the students, teachers, and other school personnel, or which create a disruption to the orderly operation of any phase of the school program or any of its services, or which cause defacement of any school property will subject offenders to suspension or expulsion.

**DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE DESCRIPTIONS:**

**STUDENT TIME-OUT PERIOD (STOP) – RECOVERY ROOM VISITS**

**Purpose:**

- To provide a “cooling off” period for disruptive students.

**Process:**

- Assigned by the teacher for disruption of class.
- May be assigned by the individual teacher for remainder of that period or any portion of that period.
- Any STOP visit assigned by an individual teacher must be accompanied by a phone call or email from that teacher to that student's parent to notify of the assigned visit.

**Timeline:**

- **First visit** - Parent is contacted by referring teacher.
- **Second visit** - Parent is contacted by referring teacher.
- **Third visit** - Parent is contacted by referring teacher and guidance is contacted to meet with student.
- **Fourth visit** - Parent is contacted by referring teacher and assistant principal is contacted to conference with the student.
- **Fifth visit** - Parent is contacted by referring teacher and student is assigned in school suspension (ISS) for one full day.
- **Sixth visit (and all subsequent visits)** - Parent is contacted by referring teacher and student is to serve out of school suspension (OSS) the next day or another designated day.

**Students sent to the Recovery Room more than once a day will be assigned In-School Suspension for the remainder of the day.**

**LUNCH DETENTION**

Lunch detention is a consequence given by administration for minor violations. Lunch detention is where a student eats his/her lunch in the ISS room. Multiple days of lunch detention can be given for a violation.

### IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)

The main objectives for this program are to keep students in school while trying to modify unwanted behaviors and give students the opportunity to maintain their academic work. Students serving ISS will eat lunch in the ISS classroom. If a student is absent on the day that ISS is assigned, the day will be served when the student returns. Students who violate ISS rules may be subject to an immediate Out-of-School Suspension (OSS).

**A student serving ISS for a full day is not permitted to participate in school activities at FMMS during the day(s) he/she is in ISS.**

### OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)

Students who make poor decisions and choose to break rules at FMMS may be subject to out-of-school suspension. While suspended, students are prohibited from attending **ANY** school activity including after school events and field trips. Classwork may not be provided during this time.

### EXPULSION

Major violations may result in recommendation for expulsion and involvement by the school resource officer. The following are considered major offenses and could lead to expulsion from school:

#### **DO NOT:**

- ***Be in possession of or under the influence of drugs and/or alcoholic beverages of any kind.*** Not only is it against the school rules, it is against the law.
- ***Be in possession of or use tobacco products or electronic cigarettes of any type.*** Don't even bring it/them to school or "carry" for someone else.
- ***Be in possession of anything that could be considered a weapon.*** Of course, you know you cannot bring guns and knives to school, but do not even bring things that could be considered or used as a weapon. This is big trouble. We want you and everyone else to feel safe in school.
- ***Say or do something to any adult or student at school that could be considered profane or threatening.*** At all times, students are to act respectful toward all adults at school. Watch what you say, and remember, so often it is not what you say but how you say it. Be respectful and you will be respected.
- ***Use exceedingly aggressive behavior or fight.*** Problems are never properly solved by aggression. If you are having a problem with another student and need to talk with someone, your teacher, counselor, school resource officer, or administrator is available. It will never be acceptable at Fort Mill Middle School to solve problems by fighting or being aggressive.

## PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Establish a regular, consistent study time for your student. It may be right after they get in from school or after supper. Whenever it is, there should be a space of time set aside solely for the purpose of schoolwork.
2. Provide a quiet place to study, free from distraction. Very rare is the student who can effectively study while the TV is blaring or little brother is jumping on the bed. Check into setting up his/her own "desk" or office space where he/she can study quietly. Early adolescents like the thought of "owning" their own space to work in.
3. Show an interest in school; ask questions about school. The more you value what happens at school, the more your student will value his/her education.
4. Look over homework papers and projects. Ask to see completed homework and his/her agenda/handbook. If you are able to check the work, do so. If you cannot check the work, the very fact that you are looking at it gives your student's work value and worth. It also provides a "window" into what your child is learning.
5. Have your student spend 5 minutes getting organized for the next school day before s/he goes to bed. Have him/her collect all of his/her books, homework, etc., in one place so that he/she can make sure to take all items with him/her to school the next day.
6. Help your student to establish long term goals. It is never too early for your child to begin thinking about what he/she wants to be when when he/she becomes an adult. Plans may change, but planning will give your student a chance to focus and see that there is a connection between performance in school and real-world expectations.
7. Emphasize reading at home. Encourage your child to read at least 20 minutes each night. Whether it be a newspaper, magazine, or book, studies show that a minimum of 20 minutes nightly improves reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, and problem solving. Ensure that your student has a book for **#sdr!** (stop, drop, and read) time.
8. Check Parent Portal on a regular basis. Please stay informed of your child's academic progress, attendance, and lunch balance. Contact your child's teacher(s) when you have questions about a grade or missing assignment.
9. Contact your child's teachers when questions, concerns, or the need for a conference arises.
10. Visit our school webpage frequently to keep up with school events, current assignments, projects, and tests.

## OTHER INFORMATION

### **Excuse from Physical Education:**

If it is medically necessary for a student to limit physical activity, the student must have a written note. In case of a long-term excuse from physical education, students must submit a physician's note to the school nurse. Students who have written notes excusing them from participating in physical education will also be expected to refrain from physical activity during our outside "recess" time and after school activities.

### **Medication Policy:**

All prescription and over-the counter-medication must be delivered by the parent to the school nurse accompanied by the necessary medical form(s). Absolutely no medication will be given without the written permission from the parent. Prescription medications also require a written Physician's authorization. These forms are available through the school nurse.

### **Guidance and Counseling:**

The comprehensive guidance program provides services to students, parents, and staff. This service is consistent with identified student needs in academic, career, and personal/social areas. Our counselors provide consulting, referral, and intervention to support student success. Parents may contact the school to request that a guidance counselor reach out to assist their children.

### **Field Trips:**

At times, teachers will arrange to take students on field trips that directly relate to the curriculum. Students who demonstrate responsible school behavior may represent our school on class trips. All students must bring a permission slip signed by the parent and any required payment by the designated due date. Parents who are interested in chaperoning field trips must contact the homeroom teacher of the student along with completing a chaperone background check. This form can be found on the district website. Students who demonstrate poor behavior on field trips may not be invited to attend future field trips without a parent/guardian as a chaperone and are subject to further school discipline. **Field trip fees are non-refundable.**

### **Safety and Emergency Procedures:**

Fire drills are held monthly. Severe weather drills and lock down drills are also held during the school year. Students are expected follow the directives of the teacher, staff member, or administrator. When exiting the building as part of a safety procedure/drill, students are expected to move quietly in a single file line to their designated areas. The same procedure is to be followed when re-entering the building.

### **Visitors and School Safety:**

Parents are always welcome, but are encouraged to make an appointment to see a teacher or administrator. Our teachers designate Wednesdays as their parent conference days. You may email your child's homeroom teacher or guidance counselor to set up a parent-teacher conference. Teachers and administrators are unavailable for conferences between 7:40-8:10am and 3:20-3:50pm, as all are supervising students and managing school arrival and dismissal procedures.

For security and safety, all visitors, including school volunteers, must use the main entrance, sign in, note the purpose(s) for your visit, and obtain a printed name badge. This badge is to be visibly worn on the upper torso. Any student who notices an unfamiliar person on campus or in the building without a visitor's badge, should immediately report his/her presence to the closest adult.

## Technology Use & Safety Reminders:

- **Treat all computers & equipment with care and respect.** Willful destruction of any computer, equipment, or software will be considered vandalism, and may warrant the involvement of local law officials.
- Any written text, graphics or executable files created, downloaded, displayed, or exchanged with another student or teacher must be **education-related and not offensive in any way.**
- **Follow copyright laws at all times.** If you have questions about the legality of using software, text, graphics, or music you find online, ask your teacher or media specialist for guidance.
- **Keep your password secret.** You will be held responsible for all computer activities associated with your password. For example, if you share your password with your friend and he/she signs on as you and breaks one of the rules outlined above, you may be held responsible.
- **All online communication must be polite and not threatening or offensive in any way.** Students are issued filtered email accounts. The district has the right to review any email sent or received using district equipment and email accounts. Email accounts should be used for educational and district purposes only. The district utilizes a program called *gaggle* to review student computer usage and documents for inappropriate material/content/communications.
- **Do not give out personal information on the internet.** Never give out your phone number, social security number, full name, age, home address, or any other personal information.

## FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal Law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools, which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. For further information regarding your rights under FERPA, please refer to the “For Parents” section of the school district’s webpage at <http://www.fortmillschools.org>.

## SYSTEMS OF EXTRA SUPPORT

FMMS has systems of support in place that include regularly scheduled remediation and enrichment days within our **Academics Plus** block (8:20-8:50am). In a typical week, students have 2 days during the week to see teachers for academic assistance. Additionally, this time is used for our sustained silent reading program, called **#sdr!** (#stop, drop, & read!). Some students will also be receiving additional support in reading during this Academics Plus time. Four days during the week, students may report to our **Math Minutes** room for extra help with incomplete Math homework. Students are expected to bring their attempted math homework from the previous night along with questions they may have for completing the assignment correctly. This math help is typically available Monday through Thursday from 7:40-8:10am and is a coordinated effort of our math teachers. Several of our teachers provide students additional academic assistance during lunchtime. This is typically referred to as **Working Lunch**. During this time, students eat their lunch in the teacher’s classroom while working on completing assignments, making up missed work, and/or receiving remediation/assistance.

## CONCLUSION

**The key to a good school lies in the pride that we have in our school and the degree to which each of us accepts our personal responsibility for the welfare of the school as a whole.** The procedures that have been listed herein are simple reminders about things that a good citizen would do on one's own. It is firmly believed that the majority do what is appropriate without the threat of punishment. However, it is important that all students clearly understand the expectations held for them and know the consequences if privileges are abused or rules are broken.

It is our goal to have a successful and rewarding year for the faculty, staff, students and parents at Fort Mill Middle School. Thanks for taking the time to read through this student-parent handbook. Hopefully, it has been helpful in giving you important information about our school. We invite you to talk to your student's teachers or contact the office if there are other questions. We hope this is your *best school year ever*.

Kindest Regards,

*Your FMMS Administrative Team:*

*Mr. T. Caricari, Principal*

*Mr. C. Johnson, Assistant Principal*

*Mrs. C. McNeil, Assistant Principal*

# NOTES PAGE

## NOTICE

Fort Mill School District (York #4) programs are operated without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, or handicap in compliance with Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 and all other applicable Civil Rights Laws. The staff member holding the following position has been designated to coordinate activities related to nondiscrimination: Coordinator of Special Services at (803) 548-2527.