



**AMS STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027**

Dr. William Pettus, Principal

Mr. Brendan Conroy, Assistant Principal

2020 Church Street
Appomattox, VA 24522
(434) 352-8257
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Welcome to Appomattox Middle School

The staff of Appomattox Middle School would like to welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year. We are committed to working hard to provide a positive school experience for every student and family. We believe with this commitment by staff, students, and families we can have a positive and productive educational experience this year. We look forward to serving our community this year.

AMS Administration and Office Staff

<i>Staff</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>AMS Phone Extension</i>
Dr William Pettus	Principal	352-8257 ext 4214
Brendan Conroy	Assistant Principal	352-8257 ext 4215
Brandy Shrewsberry	Dean of Students	352-8257 ext 4217
Brandon Kenny	Athletic Director/ Teacher	352-8257 ext 4241
Laken Greene	School Counselor	352-8257 ext 4209
Allison Allgood	School Counselor	352-8257 ext 4208
Maghan Kerr	School Nurse	352-8257 ext 4206
Deborah Barksdale	School Secretary	352-8257 ext 4204
Allison Garrett	Attendance Secretary	352-8257 ext 4203
Michelle Christian	Bookkeeper	352-8257 ext 4205
Carol Ballard	Guidance Secretary	352-8257 ext 4207

Appomattox Middle School Mission

Appomattox Middle School is dedicated to fulfilling its vision by ...

1. Instructional programs and curriculum

Providing a challenging curriculum that is presented through a variety of innovative instructional approaches that enables each student to reach his or her full potential.

2. Instructional techniques

Offering instruction that is delivered with research-based strategies differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Consequently, students will be actively involved in the learning process and demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge by producing quality work.

3. School Structure and Organization

Structuring a school day that is well-defined and will allow students to learn essential skills and knowledge, receive remediation, and explore areas of interest. It allows teachers adequate common planning to develop lessons that correlate with the state standards of learning and enhance creative teaching.

4. School Climate and Culture

Creating an environment that is conducive to learning where each student will be productive, safe, and secure. Each student will benefit from positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.

5. School Leadership, Management, and Budgeting

Having a school administration that works alongside teachers and staff to make decisions for positive outcomes and consistently communicate school expectations to students.

6. School Staffing and Staff Development

Hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers who demonstrate a strong desire to teach and believe that all students can achieve success.

7. School Resource, Physical Plant and Equipment

Maintaining the school campus as a safe, inviting, and well-kept environment. Providing students with up-to-date materials and technology to further increase their ongoing achievement.

**Appomattox Middle School
2020 Church Street
Appomattox, Virginia 24522
(434) 352-8257
“ Raiders”**

2026-2027 School Calendar

Open
House.....
.....Aug. 4, 2026
First Day of
School.....Aug
. 6, 2026
Early Dismissal (students)
.....Sept. 4, 2026
Labor Day
Holiday.....Sep
t. 7, 2026
1st Nine Weeks Progress Reports
.....Sept. 11, 2026
Early Release (students).....Sept. 16, 2026
End of First Nine Weeks/ Early Release (students)Oct.
9, 2026
Indigenous Peoples Day
.....Oct. 12, 2026
1st Nine Weeks Report
Cards.....Oct. 13, 2026
Professional Development Day for Staff
.....Nov. 3, 2026
Veteran’s Day Holiday
.....Nov. 11, 2026
2nd Nine Weeks Progress Reports
.....Nov. 13, 2026
Thanksgiving BreakNov.
25, 26, and 27 2026
End of 2nd Nine Weeks/ Early Release (students).....Dec. 17 and 18,

2026

Winter Break (students).....Dec.
21 - Jan. 1, 2027

Professional Development Day (staff)
.....Jan. 4, 2027

Teacher Workday (staff)
.....Jan. 5, 2027

2nd Nine Weeks Report Cards
.....Jan. 8, 2027

Martin Luther King Holiday
.....Jan. 18, 2027

Early Release (students)
.....Feb. 10, 2027

3rd Nine Weeks Progress Reports
.....Feb. 12, 2027

President's Day Holiday
.....Feb. 15, 2027

End of 3rd Nine Weeks/Early Release (students)Mar.
12, 2027

3rd Nine Weeks Report
Cards.....Mar. 17, 2027

Early Release
.....Mar.
26, 2027

Spring Break
.....Mar. 29 - April
2, 2027

Early Release (students)
.....April 21, 2027

4th Nine Weeks Progress Reports
.....April 23, 2027

End of 4th Nine Weeks / Last Day of School Early ReleaseMay 19 and 20,
2027

Appomattox Middle School

Regular Bell Schedule

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Arrival/ Homeroom 7:55 - 8:20	Arrival/ Homeroom 7:55 - 8:20	Arrival/ Homeroom 7:55 - 8:20
8:20 - 9:40 1st Block	8:20 - 9:40 1st Block	8:20 - 9:40 1st Block
9:44 - 11:05 2nd Block	9:44 - 11:05 2nd Block (Encore/PE)	9:44 - 11:05 2nd Block
11:09 - 1:05 3rd Block (Encore/PE) Lunch (11:15 - 11:45)	11:09 - 1:05 3rd Block Lunch (11:55- 12:25)	11:09 - 1:05 3rd Block Lunch (12:30- 1:00)
1:09 - 1:45 Raider Block	1:09 - 1:45 Raider Block	1:09 - 1:45 Raider Block
1:49 - 3:10 4th Block	1:49 - 3:10 4th Block	1:49 - 3:10 4th Block (Encore/PE)
3:10 - 3:35 Dismissal	3:10 - 3:35 Dismissal	3:10 - 3:35 Dismissal

Early Release Bell Schedule

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Arrival/ Homeroom 7:55 - 8:20	Arrival/ Homeroom 7:55 - 8:20	Arrival/ Homeroom 7:55 - 8:20
8:20 - 8:53 1st Block	8:20 - 8:53 1st Block	8:20 - 8:53 1st Block
8:57 - 9:30 2nd Block	8:57 - 9:30 2nd Block (Encore/PE)	8:57 - 9:30 2nd Block
9:34 - 10:07 4th Block	9:34 - 10:07 4th Block	9:34 - 10:07 4th Block (Encore/PE)
10:11 -12:00 3rd Block (Encore/PE) Lunch (10:15 - 10:45)	10:11 -12:00 3rd Block (Encore/PE) Lunch (10:50 - 11:20)	10:11 -12:00 3rd Block Lunch (11:25- 11:55)
12:00 - 12:35 Dismissal	12:00 - 12:35 Dismissal	12:00 - 12:35 Dismissal

2 Hour Delay Schedule

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Arrival/ Homeroom 9:55 - 10:20	Arrival/ Homeroom 9:55 - 10:20	Arrival/ Homeroom 9:55 - 10:20
10:20 - 11:15 1st Block	10:20 - 11:15 1st Block	10:20 - 11:15 1st Block
11:19 -1:05 3rd Block (Encore/PE) Lunch (11:24 - 11:54)	11:19 -1:05 3rd Block Lunch (12:00 - 12:30)	11:19 -1:05 3rd Block Lunch (12:35 -1:05)
1:09 - 2:08 2nd Block	1:09 - 2:08 2nd Block (Encore/PE)	1:09 - 2:08 2nd Block
2:12 - 3:10 4th Block	2:12 - 3:10 4th Block	2:12 - 3:10 4th Block (Encore /PE)
3:10 - 3:35 Dismissal	3:10 - 3:35 Dismissal	3:10 - 3:35 Dismissal

Section 1: ACADEMICS

School Course of Study

6th Grade

Required Subjects

Math 6 (or Advanced (specific rqmts)
Science 6 (1 semester)
English/Language Arts 6
US History to 1865 (1 semester)
Health and Physical Education 6

Encore Subjects

Exploratory 6 (1 nine-weeks each)
Agriculture 6/ Computers 6
Technology 6/ Art 6
Beginning Band 1 (Woodwind)
Beginning Band 1 (Brass/ Percussion)

7th Grade

Required Subjects

Math 7 (or Adv Math 7 - coming 2027-28)
English/Language Arts 7
Science 7
US History 2 - 1865 to Present (1 semester)
Health and Physical Education 7

Encore Subjects

Technology 7
Art 7
Computer Science 7
Agriculture 7
Band 2 (Woodwind)#
Band 2 (Brass/Percussion)#

8th Grade

Required Subjects

Math 8 (or *Algebra 1 - specific rqmts)
Science 8 (1 semester)
Civics and Economics 8 (1 semester)
English/Language Arts 8
Health and Physical Education 8

Encore Subjects

Technology 8
Art 8
Agriculture 8
Computer Science 8
*Spanish 1 (specific rqmts)
Band 3 (Woodwind)^
Band 3 (Brass/Percussion)^

*Students enrolled in Algebra 1 and Spanish 1 will receive 1 high school credit towards graduation with the successful completion of the course.

Band 1 is a prerequisite to take either Band 2 course.

^ Band 2 is a prerequisite to take either Band 3 course.

Additional courses will be offered during the Raider Reach block including Chorus. All students will have the opportunity to sign up during the course of the school year.

AMS GRADING POLICY (updated 2026)

Goal - To ensure consistency, clarity, and fairness in grading expectations across Appomattox Middle School classes. AMS is committed to supporting student learning and providing accurate measures of academic progress.

School-Wide Expectations

- **Number of grades** - Expectations are for a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 35 grades in each class per nine weeks
 - Homework - 5 grades per nine weeks for all classes
 - Classwork - minimum of 16, maximum of 26 grades (Quizzes are included in Classwork)
 - Assessments - Minimum of 4 Assessments
- **Homework** - All teachers will use this category and record a minimum of 5 grades per nine weeks.
- **Weighting Assignments** - All assignments are weighted as 1.0 in PowerSchool
- **Category Definitions:**
 - *Assessments* - Tests, Labs, papers, or Performance-Based Assessments (PBA)
 - *Classwork* - Quizzes and all graded work completed in class
 - *Homework* - Assignments specifically designed to be completed outside of school
- **Gradebooks updates** - All grades for each week will be entered into PowerSchool by the end of the day the following Monday.
- **Percentage** - All assignments are entered as a percentage.
- **Grade Level Department consistency**
 - Each grade level department should communicate expectations for all grading practices to students and parents. (Syllabus)
- **Missing work and Zeroes**
 - Missing assignments are entered in PowerSchool as a Zero. These zeroes can be replaced as work is turned in, subject to the provisions of the late work policy.
- **Late work and work missed due to absences**
 - Work missed due to absences will not be penalized unless it is turned in outside of the Absence policy timeline for missed work.
 - Assessments are not penalized for being late.
 - A 10-point deduction will be applied for each day that an assignment is late, up to a maximum of 5 days. After 5 days, any assignment turned in can only receive a maximum grade of 50.
- **Retake Policy** - Students are allowed the opportunity for retakes on tests if they meet the following conditions:
 - Students, parents, or teachers can request a retake of a test.
 - Prior to retaking the test, the student must complete remediation of the content covered on the test. This remediation can be a specific review packet, corrections of the original assessment with student-provided explanations of the corrections made, or an appropriate review activity.

These remediation activities can be completed in class or at home. Remediation activities completed at home should have a parent's signature.

- Once the remediation is complete, students retaking a test will be assigned a completely new test. They should not be given the original test or a recycled version of the original.
 - Students will complete remediation work and retake the test outside of regular class time so they do not miss new instruction.
 - The teacher will take the higher of the two grades.
- **Assessment Length** - Assessments should be of an appropriate length to measure the student's understanding of a concept.
 - Assessments: minimum 20 questions or scorable points.
 - Classworks and quizzes: minimum 10 questions or scorable points.

GRADING SCALE

Grades are issued based on the following explanation:

A - (93-100) B - (85-92) C - (77-84) D - (70-76) F - (69 and below)

HOMEWORK

We believe homework should be an extension of the classroom learning experience. The purpose of homework is to practice a skill that is being learned in class to increase speed or accuracy with that skill, explore background knowledge or increased information related to a concept or skill, extend the learning process beyond the expected learning goal, and/or individualize learning based on student learning needs and choices or interests.

INTERIM REPORTS

Students receive interim reports at the midpoint of each nine-week grading period. Parents should sign interim reports and return them to their child's teachers. Parents needing to reach a teacher should call the teacher, the office (352-8257), or contact the teacher via email to set up an appointment. Grade reports can be viewed throughout the year on PowerSchool. Please contact guidance for login information.

Interim Report Dates 2026-2027

1st 9 weeks Sept. 11, 2026	2nd 9 Weeks Nov. 13, 2026	3rd 9 Weeks Feb. 12, 2027	4th 9 Weeks April 23, 2027
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ADVANCED CLASSES

Advanced courses offered at AMS include: Advanced Math 6, Algebra I, and Spanish I. Advanced classes are rigorous and require a commitment from students to work hard both in and out of the classroom. For a student to be considered for an Advanced class, they must meet requirements established by the school and division. In order to remain in advanced classes, students must maintain at least a "B" average throughout the duration of the course. If a student receives a grade lower than a "B" at the end of any grading period, a conference with the student, parent, teacher, and guidance counselor will be held to determine proper placement in the appropriate grade-level class

COMMUNICATION

AMS disseminates information via daily announcements to students, on the AMS website, on the Appomattox Middle School Facebook page, and/or by automated phone/text calls to parents. The AMS website is located at <http://acpsweb.net/o/ams>. On the website, you will find a calendar of events, a copy of the most recent newsletter, lunch menus, and other helpful information. The school division uses PowerSchool, a student information database, to report grades. Student grades can be accessed by parents via a parent portal. For login information, please contact the guidance office.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FROM APPOMATTOX COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Currently, the only middle school courses that require students to take an end-of-course test to verify the credit (for high school graduation) are Algebra I and Spanish I (Spanish has no SOL test - only a final exam). **For complete details of all graduation requirements, please refer to the *Student Guide for Individual Planning* and/or see your guidance counselor.**

All students graduating must earn a certain number of units of credit to receive a standard diploma and earn a certain number of credits to receive an advanced diploma. In addition, students will be required to pass Standards of Learning (SOL) tests to verify proficiency in selected subjects which carry high school credit.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Homebound instruction may be available to students who have an illness or injury that precludes school attendance which has been certified by a doctor and approved by the Superintendent or a designee. Parents with concerns or questions about this program should contact the student's school counselor.

LATE WORK POLICY

It is the student's responsibility to make up work missed due to absence from any class (e.g. field trips, special projects, and illness). Students shall have one day for each day absent to make up work once they return to school.

Teachers shall work with each student to distribute and communicate all missed assignments and work. Parents may request student work during an absence of at least three days. The parent will make an official request with the main office or via the counseling office (352-8257). Once the request has been made, teachers should have 24 hours to accumulate the work and deliver it to the main office, once notification is made.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

AMS students do not dress out for PE classes at this time. Students should not access the gym locker rooms without permission from their PE teacher. Students will participate in a variety of activities both inside the gym and outside. Students are expected to follow PE teacher directions and behave in a way that keeps everyone safe. Students who behave in a dangerous way can be removed from activities and be asked to get physical activity by an alternative activity.

PROMOTION POLICY

Middle school students are required to pass five (5) subjects each year, including the four core subject areas (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies), in order to earn promotion to the next grade. Parents of students who are in danger of retention will be contacted so that a plan can be made to prevent retention. Final grades are determined by averaging the numerical grades for each nine-week grading period during the year. SOL scores are taken into account when analyzing whether a student should be retained. Summer school remediation may be required to be promoted to the next grade. Our goal is for each child to succeed and achieve. Students must adhere to the requirements (grades, attendance, and initiative) to prove success.

RAIDER REACH BLOCK

Raider Reach block is a 35minute period in each school day, running in 6 week cycles and designed to allow teachers to remediate students who might be struggling with course content. During this block other enrichment type classes will be offered for students who do not require remediation. Students may receive a Pass or Fail grade for this block.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL) TESTS

At the end of each grade, students will take Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. The purpose of an SOL test is to measure the student's knowledge of a subject. These tests determine the school's accreditation status and are used as one of the many variables to determine placement or promotion for the following year.

In the eighth grade, students take SOL tests in Writing, Reading, Math, Social Studies, and Science. Students enrolled in Algebra I take the end-of-course (EOC) test for verified credit during the May testing window.

In sixth and seventh grade, students take SOL tests in Reading and Math.

Section 2: ATHLETICS

ATHLETICS

It is the philosophy of Appomattox Middle School that competitive athletic programs be provided and the primary goal will be to help the student/athlete grow not only athletically but also academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. It is the intent that the athletic program will have broad participation by as many boys and girls as possible and that our teams will be competitive with other schools, but never at the sacrifice of academics, sportsmanship, or the general welfare of the school or student.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

It is the expectation that students involved in a school sport or other school extracurricular activity at AMS will maintain a grade of C or better in all of their classes. **A student with an F in any class, or more than one D in any of their classes, at any interim or end-of-quarter grade check, will be placed on academic probation that will remain in effect until the official grade check. At each grade check, students' academic standing will be reassessed. Students will remain on academic probation until their grades meet these standards.** Students on academic probation are expected to continue to attend practice but they may not participate in competitions or other activities apart from practice. Any middle school student participating in a VHSL-sanctioned sport or activity at ACHS (i.e. a Junior Varsity (JV) athlete) is ALSO subject to VHSL rules and regulations, including VHSL academic standards.

The administration at AMS has the right to remove any student/athlete from a team based on failure to comply with team and school policies.

[Link to the AMS Student-Athelete Handbook](#)

SPORTING EVENTS

Students may not remain on campus after school to wait for a sporting event scheduled later that day. Doors will be open thirty minutes prior to the start of all games for admission, and students must be accompanied by an adult during the time they are attending the athletic event. Students need to leave the school property by 3:30, unless they are in a supervised after-school program or directly affiliated with the athletic team and supervised by the coach

Section 3: ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES (Policy JED)

Good consistent student attendance at school is a major factor in student academic success and social acceptance. Recognizing that regular attendance is critical to a student's achievement in school, the school division has developed the following guidelines for attendance.

1. Parents are to notify the school by 9:00 am on any day their student is absent from school.
2. Students returning from an absence are required to have a written note from the parent.
3. Definition of terms regarding attendance
 - a. Administrator refers to the building principal or assistant principal
 - b. Excused absence
Students must present proof and a reason for an absence in writing by a statement from the parent or guardian, health care provider, or court official. This documentation is expected on the day the student returns to school. Students shall make up class and homework for an excused absence. An absence may be excused due to the conditions noted below. The school reserves the right to require additional documentation of absences before designating an absence as excused.
 - i. Personal illness or appointment verified by written documentation from a physician, dentist, or mental health professional
 - ii. Religious holidays
 - iii. Subpoenaed court appearance or legal appointment.
 - iv. Extenuating Circumstances-The administrator reserves the right to approve as excused special circumstances that require a child to be withheld from attending. The parent should notify the school immediately of such circumstances. The administrator will take the student's overall attendance into consideration when making a determination of excused or unexcused.
 - c. Pre-arranged absence (family trips, etc...)
A pre-arranged absence is one that is known in advance by the parent and is not one of the types above under "excused absence." The administrator will designate absences known in advance as excused or unexcused. A parent requesting a pre-arranged absence shall, prior to the absence, notify the school administrator of the circumstances requiring absence from school.
 - d. Unexcused absence- An absence that is designated unexcused by division policy or the building administrator
4. Make-up work
 - a. Students shall make up work due to an absence and are responsible for returning the assignments to the teacher for grading. Make up work for an unexcused absence may be discounted a letter grade.
 - b. Refer to the **Late Work** section of this handbook for details and timelines by which make-up work must be returned to the teacher.
{Teachers are reminded to be mindful that the student has several teachers to work with and current work to be maintained during this time.}
5. Follow-up with parents for attendance and truancy issues
 - a. All parents will be notified when their student has been absent from school (excused and unexcused) for a total of 10 days during the school year.
 - b. After 5 unexcused absences, a conference will be held with school officials to create a school attendance plan.
 - c. Referrals may be made to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court as required by law for students violating school attendance plans.

- d. Students are expected to be in school during the school hours.

Each child is allowed 4 “Absent Excused Parent Notes” per semester, or a total of 8 for the entire year. The principal or designee may determine the validity of the excuse. He/she may deem the absence excused or unexcused.

ABSENCE/DISMISSAL

Students who are returning to school after having been absent, who are leaving school early, or who are riding a different bus in the afternoon must bring a **written note** from home (phone calls or emails will not be accepted) to their homeroom teacher. Any student arriving at school tardy must report to the office and sign in. Parents must come to the office and sign students out. Students will not be allowed to leave the building on their own to meet parents. Parents should call the school by 9:00 am on days that a student is going to be absent from school. (State Law)

Students missing more than 10% of school days at each 4.5-week mark during the school year will be required to attend after-school recovery time. See Recovery Time section of the Handbook.

Students who are staying after school for clubs or athletic practices must stay on campus under the direct supervision of the adult sponsor.

*Please inform the Guidance office and/or the nurse if special or unusual health or custody concerns arise during the school year. **If custody changes, papers must be on file in the guidance office.***

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Upon arrival at school, students are to report directly to their homeroom class. Crossing guards will be located on 460 Business and Church Street to assist students across the street. Students who choose to pick up breakfast in the cafeteria must do so as soon as they arrive at school. The cafeteria will close at 8:15 am. **Students ARE NOT to be on campus before 7:55 a.m. due to lack of supervision.**

TARDY POLICY (School start of day)

If a student is not in their homeroom by the 1st block tardy bell, they must report to the main office to check in and receive a tardy note. Excused tardies include medical appointments, court appointments, and deaths in the immediate family (parent/guardian/sibling). All other tardies will be considered unexcused. These include, but are not limited to, the student missing their bus, oversleeping, or parents bringing them late to school.

Each student will be allowed 5 tardies to school per nine weeks. **Each student who accrues more than 5 unexcused tardies per nine weeks will be assigned after-school recovery time. Until the recovery time is completed, the student may not participate in or attend after-school activities on any Appomattox school campus. This includes athletic practices, games, clubs, and events.**

RECOVERY TIME

Consistent school attendance is a positive factor in student achievement and engagement. As a part of the AMS attendance program this school year, student attendance and tardies to school will be monitored periodically. Students whose absences are greater than 10% of the school days at each monitoring point will be required to attend after-school recovery time. For example, students who have missed 3 school days after the first 20 days would be required to make up 1 day by attending 3 after-school recovery time sessions. Students with more than 5 unexcused tardies in a nine-week grading period will be required to attend after-school recovery time. Missed time will be made up at the rate of 1 after-school recovery session per tardy and 3 after-school recovery sessions per missed school day. Until students complete their after-school recovery time, they will not be allowed to participate or attend any extracurricular activities or events on any Appomattox school campus, including athletic practices, games, clubs, or dances.

WITHDRAWALS FROM SCHOOL

Any student withdrawing from school must report to the Guidance Office and fill out the necessary forms for transfer. The student must report to the office and turn in all textbooks and library books. Any fines must be paid. The student must clean out his/her locker before leaving. Students will be marked unexcused until the student is registered at their new school (attendance markings will be changed after receiving official notification from the receiving school that the student is registered). Parents could be liable for truancy if registration at the student's new school is not promptly completed.

Section 4: DISCIPLINE

AMS CLASSROOM RULES

- Enter class in an orderly manner, be seated, and prepared with all necessary material to work when class begins.
- Treat your school, yourself, and others with respect.
- Listen to and follow instructions when they are given.
- Respect personal space and personal belongings.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Maintaining a safe, orderly, and proper learning environment is imperative if our students are to achieve their maximum potential in the classroom. AMS utilizes the principle of processing with the student to accept ownership of their actions in dealing with behavior issues.

The following steps are generally followed by classroom teachers:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 st offense | Warning/student conference/silent lunch, “expectations” conversation |
| 2 nd offense | Parent contact and/or Intervention staff conversation |
| 3 rd offense | Referral to the administration and/or Intervention staff conversation |

*Some actions may require the immediate removal of a student from a classroom.

The administrator will assign the discipline action. Possible disciplinary options include lunch detention, silent lunch, in-school suspension, overnight suspension/required parent conference, and out-of-school suspension.

General Categories of Infractions

- a) Skipping class/leaving school grounds without permission
- b) Public/physical display of affection
- c) Excessive/repeated tardiness to class/school
- d) Repeated disruption of instruction
- e) Refusal of reasonable request of a staff member
- f) Disrespect/defiance towards any school employee
- g) Theft
- h) Vandalism/defacing school property/computer vandalism
- i) Engaging in misconduct, disrespectful conversation, verbal abuse, use of profanity
- j) Cheating/plagiarism
- k) Intimidation/harassment
- l) Physical altercation (minimum 1-day in-school suspension)
- m) Fighting (minimum 3 days out-of-school suspension)
- n) Pre-planned physical assault (minimum 10 days out-of-school suspension, possible charges and recommendation to ACPS district discipline hearing officer)
- o) Violation of tobacco/vape policies and laws (1st offense - minimum 1-day out-of-school suspension and 1-semester after-school activity suspension (i.e. not allowed on any ACPS campus outside of school hours))
- p) Violation of alcohol/drug policies and laws (1st offense - minimum 10 days out-of-school suspension, possible charges and recommendation to ACPS district discipline hearing officer)
- q) Possession of cellular or other similar portable communication devices
- r) Weapons—possession of any item, including firearms, knives, or any object which could cause injury to another person. This includes, but is not limited to: guns, knives, look-alike weapons, BB guns, or razor blades. Any student determined to have brought a “firearm” to school or to a school-sponsored activity may be suspended for up to one calendar year (365 days), per state law.
- s) Bullying (possible suspension and possible court charges)
- t) Other actions deemed inappropriate for the school environment.

BULLYING

Bullying is defined by ACPS policy as:

- 1) Any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim;
- 2) involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and
- 3) is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma.

"Bullying" includes cyberbullying. Please note that bullying does NOT include ordinary teasing, horseplay, arguments, or peer conflict. Under Virginia law, AMS is now required to investigate any cyberbullying issues brought to our attention. Students who engage in cyberbullying may receive school-based disciplinary consequences, even if the cyberbullying took place outside of school hours and off of school grounds, per Virginia Senate Bill 908 (2025), §22.1-279.6.

AMS will not tolerate bullying or bullying-like behavior. AMS enforces the following Anti-Bullying Rules:

- 1) We will not bully others.
- 2) We will try to help students who are bullied.
- 3) We will try to include students who are left out.
- 4) If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

If a student feels they have been bullied, or has seen another student bullied, they should tell a teacher, counselor, or administrator immediately so that the issue can be investigated and addressed.

CELL PHONES

Appomattox County School Board policy, which implements Virginia school cell phone law (§ 22.1-79.3) allows students to have cell phones at school. **At school, phones are to remain turned off from the opening bell to the closing bell of school and stored in the student's locker.** Phones are not to be **visible or used** during the school day (7:55 – 3:35). Failure to follow this policy may result in the following:

- 1st Offense:** phone confiscated and returned to parent; student given ISS for 1 day
- 2nd Offense:** phone confiscated and returned to parent; student given ISS for 2 days
- 3rd Offense:** phone confiscated and returned to parent; student given ISS for 3 days
- 4th Offense:** phone confiscated and returned to parent; student given ISS for 4 days. The student will lose the privilege to bring the cell phone to school. Other loss of privileges which may include attendance/participation at all ACPS after-school events, attendance of field trips, etc.
- 5th and Additional Offenses:** phone confiscated and returned to parent; student suspended from school up to 5 days. Loss of privileges which will include attendance/participation at all ACPS after-school events, attendance of field trips, etc.

Any cell phone usage that includes threats made to other students, regardless of the time of day when the message was sent or where the sender was located at the time, and which leads to disruption in the school (i.e. student conflict, class disruption, etc.) can result in the student losing the privilege to bring a cell phone to school. Administrators will discuss the situation with parents and could require cell phones to be turned in to the main office each morning upon arrival.

Please note that students using smart watches to communicate will be considered the same as using a cell phone and will be treated as the same offenses if they are utilized in a cell phone-like manner (i.e. used to text or otherwise communicate with others).

DRESS CODE

In order to promote an orderly and safe learning environment while preparing students for success in the world of work, dress guidelines have been established. Parents and students are responsible for appropriate school dress. This means that a student's dress, grooming, and appearance, including hairstyle, jewelry, and makeup

shall be safe, appropriate, and shall not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Dress that is disruptive, distracting, revealing, or interferes with the educational process will not be acceptable. Administrators will have the final authority to determine if a student's clothing is appropriate for school, is safe, or whether it will create a climate that is distracting to learning and instruction. Principals, faculty, and staff members will enforce the following dress code policy:

The Appomattox County Public Schools Dress Code prohibits the wearing of any of the following:

- Clothing or accessories that advertise, glorify, or symbolize any illegal substance, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, cigarettes, vaping, e-cigarettes, or illegal acts,
- Clothing or accessories that contain vulgar, derogatory, violent, or suggestive diagrams, pictures, words or slogans,
- Clothing or accessories with gang insignia or symbols,
- Clothing that exposes cleavage, private parts, the midriff, or undergarments, or that is otherwise sexually provocative, is prohibited. Examples of prohibited clothing include, but are not limited to: sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines that show cleavage, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, clothing constructed of see-through materials,
- Dresses, skirts, shorts, and skorts shorter than 5 inches above the knees,
- Slits, splits, cuts, frays, and holes in clothing so that undergarments or bare skin is exposed that is 5 inches above knees,
- Picks, combs, or brushes in hair,
- Hats, hoods, sun visors, and sunglasses (unless prior arrangements are made with the administration for Medical or religious reasons),
- Heavy chains worn as jewelry or belts and free-swinging chains. This includes wallet chains exceeding six inches,
- Spiked jewelry, clothing, and accessories (including fish hooks on hats),
- One-piece pajamas,
- Blankets, capes and flags.

Note: Shoes must be worn at all times and be appropriate for instructional activities.

All teachers and staff are expected to enforce the dress code policy throughout the day.

Student Dress Code and Special Circumstances:

- Some classroom activities and curriculum may require specific dress guidelines (e.g., physical education). Any such changes will be explained by the teacher and addressed in the course syllabus/parent letter.
- Administrators, coaches, and sponsors may suspend portions of the dress code and allow students to wear other appropriate attire at special activities. Such activities may be related to field days, theme days, field trips, physical education, cheerleading, athletics, and band.

Consequences (One or More May Apply)

- Change into alternate attire to meet the ACPS Dress Code
- Call a parent to bring appropriate clothing
- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Referral to school administrator

Repeated willful ACPS Dress Code violations may be subject to further/additional disciplinary action at the administrator's discretion, including In-School Suspension.

GRIEVANCES

Any questions or concerns students have about school rules and regulations or the administration of the rules can be taken to the following sources depending upon the nature of the concern: teacher, guidance counselor, school resource officer, dean of students, assistant principal, or principal.

If a school matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student may take the concern directly to the dean of students, the assistant principal, or the principal. If suspended, the student has a right to appeal the suspension to the principal, district hearing officer, superintendent, and the School Board.

Any questions or concerns which parents have regarding processes and procedures of a classroom should be addressed initially with the classroom teacher. If an issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, they may take the concern to the school administration.

- a) Complaints may be filed with the administrator of the school. When possible, please follow the proper chain of command (ex. Teacher, Administrator, etc...)
- b) The complainant will be requested to outline accusations in a written form including the details relative to the complaint, the names of persons involved, and the dates of any specific incidents.
- c) Refusal to put the complaint in writing shall not preclude an investigation of the complaint.
- d) An immediate investigation into the allegations will be initiated. The investigation will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible.
- e) Appropriate and prompt action will be taken to resolve the complaint.
- f) The student filing the grievance will have the opportunity to provide witnesses and other evidence.
- g) Assurance will be provided that there will be no retaliation for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation or inquiry.
- h) Written notice of the outcome of the investigations will be filed.
- i) The student will be kept informed of the status of the complaint.
- j) Assurance will be given that steps will be taken to prevent recurrence of any issue.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)

In-school suspension will be assigned by the dean of students, the assistant principal, or the principal. All assigned school work should be completed before a student may return to his/her regular classroom. Failure to attempt work during ISS may result in additional time in ISS. Students who are absent on a day assigned to ISS, or who leave school early while in ISS, must complete their originally-assigned time in ISS on the next day in attendance.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED

Any item that might distract from the learning environment (magazines, toys, blankets, electronic games, lasers, radios, tape/CD/MP3 players, iPods, cameras, AirPods, candy, etc.) will be confiscated by teachers and turned over to the school administration. Students are responsible for their own personal property.

**Appomattox Middle School is not responsible for damaged or lost personal property.
Gum will be addressed on an individual basis if there is an issue of improper disposal and mess.**

RACIAL HARASSMENT (School Board Policy JFHA/GBA)

The School Board hereby establishes a policy, and the Superintendent shall implement procedures for resolving complaints arising from alleged racial harassment. The Superintendent does hereby designate the Assistant Superintendent as Racial Complaint Coordinator, to coordinate the efforts of the Appomattox County Schools to comply with and carry out his responsibilities for implementing the law, including investigation of any complaint of alleged non-compliance with the law, regulations or this policy.

The school system shall notify students, parents of students, and employees of the name, office address, and telephone number of the Racial Complaint Coordinator.

The school system will implement specific and continuing steps to notify students, parents, and employees that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Procedures for making and resolving complaints shall comply with all applicable federal and state law and regulations. It is the policy of the Appomattox County School Board to maintain a working and learning environment for all its employees and students which provides for fair and equitable treatment, including freedom

from racial harassment. It is prohibited for any employee or student to harass an employee or student based on race, color, or national origin by using racial epithets, slurs or any other conduct of a verbal, physical, or written nature that is harassing, intimidating, abusive, degrading, or threatening and which causes or contributes to a racially hostile environment.

Any employee or student, who believes that he or she has been subjected to racial harassment, or has been a witness to such an incident, should file a complaint of the alleged act immediately to the building-level administrator or Racial Complaint coordinator. The administrator or coordinator shall request that the complaint be in writing. Refusal to put the complaint in writing shall not preclude an investigation of the complaint. The complaint should state in detail the basis for the complaint, the names of the persons involved, if known, and the dates of any specific incidents. A thorough investigation of all reported incidents to determine the nature and extent of any alleged racial harassment will be undertaken immediately. All investigation and resolution should be completed as soon as possible, but no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the complaint.

The school division may take immediate steps at its discretion to protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged racial harassment. Any individual filing a racial harassment complaint is assured that he or she will be free from any retaliation by the Appomattox County School Division from filing such a complaint. Likewise, retaliation by student(s) is prohibited. False and malicious charges of racial harassment shall be treated as a serious offense and those persons making false and malicious charges shall be subject to disciplinary action.

If the complaint is against the Racial Complaint Coordinator the complaint shall be filed with the superintendent. If the complaint is against the superintendent, the complaint shall be filed with the chairman of the School Board. The question of whether a particular action or incident is prohibited behavior requires a determination based on all available facts in the matter.

A written report shall be filed at the conclusion of the investigation out the individuals interviewed, the names and titles of the individuals processing the complaint, copies of any notes, and the decision, including any action taken, if applicable. This report shall remain confidential and shall be kept in the central office for a reasonable period of time. Information about the outcome shall be disclosed consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

SELLING, SOLICITING, ADVERTISING

There is to be no selling, soliciting, or advertising of items at school without the explicit permission of the principal.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (School Board Policy JFHA/GBA)

It is the policy of the Appomattox County School Board to maintain a working and learning environment for all its employees and students which provides for fair and equitable treatment, including freedom from sexual harassment. It is prohibited for any employee or student, male or female, to harass another employee or student by making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or engaging in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the employee or student; (2) such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or learning environment; (3) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment or participation in school programs.

Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should file a written complaint of the alleged act immediately with the administration. The written complaint should state in detail the basis for the complaint, the names of the persons involved, and the dates of any specific incidents. A thorough confidential investigation of all reported incidents, to determine the nature and extent of any alleged sexual harassment, will be undertaken immediately.

SUSPENSION

A student may be suspended from school by the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students when there is sufficient cause. A copy of the referral will be mailed to parents concerning each suspension. Students ARE able to access and complete graded work during and after the suspension. Students may NOT attend any ACPS school function (e.g., dances, field trips, athletic events) or be on school district grounds during the suspension. *Students who are suspended and are on school district grounds may be charged with trespassing.* A parent conference with the principal or assistant principal may be required before the student will be allowed to return to school. Students who are serving in-school suspension will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities that day.

Severe or multiple/repetitive discipline referrals may require a referral to the District Hearing Officer or a meeting with the Superintendent.

TARDY POLICY (to class during the school day)

Students are given time in between classes to go to the restroom and their locker. The first five minutes in class are critical to any successful lesson. Students tardy to class disrupt this important instructional time. Students who are tardy to class will receive a tardy from that period's teacher.

Per nine weeks, per teacher, a student is allowed three (3) tardies *total*. A tardy is defined as a student who is not in the classroom and prepared to learn by **the tardy bell**. A tardy notice is completed and school administration is notified after the 5th tardy to class.

Consequences:

- 1st offense - Warning
 - 2nd offense -Warning and parent contact
 - 3rd offense - 1 day Silent lunch and parent contact
 - 4th offense - 2 days Silent lunch and parent contact
 - 5th offense - 3 days Silent lunch and parent contact
 - 6th offense - 1 week Silent lunch and parent contact
- Tracking of class tardies resets each nine weeks.

TRESPASSING

Students and/or community members are not allowed on school property before or after school hours without permission. Please see administration for use of the facilities. Students who are on school property without approved permission may be issued a No Trespassing Letter.

VAPE POLICY

Students who are found to have used or have been in possession of a vape on school grounds will be subject to the appropriate discipline sanctions for tobacco possession. In addition to discipline, any AMS student caught with a vape will not be allowed to attend any AMS dances or ACPS after-school events, including athletic contests, for 1 semester from the date of the offense. Repeat offenses will result in additional exclusions from AMS events as well as additional discipline sanctions.

Section 5: SERVICES

CAFETERIA – Food and Drink

Each day the AMS cafeteria offers two nutritious meals for students, breakfast and lunch. ACPS has implemented the USDA Community Eligibility Provision which provides free breakfast and lunch for all students for the entire 2026-2027 school year.

Student Breakfast	Free	Student Lunch	Free
Adult Breakfast	\$2.75	Adult Lunch	\$4.70

Breakfast is served from 7:55-8:15am. For lunch, students will report to the cafeteria with their class and sit in assigned areas. Students who choose to bring their lunch should bring a nutritious meal. While snacks, ice cream, and fruit drinks are available for purchase, these items should only be purchased in conjunction with a meal. Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor what their child is eating each day. Classroom or organizational social gatherings must be pre-approved by the administration. Each grade level team may denote a snack time depending on the schedule.

- Breaking in line, saving seats, and visiting other tables is not permitted. Students are to remain seated and keep the noise level down in the cafeteria. When dismissed, students are to pick up all trash, return their tray to the clean-up station, line up with their class, and follow the teacher back to the classroom.
- Snacks, ice cream, and fruit drinks may NOT be charged.
- **All food and drinks (excluding water in clear water bottles) must remain in the the cafeteria. Students may not take food back to classrooms; no eating in the halls.**

CLINIC

A nurse is on duty for *emergencies* and is in the clinic located on the second floor of the main building. Parents are required to complete the medical information section of the online registration system at the beginning of the school year. The nurse will not be permitted to attend to a student, unless an emergency situation arises, unless parents have completed this online medical section. All medication, including over-the-counter medicine, must be given to the nurse with a doctor's note. Self-administration of any medication, with the exception of asthma medication if a form is completed, is prohibited for students K-8 (Policy JHCD). An electronic hall-pass from a teacher/staff member is required to see the nurse. **All accidents must be reported to the nurse immediately.**

ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

All students should immediately report any injury occurring on school campus during school hours or while utilizing school transportation. Injuries should be reported to school staff such as bus drivers, nurses, teachers, administrators, or coaches. When an injury is reported to staff an injury Report may need to be filed.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are available to students dealing with personal, emotional, career, and academic concerns. A student may request an appointment by filling out the Counseling Appointment Form or if they feel they need immediate assistance, asking their teacher to call the counseling department. The school counseling offices are located on the second floor of the main building.

Section 6: TRANSPORTATION

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PLANS

There are three acceptable methods for students to get to and home from AMS each day. These are to use School Provided Transportation, to be a car rider, or to walk. Each student and family are expected to complete a Transportation plan each year so that AMS staff is aware of how the student will be getting to school and home from school each day. This form is provided in each student's back-to-school packet and must be completed and returned to their homeroom teacher. Students and parents are accountable for the rules provided on the form. Failure to provide the school with a documented transportation plan prevents school staff from safely supervising the student's arrival and dismissal each day.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Students who utilize ACPS Transportation are expected to follow all rules, regulations, and expectations outlined in the Transportation code of conduct. Bus drivers are to be considered the supervisor on their bus and their directions must be followed by students, School administration will utilize the code of conduct when addressing behavior on school transportation.

CAR RIDERS

Parents may drop off and pick up their student at AMS by utilizing the car rider circle accessed by Oakleigh Ave and Middle Street. This area will be supervised daily by AMS in the morning and the afternoon. Car drivers are expected to follow staff directions while in the circle.

- At arrival, cars need to pull as far forward as possible to allow for multiple cars to drop off at one time. Students should exit their vehicle and walk on the sidewalk to exit the area.
- At Dismissal, students will need to pay attention to the arrival of their vehicle, anticipate where they will stop in the circle, and move to meet them at that point.
- Students should **not** meet cars in the Theater parking lot, streets around the school, or in any other school parking area as these areas are not supervised.

WALKERS

Students who walk off-campus or are picked up daily are requested to complete a permission form at the beginning of the year. Once this form is reviewed, the student will be approved for walking home. Students who are walking home from school are expected to leave campus immediately at dismissal after gathering their belongings. Students who walk are not allowed to return to the school campus that day unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Students who do not regularly walk off-campus after school may do so if they provide a signed parent note at the beginning of the day to their homeroom teacher.

SECTION 7: OTHER POLICIES

CHANGING CLASSES

Students have four minutes to change classes. There is time to go to the restroom and their locker as scheduled. Students should keep to the right in the halls and on stairways to help assist with safety and help traffic move smoothly. Students are not to congregate at the lockers. Students are not to cut through the gym, cafeteria or library during class changes.

DANCES

To attend a dance, students must meet the requirements specified for each dance. A permission slip with details, attendance requirements, and dress code requirements must be signed and returned prior to the event. No exceptions will be made. **Cell phones are not allowed to be out during dances. They must be kept with the students' belongings in the student's locker or an arranged storage area until the end of the dance.**

EVACUATION PROCEDURES (Procedures are posted in each room.)

All students are to proceed quickly, quietly, and orderly during an evacuation of the building. Class groups are to stay together in their assembly areas to enable teachers to check rolls. A signal will indicate when teachers and students are to return to class.

HALL PASSES

AMS utilizes the E-Hall Pass system that is accessed via Chromebook in the classroom. Before leaving any classroom, a student must have an E-Hall pass approved by a teacher or staff member. Students who are in the hallway without an approved E-Hall Pass are subject to discipline. Passes are limited and need teacher or administrator approval to use.

LIBRARY

Students have a regularly scheduled library session each week with their Language Arts classes. Students are responsible for lost or stolen books and will be fined for the replacement value. Any overdue materials will result in students not being allowed to check out additional materials. Students are reminded that the library is a classroom and all school rules apply. The library is open before and after school.

LOCKERS

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items from lockers. Lockers are assigned by the office and may not be changed without permission from the office. Students should not share their combination with other students. Students should likewise not store their items in another student's locker. The administration reserves the right to inspect lockers.

LOST AND FOUND

Any object that is found should be taken to the main office. Students are to notify the office of lost items. Lost and Found bins are available on the ground floor of the AMS original building and the 2nd floor of the AMS new building.

STUDENT REWARD/ RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES

All students are welcomed to participate in student reward and recognition activities (dances, skating, etc.). General factors for consideration to participate include, but are not limited to: attendance, discipline, grades, and outstanding debt.

TECHNOLOGY STATEMENT

All forms of technology are designed to enhance student learning by supporting instructional activities and resources within and outside the school walls. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner by signing (or parents signing) the *Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)* at the beginning of the year.

TELEPHONE USE

Students may use the office or teacher phone only with permission from a teacher or office staff member.

VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit AMS. Upon their arrival, all visitors must first report to the main office to sign in and receive a Visitor's Pass. In order to receive a Visitor's Pass, photo identification must be presented to the office staff. Visitors are not to interrupt classroom instruction. Parents are encouraged to make appointments with classroom teachers during the teacher's planning period or before/after school to provide an interruption-free discussion.

WATER BOTTLES

AMS students are allowed to carry water bottles with them during the school day provided they do not cause issues or disruptions. **Water bottles that squirt are NOT allowed.** Students are responsible for keeping up with their own water bottles. No substances other than water should be brought to school in water bottles.

Appomattox Middle School - Parent and Student Handbook Signature Page

Student Name : _____

Grade: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

Key Policies:

Parent notes for absences	Section 3
Recovery time	Section 3
Cell Phone	Section 4
Bullying	Section 4
Dress code	Section 4
Discipline	Section 4
Vape possession	Section 4
Food at school	Section 5
Water bottles	Section 7

By signing or filling out the form through the QR code below, I acknowledge that I have read and am aware of the policies, expectations, and consequences as they are outlined in the AMS Student Handbook. I understand that I am expected to abide by these policies as a member of the Appomattox Middle School community. I am aware that the full text for each policy can be found on the ACPS website.

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

This page should be returned to your student's homeroom teacher. Please keep the rest of the student handbook as a reference.