Helena Middle School
2025-2026

Student Handbook

Welcome to Helena Middle School, the Home of the Huskies!

We, at Helena Middle School, aspire to create a culture where students and staff grow by learning, find purpose through service, and lead with character.

Helena Middle School is part of the Shelby County Schools district. It is a public school for students living in Helena, Alabama. There are over 930 students in grades six through eight and there are over 80 faculty and staff members. Helena Middle School's mascot is the Husky and the school colors are blue, silver, and black. We encourage each student to participate in our academic, athletic, and extracurricular activities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Helena Middle School is to empower and inspire our students to achieve academic excellence and make a positive contribution to the world.

BELIEFS

- Learning takes place in an environment that is safe and secure for students and staff.
- Education is a collaborative effort among faculty, staff, students, and parents.
- Each student has the right to learn and each student can learn.
- The school environment promotes dignity, respect, and accountability.

THE HUSKY WAY

Growing by Learning
Finding Purpose through Service
Leading with Character

VISITORS

All visitors must enter through the front doors at the main office upon arrival, sign in, state the reason for the visit, and get a visitor's pass. Office business can be taken care of between 7:15 and 3:10 on school days.

SCHOOL OPENING

The school doors will be unlocked at **7:10 am** each morning. Shelby County Board of Education and Helena Middle School are not responsible for students dropped off prior to 7:10 a.m. unless they are under the supervision of a coach or sponsor. Upon arrival at school, 6th graders will report to the cafeteria and 7th and 8th graders will report to the gym. Students are **not** allowed to go to their lockers or upstairs prior to the 7:30 a.m. bell. No students are allowed in the locker rooms prior to 7:35. The media center will open daily at 7:10 am.

MORNING ARRIVAL

Morning Dismissal Bell	7:30 a.m.
Warning Bell	7:39 a.m.
Tardy Bell	7:40 a.m.

IMPORTANT: The tardy bell rings at 7:40 a.m. Students need to be in their first period class by 7:40. Students who arrive late must report to the front office to sign in. If students receive **3 tardies to school in a 9 week period they will be issued a detention**. Any additional tardies during the 9 week period will result in further discipline consequences, including In School Suspension.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL 3:00 pm

ATTENDANCE : It is vital that your child be in school on a regular basis. A student who accumulates more than 10 absences during a school year is subject to retention. Attendance letters will be emailed to parents after the 2nd, 5th, 7th and 10th unexcused absence. Pre-Referral conferences with students and parents will be held when the student reaches 5 unexcused absences. Students will be referred to Early Warning Court upon the 7th unexcused absence. Students who are absent should bring a written explanation of their absence from the parent or guardian within **3** days of the student returning from an absence, or provide the excuse via email to scboe-hlms@shelbyed.org. **The school will not accept an excuse after 3 school days of the absence.** After 10 parent excuses are used, a student's absence must be accompanied by a doctor's excuse or legal excuse.

TRANSPORTATION

Please note all traffic is **ONE WAY** starting to the left of the school at the top of the hill.

IMPORTANT: *Any changes in a student's transportation for the day must be submitted to the office NO LATER than 2:00 p.m. so that we can ensure there is plenty of time to communicate the change to the student.*

- **Car Riders** load and unload in the **back** of the building. Students should not be dropped off prior to 7:10 am and should be picked up by 3:10 pm.

- **Walkers and Bike Riders** must use the designated CROSSWALK in front of the school and enter and exit the building through the front of the school. Motorized vehicles such as motorcycles, golf carts, dirt bikes, dune buggies, Go-Karts, etc. are not allowed on campus, even if the student is licensed to drive that vehicle.

- **Bus Service** is available for all students who are zoned for Helena schools. We encourage parents to take advantage of the Shelby County Bus service in order to cut down on traffic at the Middle and High School. Some buses run a double route. Students must ride the bus they are assigned. If a student is to ride home a different way or on a different bus, a note from the student's parent/guardian must be sent to the main office that morning. The note will be signed by an administrator and returned to the student. See above regarding changes in transportation.

Bus Expectations: The sole purpose of a school bus is to transport students safely to and from school. The school bus is an extension of the classroom and all SCBOE rules apply. Our goal is to ensure that all students who ride the school bus exhibit good behavior while on the bus. In the event the bus driver deems it necessary to issue a disciplinary notice, an administrator will take appropriate action.

Inclement Weather which requires dismissal: Parents should begin to listen to the local news for announcements of school closings in case of inclement weather. Parents should also check their e-mail and the Shelby County website for the announcement of school closing early. Buses will run their routes unless inclement weather prevents it. Parents may also sign up for **ThrillShare** to receive timely notifications by phone, e-mail and text message for delays or other bus related information. The Helena Middle **ListServ** will also share dismissal information.

BOOK BAGS

Book bags can be brought to school but **must** be placed in the locker before 1st period. Book bags should not be brought into class unless an administrator allows special permission. Book bags, purses, etc. are not allowed in the serving area of the cafeteria.

CELL PHONE

Students are asked to keep electronic devices turned off and in their lockers during the day. If a student has their phone taken up or it is seen during the instructional day, the first incident will result in a lunch detention. The second offense will require the student to attend ½ day of In School Suspension and the device will be held by administration until it can be picked up by a parent. Further offenses will result in more severe consequences, including In School or Out of School suspension.

DRESS CODE

HMS follows the Shelby County Code of Conduct Dress Code. Students who violate the HMS dress code policy will face disciplinary consequences. Please refer to the Dress Code Policy in the Code of Conduct for a more inclusive list of acceptable standards.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Helena Middle School offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities for our students. Students may participate in athletics, band, choir, dance team, majorettes, cheerleading, and yearbook. They also can involve themselves with service clubs and academic teams. We encourage all of our students to get involved.

LOCKERS

Every HMS student will be issued a locker at the beginning of the year. The locker rental fee is to be paid at registration. Students MAY NOT change lockers without approval from administration.

LOST & FOUND

The school cannot assume responsibility for the loss of personal items, including cell phones. Lost and found is located in the office. Students may also check in the gym. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity. Personal devices need to be labeled with the student's name.

MEDICATION POLICY

Information about medications is included in the SCBOE Code of Conduct. For questions please contact the HMS nurse at 682-5300.

Discipline

FIELD TRIPS

Students who exhibit difficulty adhering to the Shelby County Schools Code of Conduct may receive disciplinary consequences as listed below. In addition, students may be denied permission to attend certain field trips if they receive two or more Class II, III, IV violations.

For students, please see the following information in regards to discipline related to Code of Conduct infractions by students at Helena Middle School

DETENTION

Detention will be held during lunch Monday through Friday. Attendance is mandatory. Failure to attend will result in an additional day of detention.

IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)

ISS is offered Monday through Friday, 7:40-2:55 pm. Students must report to the ISS room by 7:40 AM.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)

A student that has been Out of School suspended will not be allowed to return to the building or any other Shelby County Schools property until the prescribed time set by an administrator based on the disciplinary infraction. Students who are Out of School suspended are not allowed to participate in any school activities on a day where they have been suspended.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

The most severe cases of discipline can result in a referral to the Shelby County Schools Alternative School, called New Direction, at the discretion of administration. Alternative School is located in Columbiana and could require parents to be responsible for transportation to and from New Direction.

Additional Information

FOOD AND DRINK

Students will not be allowed to eat inside of classrooms or in the hallways, except for documented medical reasons. Energy drinks, sodas, and other non-water drinks are prohibited from being consumed during class or in the hallways.

STUDENT OFFICE PHONE USE

Students may use the office phone for EMERGENCY USE ONLY. Parents may call and leave a message for their child, but students will not be allowed to leave class to return parent phone calls unless there is an emergency.

ITEM DROP OFF FOR STUDENTS

If a parent or guardian is bringing something for a student during school hours, please bring the item to the front office. We will call the student down to retrieve the item so that as little of the instructional day is missed as possible. Students are **NOT** allowed to receive outside food for lunch during the school day.

MEDIA CENTER

Students may visit the media center with a pass from a teacher to check out books, study, and complete research. All books, with the exception of certain reference and reserve books, may be checked out. Lost books cost $20.00 to replace.

CHROMEBOOK USAGE

Helena Middle School students will be issued a Chromebook and charger within the first few weeks of school. This is allowed to be used during the school day and come home with students. Chromebooks should be used for educational purposes only. Students are expected to care for their device and may be subject to a repair fee if the Chromebook is damaged while in the student's possession.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM CHARGED MEAL PROCEDURE

Shelby County Schools realizes that students may forget or lose lunch/breakfast money. To make it easy for parents to view charges, fund accounts, and get notified of low balances, we have partnered with www.myschoolbucks.com. There is no charge for parents to create, monitor, or receive emails regarding low student meal balances. Parents may also utilize the myschoolbucks mobile app on their mobile devices to monitor accounts. Parents will still be notified in writing of negative student balances and will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to clear the debt.

It is unlawful for the Child Nutrition Program to absorb unpaid, charged meals. Parents are responsible for providing funds for student accounts. If parents need financial assistance paying for school meals, a meal benefit application for free/reduced price meals must be completed. It can be found online at Meal Application or Shelby County Meal Benefits, at the local school, or at the Central Office. Applications for meal benefits can be completed at any time during the school year. Please make sure your child's lunch account is up to date. If you have questions regarding your child's lunch account, please call the cafeteria manager at 205-682-5306.

CATEGORICAL GRADING

Grades in all Helena Middle School classes will be assigned in the following format:

Bronze 10%- Minimum 10 assignments

SIlver 30%- Minimum 6 assignments

Gold 60%- Minimum 3 assignments

Online Communication Platforms

- ***PowerSchool***: Both parents and students are provided a login for PowerSchool. This platform allows parents and students to view grades and monitor absences.
- ***Schoology***: Students and parents are able to view class assignments, announcements and homework through this platform.
- ***Thrillshare and Listserv***: Parents are able to receive emergency notifications and daily school announcements by signing up for these services.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Administration

- LaTasha McMillan, Principal - L2mcmillan@shelbyed.org
- Candace Brown, Asst. Principal (6th and 8th Grade) - c4brown@shelbyed.org
- Henry Long, Asst. Principal (7th Grade) - h2long@shelbyed.org

Counselors

- DeAsia McNeal (6th Girls and 7th Grade) - dmcneal@shelbyed.org
- Katelyn Lane (6th Boys and 8th Grade) - klane@shelbyed.org

Office Staff

- Julie Hutcheson, Registrar - j2hutcheson@shelbyed.org
- Bethany Davis, Bookkeeper - b4davis@shelbyed.org
- Rhonda Fikes, Secretary - rfikes@shelbyed.org

WE ARE...

HONEST

UNITED

SELF- DISCIPLINED

KIND

INCLUSIVE

EMPATHETIC

SKILLED