Metter Middle School
Student Handbook
2026-2027

Dr. John Jordan, Superintendent
Will Thigpen, Principal
Miranda Rigdon, Asst. Principal
Patrice Hunter, Counselor

33661 Hwy 129 South, Metter, GA 30439
Phone: (912) 685 – 5050 Fax: (912) 685 – 4970
Website Address: www.metter.org

Accredited with Quality by
The Georgia Accrediting Commission, Inc.
SACS Accreditation

Member of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
Making Schools Work National Project

Mission Statement

The mission of Metter Middle School is to provide an engaging and supportive learning environment that fosters growth through a commitment to accountability, positive relationships, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Candler County Board of Education – (912) 685 – 5713

Director of Curriculum and Federal Programs
Tami Wallace

Assistant Superintendent, Special Education and CTAE Director
Dr. Robbie Dollar

Candler County Board of Education Members

Craig Lanier, Chairman
Brenda Brown
Jason Douglas
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Metter Middle School

33661 Hwy. 129 South, Metter, Georgia 30439
912-685-5050 – Fax 912-685-4970
www.metter.org

To: Parents/Guardians

From: William W. Thigpen
Candler County Board of Education

Date: July 11, 2026

Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

Dear Parents,
In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Candler County School District would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

Whether the student's teacher—

- has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact the school principal, Dr. Will Thigpen at 912-685-5050.

Sincerely,

William W. Thigpen

William W. Thigpen
Principal
Metter Middle School

Candler County School District Strategic Plan

Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and Commitment

Vision:

- Our vision for Candler County Charter School System is for all students to meet or exceed Georgia Accountability measures, for the graduation rate to continuously improve, exceeding 90% and above, and for the system to perform on or above state averages in all subject areas.
- We will accomplish this vision with high expectations inclusive of acceleration opportunities, high impact literacy practices, multiple interventions, student, community and parent engagement and alignment from Pre-K-12.
- As a result of our success, we will attract high performing teachers and new business and industry, and our graduates will be prepared to continue post-secondary options and/or pursue gainful employment through a variety of CTAE (Career, Technology, and Agriculture Education) offerings and a broad based soft skills curriculum.

Mission:

The mission of Metter Middle School is to provide an engaging and supportive learning environment that fosters growth through a commitment to accountability, positive relationships, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Belief/Commitment Statements:

We believe and are committed to…

- Continuously improving the graduation rate;
- An aligned standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment that provides for extended learning opportunities for **all** students;
- Innovative learning opportunities in the areas of Fine Arts, CTAE (Career, Technology, Agriculture Education) offerings and Acceleration with emphasis on a broad based soft skills curriculum to enhance career opportunities for students;
- Effective teaching that energizes and maximizes active learning for **all** students;
- Significantly improving the literacy level of all students;
- Data driven collaborative decision making;
- Professional growth for all of our colleagues;
- Student, parent and community involvement to enhance learning.

Principal's Message

Greetings and welcome to Metter Middle School, home of the Tigers! We are honored that you have entrusted us with the education of your child(ren) and we look forward to working together to make this a great 2026-2027 school year!

Our goal is to continue to make Metter Middle School a place where teachers and parents work together to ensure that students have everything that they need to take their next steps. Most middle school students are still unsure about their plans for the future. It is our job to expose them to a variety of interest-based learning opportunities while also providing them with literacy, mathematics, and soft-skills instruction that will ensure their college and/or career readiness. As we provide students with opportunities to learn more about who they are and what they are interested in, we will also help them to set goals and provide them with support that will help them to achieve their goals.

If I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are here to serve, and together, we will make this a great school year!

Sincerely,

Will Thigpen
Principal, Metter Middle School

DISCLAIMER

This document is presented as a matter of information only and should not be construed as an all-inclusive agreement. The administration reserves the right to change (within reason) details of school level policies in the student handbook without prior notice.

Metter Middle School
Parent and Family Engagement Plan
2026 - 2027

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, each school that receives Title I, Part A funds must develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent and family engagement plan, agreed on by such parents, that contains information required by section 1116 (b) and (c) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The plan establishes the school's expectations for parent and family engagement and describes how the school will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the school's plan submitted to the local educational agency (LEA).

The school agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:
•Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, Part A, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement plan and the joint development of the school wide program plan under Section 1114 (b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
•Update the school parent and family engagement plan periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, distribute it to the parents of participating children, and make the parental engagement plan available to the local community.
•Provide full opportunities, to the extent practicable, for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
•If the school-wide program plan under Section 1114 (b) of the ESSA is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.
• Be governed by the following statutory definition of parental engagement and will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:
Parent and family engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

(A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
(B)Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
(C)Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
(D)The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA.

PART II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SCHOOL WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED SCHOOLWIDE PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN COMPONENTS

1. Metter Middle School will take the following actions to involve parents in an organized, ongoing,

and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including involvement in the decisions regarding how the 1% of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement will be used.
• Annual Title I Meeting
• Local SGT Meetings
• Parent Surveys

2. Metter Middle School will take the following actions to conduct an annual meeting, at a convenient time, and encourage and invite all parents of participating children to attend to inform them about the school's Title I program, the nature of the Title I program, the parents' requirements, the school parent and family engagement plan.
• SGT Meetings
• Parent Conferences
• Parent Involvement Nights
• School Webpage
• Other forms of communication inclusive of social media and flyers

3. Metter Middle School will take the following actions to offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide with Title I funds, transportation, child care or home visits, as such services relate to parental engagement.
• Parent Surveys
• Parent Conferences
• Group Conference with Translator
• Phone Conferences
• Home visits by Social Worker & Teachers
• County Transit Transportation
• Child Care

4. Metter Middle School will take the following actions to provide parents of participating children the following:
• Timely information about the Title I programs.
• Description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
• Opportunities for regular meetings, if requested by parents, to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
- Parent Academic Nights
- School Facebook Page
- School Website

5. Metter Middle School will take the following actions to jointly develop with parents of participating children a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards.
• Local School Governance Team (LSGT)
• Parent Surveys
• Parent Conferences
• Leadership Team

6. Metter Middle School will build the parents' capacity for strong parent and family engagement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following activities specifically described below.

A. Metter Middle School will provide assistance to parents of participating children, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described as follows:
• The State's academic content standards.
• The State's student academic achievement standards.
• The State and local academic assessments
• The requirements of Part A.
• How to monitor their child's progress.
• How to work with educators.
• Parent Academic Nights
• ESOL Parent Nights
• Parent Action Council (PAC) Meetings

B. Metter Middle School will provide materials and training to help parents to work with their child to improve their child's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental engagement through the following:
• Parent Academic Nights
• Parent-School Computer & Resource Center
• Parent Portal
• Parent/Teacher Conferences

C. Metter Middle School will provide training to educate the teachers, pupil services personnel, principal, and other staff in how to reach out to, communicate, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and the school through:
• Professional Development
•District Support via Professional Development

D. Metter Middle School will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with Head Start, Even Start, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children through:
• Birth to 5 literacy nights

E. Metter Middle School will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand:
• System translator
• Bilingual Staff
• Electronic Translation Devices

F. Metter Middle School will provide other reasonable support for parental and family engagement activities under Section 1116 as parents may request by:
• Contacting the principal or designee by phone 912-685-5050 or by email wthigpen@metter.org

PART III. DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN COMPONENTS

Indicate which of the following discretionary school parental engagement plan components the school will implement to improve parent engagement.

✓Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training.
✓Provide necessary literacy training for parents from Title I, Part A funds if the school has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for that training.
✓Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent and family engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.
✓Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.
✓To maximize parent engagement and participation in their child's education, arrange school meetings at a variety of times or conduct in-home conferences with teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children and parents who are unable to attend conferences at school.
✓Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parent engagement;
✓Establish a school-wide Parent Advisory Council to provide advice on all matters related to parent engagement in Title I, Part A programs.
✓Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parental engagement activities.
• Academic Night
• Provide transportation for parent meetings
• Provide childcare
• Phone conferences
• Home Visit Conferences
• Group Conferences w/ Translator
• Before & After School Conferences

Revised July 11, 2026

<u>School Governance Team</u>:
The School governance team includes two parents, two teachers, two community business leaders, the principal and the assistant principal. The Assistant Principal will be responsible for developing an agenda and conducting the meetings.

<u>Purpose of the SGT:</u>
- Improve communication and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of the school.
- Bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation.
- Solve difficult education problems.
- Improve academic achievement.
- Provide support for teachers and administrators.
- Bring parents into the school based decision-making process.
- Assist the local board of education in developing and nurturing participation.

<u>Arrival and Departure</u>
1. School begins at 7:45 a.m.
2. Students are tardy after 7:45 a.m.
3. When a student is tardy he/she must report to the office. We encourage all students to be on time in order to conserve learning time.
4. Students leaving before or arriving after 11:30 a.m. will be counted absent.
5. The parent or guardian must sign out any student being picked up during the school day.
6. All students will be dismissed by 3:10 p.m. For safety purposes, car riders will follow a defined walking path in front of the PreK – 8 Complex.
7. Students who are not in detention, making up work for a teacher, making up absences or participating in a planned after school activity must leave campus immediately after the last dismissal bell. Under no circumstances should students loiter

in and around the school building. No students should be in or around the gym unless supervised by a certified staff member.
****Please Note: Supervision of students begins at 7:20 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.** (Unless assigned)

Attendance Policies
Attendance, Absences and Excuses It is the expectation of the Candler County Board of Education that no child accumulate more than five (5) absences, including those excused and unexcused, during the school year. It is mandatory that students attend school on time and stay throughout the school day. Tardiness and leaving school early are unacceptable. Candler County Schools require students to be in attendance in accordance with requirements of the compulsory school attendance law. Attendance at school is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian and child. Any child subject to compulsory attendance, who during the calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences, is considered truant. School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy. The school is responsible for informing the parent/ guardian of the child's absence and/ or truancy. After a student accumulates five days of unexcused absences and is deemed to be truant, and after required parent and student notification, the school Truancy Officer/ Social Worker may refer the student to CHINS (Children in Need of Services) Hearing. At the CHINS Hearing a Plan of Action will be initiated for the student and parent. If the student and/ or parent does not adhere to the action plan set forth, a referral will be made to appear before the Judge of the Department of Juvenile Justice. It is the policy of the Candler County Board of Education that students must attend school each day school is in session for the entire school day, unless the student is absent due to one or more of the reasons specified in law and State Board of Education Rule 160-5 -1 -.10 as follows: 1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others. 2. A serious illness or death in the student's immediate family necessitating absence from school. 3. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school. 4. The Observance of religious holidays necessitating absence from school. 5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety. 6. Registering to vote in a public election, which shall not exceed one day. 7. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or National Guard, and such parent/ guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five (5) school days per school year. 8. Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly and/ or while representing the school in an activity approved by the school and/ or the Candler County Board of Education. The student must submit to the principal documentation in the form required by the principal within 3 days after returning to school. Documentation will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. If the required documentation is not furnished or the reason for the absence is other than stated above, the absence shall be considered as unexcused. If a student is found guilty of Truancy, The Court may find the parent guilty of violation of the mandatory school attendance law and impose the penalties of that law. Ga. Law 20-2-690.1 states that "Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than $25.00 and not greater than $100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school system notifies the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense."

Perfect Attendance
Students must attend 176 days of school and have no more than **2** tardies and/or **2** unexcused early dismissals to earn perfect attendance. Excused early dismissals must be accompanied by a doctor's note upon the first day of return to school.
***Students having Perfect Attendance or those who have missed no more than 2 days (without recovery policy) will receive a reward for their diligent effort to be in attendance at school. There will be one attendance award for each semester.**

Recovery of Present Status
Any student exceeding the absentee limitation will be assigned **Recovery of Present Status**. This will be a designated time after school in which students will have the opportunity to recover days missed at school. For each class missed, the student will spend an hour with the classroom teacher(s) or designee(s) to recover that class time. Assignments

will be assigned as necessary to recover work that may have been missed. Students must recover days within 2 weeks of being absent. Parents will be responsible for providing transportation for students after school. There will be an after school bus available as well to aid in the transporting of students who are serving **RPS** from school.

Tardy Policy

Excessive tardiness will be dealt with on an individual basis while taking extenuating circumstances into consideration.

Transportation

A. Cars

1. All changes in the transportation of students should be submitted in writing to the office. **Please do not make transportation changes by phone.**
2. Students transported by parent(s) or guardian(s) should be dropped off and picked up at the parent parking area (MMS loading zone.)

B. Buses

SCHOOL BUS RULES and PUPIL REGULATIONS

1. All Students are expected to obey the driver promptly and with a good attitude.
2. Obey and respect the orders of authorized persons.
3. Arrive on time.
4. Wait in an orderly line off the street or road.
5. Ride only the bus assigned by school officials. If you are riding a different bus, **you must have a note to that effect from the parent/guardian. After the MMS office verifies the note, a signed bus change form will be issued to the student.**
6. Cross in front of the bus only when the road is clear and at a safe distance (minimum 10-ft.) in front of the bus in order to be seen by the driver.
7. Do not run toward or try to get on or off a school bus while it is in motion.
8. Pupils must occupy seats assigned to them by the bus driver or school officials and remain seated.
9. Students on the bus are prohibited from acts of physical violence (Code Section 20-2-751.6), bullying (Code Section 20-2-751.4), physical assault or battery or verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior.
10. Do not engage in any activity which might divert the driver's attention, such as: Loud talking, laughing, or confusion.
    - Unnecessary conversation with the driver.
    - Extending body parts outside of the bus.
    - Opening or closing bus windows without permission of the driver, or regulating or operating any part of the bus.
    - Any activity that might cause damage to the bus.
11. The following are prohibited on the bus: using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones; ipods; mp3 players; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus (Code 20-2-751.5); and the student shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus (Code 20-2-751.5).
    - spitting or throwing anything in or from the bus
    - possessing any sharp object
    - tampering with mechanical equipment, accessories, or controls
    - bringing animals or large objects such as, projects, **balloons,** etc., on the bus
12. Pupils must be courteous to the driver, fellow students, and passers-by.
13. Pupils will not leave the bus on the way to school or home without permission of the driver. The driver must have written permission from the parent/guardian or administration.
14. Report promptly to the driver any damage done to the bus. Persons causing damage may be expected to pay the full cost.

BUS VIOLATIONS

When necessary, the principal, assistant principal, or the Director of Transportation may suspend or revoke riding privileges. Any student not following bus rules will have a written referral turned in and any one or a combination of the following bus discipline rules/options may be applied at the discretion of the principal or assistant principal.

Bus Discipline Rules/Options may include:

- Warning
- Suspension from bus 3 days
- Suspension from bus 5 days
- Suspension from bus 10 days
- Suspension from bus remainder of school year
- Recommendation for Tribunal

The foregoing steps are not mandatory and in extreme cases, or to protect life and property, any one of the steps may be skipped and riding privileges may be revoked. **Bus discipline that involves weapon(s), drugs/alcohol, and fighting will be referred to law enforcement for further action.** Suspension from one bus includes suspension from all county buses.

Grading Scale
A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
F = 69 and below

Honor Roll
Principal's Honor Roll: Student earns all A's (a 90 or above) in all classes.
MMS Honor Roll: Student earns A's and B's in all classes

Grading Systems
Candler County Board Policy
The Candler County School Board believes that all students should have the opportunity to learn at their highest possible level. Learning will occur because of focused work with the Student Learning Cycle (SLC) in the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and subject alike planning. Attention to question #4 on the SLC will ensure mastery through sound Differentiated Instruction (DI). It is imperative that students be assessed via a variety of assessment types inclusive of balanced standard assessments and that work relating to content standards is completed by students.

The practices stated below are to be adhered to when determining mastery of standards.

1. Standards Based Grading will be the driving force in determining grades.
2. While CCSD places a tremendous amount of emphasis on soft skills development, effort, participation, attitude and other behaviors shall not be included in grade determination but can be reported separately (school level decision).
3. The desire is for all student work to be performed at a high level of mastery within a timely manner. Teachers will use their professional judgment to determine the best steps to get students to mastery. The teacher's decision regarding re-tests and make-up work should err on the side of the best interest of the child to potentially reach mastery. In order to ensure re-teaching occurs, **pre-planned differentiated instruction activities will be a vital part of each unit**. Re-teaching opportunities shall be a tool available to all teachers in seeking student mastery. Re-testing, if deemed valuable by the teacher, is also a tool that can be used to reach mastery. Teachers will regularly analyze formative/summative data with subject alike teachers to best plan for DI.
4. Absent students (excused or unexcused) shall be given opportunities for all missed assignments within the school's makeup policy.
5. In determining grades, teachers must decide whether they have sufficient evidence of achievement. Grades shall be weighted carefully to ensure the intended importance is given to each content standard and to each assessment. The weights shall be defined at the school level.
6. Teacher (s) shall consistently maintain accurate evidence of standard mastery by the student. Records will reflect the standard (s) being assessed. Report cards will be issued to parents and students each 9 weeks grading period.
7. CCSD realizes that a flexible policy could inadvertently lead to equity for all students possibly being questioned. However, the district feels that teacher autonomy in terms of helping each individual student reach mastery is the best option for accomplishing our goals. Any issues of alleged inequality will be handled with the utmost attention.

***Cheating** - to break the rules of an examination or assignment; to claim another's work as your own; (**Consequence:** Students will receive a zero (0) on the assignment plus 1 day of ISS.
-Each subsequent offense will result in 2 days of ISS or other consequences as deemed necessary by the administration.)

Promotion and Retention Policy

- In addition to the promotion/retention criteria that follow, part V of the policy outlines the procedures for automatic review (View document at www.metter.org).

Grade 6 to Grade 7 Promotion Criteria
The student must:
1. earn a final report card grade of 70 or better in three of four core academic classes;
AND
2. achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Reading MILESTONES
AND
3. achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Math MILESTONES
AND
4. achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Language Arts MILESTONES

Consequences for Not Achieving Promotion Criteria

The student shall:

1. be retained in Grade Six for the following school year
   OR
2. attend, with no more than two absences, the Candler County Schools summer school program (if available) and earn a grade of 70 or better in the subject(s) taken and meet/exceed target on MILESTONES equivalency assessment
   AND
   be promoted to Grade Seven and provided appropriate Tier II and Tier III interventions.
   OR
3. attend the Candler County School Summer School Program, missing no more than three days, and earn a failing grade in the subject(s) taken or not meet/target on MILESTONES equivalency
   AND
   be retained in Grade Six and be monitored by the Student Support Team.

Grade 7 to Grade 8 Promotion Criteria

The student must:
1) earn a final report card grade of 70 or better in three of four core academic classes;
AND
2) achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Reading MILESTONES
AND
3) achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Math MILESTONES.
AND
4) achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Language Arts MILESTONES

Consequences for Not Achieving Promotion Criteria
The student shall:
1. be retained in Grade Seven for the following school year
   OR
2. attend, with no more than two absences, the Candler County Schools summer school program (if available) and earn a grade of 70 or better in the subject(s) taken
   AND
   be promoted to Grade Eight and be provided appropriate Tier II and Tier III interventions.
   OR
3. attend, with no more than two absences, the Candler County School Summer School Program and earn a failing grade in the subject(s) taken or MILESTONES equivalency assessment
   AND
   be retained in Grade Seven and be monitored by the Student Support Team.

Grade Eight to Grade Nine Promotion Criteria
The student must:
1. earn a final report card grade of 70 or better in three of four core academic classes;
   AND
2. achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Reading MILESTONES
   AND
3. achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Math MILESTONES.
AND
4. achieve Level 2 or Level 3 Performance Level (meet or exceed the state performance standard) on the Language Arts MILESTONES

Consequences for Not Achieving Promotion Criteria

The student shall
1. be retained in Grade Eight for the following school year
OR
2. attend the Candler County Schools summer school program (if available), missing no more than two days, and earn a grade of 70 or better in the subject(s) taken
AND
3. Achieve proficiency on the MILESTONES retest in the subject area(s) or test area(s) that did not meet promotion standards. (The test(s) shall be administered on the date determined by the State with testing information sent in writing to the parents prior to administration.)
AND
4. be promoted to Grade Nine and be provided with appropriate Tier II and Tier III interventions.
OR
5. attend the Candler County Schools summer school program, missing no more than two days,
AND
6. Not achieve proficiency on the MILESTONES retest in the subject area(s) or test area(s) that did not meet promotion standards.
AND
7. be retained in Grade Eight and be monitored by the Student Support Team.

**Final decision for promotion or retention will be determined by the Placement committee as outlined in the county's promotion policy.*

****Grade Eight Inclusion of the GMAS and Finals**

• The GMAS will count 10% of the YEARLY grade for ALL content areas.
• The conversion chart will not include any scores below 60.
Content Finals
• All students will be offered a final in content classes.
• Finals will be mandatory for those students not meeting the criteria for exemption.
• Science and ELA will be on a designated day.
• Math and Social Studies will be on a designated day.

Final Exemptions
• Student must be passing the class with a 70 or above and the student has missed 4 days or less for the current school year for that content class,
OR
• If a score of Level 4 is achieved on GMAS for that specific content area and the student is passing the class with a grade of 70 or above.

Attendance Incentive

Consistent with our "MMS Winning 50" we encourage students to "Show UP" prepared each day with a great attitude. In order to encourage student attendance MMS will utilize a variety of incentives including "Best Day Ever" and rewards for attendance tied to House Cup and House Field Trips.
• Only excused absences can be recovered
• Absence recovery must be served at least 2 weeks prior to the last day of school
• Classroom teachers will be responsible for keeping attendance for each class period

Parent/Guardian & Visitors Procedures:
1. Parent/guardians and all visitors are required to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass from the office before going to a classroom. (House Bill 161 regarding loitering at or disrupting school)
2. Parents must notify the school of any changes in student information; such as, address, phone number, emergency contact, etc.
3. Parents who are withdrawing a child from school must notify the school as soon as possible before the withdrawal date. All school books must be returned and all money owed must be paid before records can be transferred. Withdrawals cannot be completed on the day of the request.
4. Parents are asked **not** to make phone calls to students during school hours. Teachers may be reached after school has been dismissed.
5. Mark Belongings - each child's belongings, including school supplies, coats, gloves, etc., should be plainly marked to avoid loss or exchange.
6. A fee will be charged to students who lose or damage books, agendas, or other educational materials.
7. Parents/guardians are responsible for seeing that student wears appropriate clothing to school. The school dress code will be enforced.

General Information
1. School Nurse
MMS **does** have a nurse. All prescription medicine must be in the original container with appropriate information including: name of drug, name of patient, name of doctor, all administration instructions, pharmacy name and prescription, date prescription was filled.
(Note: Teachers cannot administer nonprescription or prescription medication sent by parents for example, cough drops and Tylenol. Students that require medication must take their medicine to the nurse. Students are not allowed to have prescriptions or other medicines on their person.)
2. School Counseling and Student Services
MMS has full-time counseling. Teachers, parents, and students may make referrals to the counselor. The counselor educates students about study skills, communication, coping skills, decision-making, managing anger, etc. The counselor visits classrooms and works with small groups. Parents may contact the counselor by calling the school office at 685-5580. Communication between the counselor and parent/guardian is encouraged.
3. Student Council
The students of MMS have opportunities to influence school decisions and events through an active student council. Selected sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will represent their homerooms.
4. Required Documents
Georgia law requires:
*Social Security Number (voluntary)
*Certified Birth Certificate
*Up-to-date Ga. Immunization record
*HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS
It is the Georgia State law that a student cannot attend school without the proper immunization. Those students transferring from another Georgia school will be given 30 days to bring the proper certificate of immunization or they cannot continue in school. If a student is transferring from another state or out of the country they have 90 days to produce the certificate of immunization.
1. Any student attending a Candler County school must prove that they have been immunized against childhood diseases (polio, mumps, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, rubella, and tetanus). All 6th graders must have proof of their 2nd measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), Chicken Pox (Varicella) vaccine or the disease. Any student

entering the system for the first time must start a Hepatitis series of three shots.
2. Any student entering a Georgia school for the first time must have a dental, hearing, and vision certificate. *The Immunization certificate and the dental, hearing, vision certificate may be obtained at the Candler County Health Department or from a private physician. Out of state certificate records must be converted to a Georgia certificate.*

5. Head Lice Policy

*MMS has a no-nit policy.
*Monthly class checks are conducted. (When deemed necessary)
*Students entering for the first time will be checked.
*Parent/guardian will be notified to pick the child up if he/she is infested.
*After treatment, the parent/guardian must have the student cleared by the health department or school nurse. The infected student may not ride the bus until given a "clear" rating.

Bed Bug Policy
*If a bed bug is found present on a student or in a student's belongings, the student must have clearance to return to school.
*To be cleared to return, the student's home must be inspected by a licensed exterminator. A letter from the exterminator will need to be presented to the school nurse or counselor. If bed bugs are found, notification of treatment of the home is also needed.
*If a student moves to a different location before clearance, a clearance letter from the exterminator will need to be presented for the new location.

6. **Breakfast and Lunch Program**

ALL STUDENTS IN THE CANDLER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL RECEIVE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH AT NO COST.

All lunches brought from home should be packed in appropriate containers for proper food safety. The choice of drink should be **fruit juice or water.** Food deliveries for students of any kinds are prohibited. This includes take out services such as DoorDash as well as personal deliveries from family members, etc.

Students must observe the following rules:
All food is to be eaten and all drinks are to be consumed inside the lunchroom. No food is to be taken outside--this includes fruit, ice cream, etc.
PLEASE OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES:

- Enter the lunchroom quietly.
- Observe appropriate table manners and speak at a low volume.
- Place all paper products, trays, trash, and utensils in the appropriate places.

***REMEMBER YOU ARE IN A DINING AREA. NO FOOD OR PAPER PRODUCTS SHOULD BE LEFT ON THE TABLE OR FLOOR.**

7. School Insurance

Insurance packets are sent home with students at the beginning of each year and are available upon request throughout the year.

8. Field Trips

When an out-of-county field trip is scheduled, information will be sent home. Parents must sign the permission section and return it to the classroom teacher for the student to be allowed to participate.

9. Safety Drills

Each classroom has an evacuation plan posted near exit doors.
Regularly scheduled fire/tornado/evacuation drills are conducted throughout the school year as required by the state of Georgia.

10. School-wide Rules and Discipline Policies

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS:
1. Be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing, with the right materials.
2. Do everything you can to help yourself learn and to help your teachers to teach.
3. THE RULE IS RESPECT - RESPECT IS THE RULE! Respect all staff members and students.
4. Cooperate with all teachers and school personnel.
5. Accept responsibility for your own behavior, including the consequences that follow irresponsible choices.

DISCIPLINE REFERRALS:

Refer to Metter Middle School Code of Conduct.

11. EXPELLED FROM OTHER SCHOOL SYSTEM

A student who has been suspended or expelled from another school system and is attempting to enroll at MMS shall inform school officials of any suspension or expulsion. Consequences from the previous school will be honored by MMS. Before a student is enrolled: 1) The term of his/her suspension from the former school must be fully served, and 2) If the student has been expelled from the former school, he/she will not be permitted to enroll into MMS until that time stated has been completed for the expulsion.

YDC or Out-of-System Alternative Schools

Students from YDC or out-of-system alternative school must attend Candler County Alternative School for at least one semester. Pertinent to Code **Section 20-2-154.1 and Ga. Comp. R. & Regs.R.160-4-8-.12 MMS** does have an alternative education program for students beginning in grade six.

12. TOBACCO, VAPING & ALCOHOL FREE ENVIRONMENT

TOBACCO & VAPING POLICY--Students are not allowed to bring cigarette lighters to school or allowed to use or possess any tobacco or vaping products, i.e., cigarettes, cigars**, e-cigarettes, vaporizers,** dip, snuff, etc. on school campus or school functions. Students are not allowed to display items that promote tobacco or vaping products (shirts, bags, etc.)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY--No drugs or alcohol will be allowed on the school campus or school functions. Parents will be notified and the student will be suspended. Students cannot have items that promote drugs or alcohol products (shirts, bags, jewelry, etc.)

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES & STIMULANT DRUGS

A student shall not knowingly possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, THC products, CBD products, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind on school grounds. The same shall not be on the school grounds at any time when the school is being used by school groups; off school grounds at a school activity; or en route to or from school or a school activity.

ADDITION TO DRUG OFFENSE POLICY

It is the opinion of the Candler County Board of Education and of the administration and faculty of the Candler County School System, that the presence of a student who has engaged in the possession, sale, transmittal, or distribution of unlawful drugs or controlled substance as defined under Georgia law or criminal laws of the State of Georgia, has a direct and immediate detrimental effect upon the operation of the school which he/she attends. Therefore, a student who has engaged in the possession, sale, transmittal, or distribution of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any controlled substance under Georgia law or who has been convicted under the criminal laws of the State of Georgia of such behavior may be suspended for 10 days and may be recommended for expulsion from the school which he/she attends and from the Candler County School System, whether or not the activity in which the student has engaged or for which the student has been convicted occurred on the school campus, during hours, during the school term, or at a school activity.

DRUG ABUSE--State law requires that all teachers, other educators, etc., suspicious of anyone abusing drugs must make a report to the proper authorities.

13. SEARCHES OF STUDENTS

Student authorities, in the interest of maintaining order and discipline in the school and in protecting the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, reserve the right to search the student's person and/or personal effects (purse, bookbag, gym bag, clothing, possession(s), etc.), whenever a school official has a **reasonable suspicion** to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or dangerous articles, items or material or if the officer has a reasonable suspicion to believe the student is in possession of these items which are not authorized by school policies. A student who refuses a reasonable request by an official to submit to a personal search or to a search of his/her personal property shall be subject to suspension from school for up to ten (10) days, and the principal shall recommend his/her expulsion from Metter Middle School.

14. BICYCLES

Students may ride bicycles to school. The student takes sole responsibility for the security of his/her bicycle while on campus.

The school cannot be responsible for lost/stolen bicycles. Locks and other precautionary measures are the responsibility of the parent and child.

15. TELEPHONE

Office telephones are for school business and can only be used in case of an emergency or extreme circumstances. Students are **not** to use the telephone during or between classes. If the student is sick, the nurse will call for the student. Parents should give their child instructions the night before or in the morning before they leave for school where they can be reached. Students can be reached only for an emergency.

16. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Each student must take physical education and dress out each day unless the school receives a written letter from a medical doctor exempting the student from participation. The letter should contain dates of exemption. Students that do not dress out are subject to disciplinary action(s).

17. MEDIA CENTER

The Media program is designed to meet the needs of each member of the Metter Middle School family. It is necessary that students observe the formulated rules in order to assure maximum effective usage:

1. Students who come to the media center must come for a specific purpose that involves use of media material or media center.
2. Upon entering the media center, a student must present a pass from his/her teacher to the media person.
3. Students are expected to exhibit courtesy at all times.
4. Each student is responsible for all materials he/she checks out. If lost or damaged, the full replacement cost is due.

5. Students who keep materials out past the due date must pay a fine at the rate of five cents per day, per book.
6. If a student loses or damages a book, it must be paid for before the student may resume the privilege of checking out other materials.
7. All regular materials may be checked out for a period of one week. Special materials such as encyclopedia(s) may be checked out on an overnight basis. Overnight materials must be checked out after 3:00 p.m. and returned the next morning during homeroom period.
8. A student may lose his/her media privileges if he/she fails to abide by the rules.
9. Materials should be returned through the book drop in front of the charging desk.
10. When checking out book(s), a student must be able to present his/her patron number.
The media staff reserves the right to send students who misbehave back to their places of origination.

18. ELECTRONIC DEVICES & PERSONAL PROPERTY

Cellphones and other electronic devices are permitted at school, but must be powered off and put away (out of sight) during the school day.

THE SCHOOL WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN PERSONAL PROPERTY.

Students are prohibited from bringing any item to school to sell. Students are also prohibited from selling any items in the school unless it is a school-sponsored activity. Articles sold or traded without authorization will be confiscated. Students involved in selling or buying will be subject to disciplinary action.

19. BOOKBAGS

Book bags---If book bags, backpacks, or gym bags are brought on campus, the student is responsible for it during the school day. **Book bags made of clear or open mesh material are strongly encouraged for all students.**

20. BLANKETS

Students are not permitted to bring blankets, Snuggies, or any such items to school. These items may be taken up and returned at the end of the school day. Repeated offenses may result in progressive discipline inclusive of parent contacts, detention, or ISS.

21. VANDALISM AND PROPERTY DAMAGE

The school buildings and equipment cost the taxpayers to construct, purchase, and maintain. Students who destroy or vandalize school property will be required to pay for loss and damages. If students willfully destroy school property suspensions and subsequent expulsion may be necessary. If a student should happen to damage something by accident it should be reported to a teacher or the office immediately.

22 a. CLUBS

Eligible MMS students may participate in the following clubs and organizations:

Student Council	Y-Club	BETA Club
4-H Club	Math Club	FBLA
MOD Squad	Girls with Confidence	

If a student has been suspended (ISS or OSS) from school for their conduct, he/she will not be allowed to run or hold office in any school organization. Clubs not sponsored by the school are strictly prohibited. Persons may not distribute or post any announcements, letters, cards, or symbols that represent any organization that has not been authorized and approved by the principal or designee.

22 b. Explanation of Extracurricular School-Sponsored Clubs & Activities

STUDENT COUNCIL

The mission of Student Council is to involve Metter Middle School students in leadership positions that will enable them to act as peer and faculty consultants. Students give suggestions for school improvement and participate in activities that benefit both the student population and the school staff. In addition, the Student Council sponsors fundraisers that directly benefit the student body and overall school needs. Two students are chosen from each homeroom at the beginning of the school year based on the following criteria:
1) The homeroom teacher selects one student that he/she thinks is reliable to represent the class.
2) The students in each homeroom class choose one student that they believe will represent each class responsibly. There are no fees required to participate, however students may be asked to help with fundraiser activities. The sponsor for Student Council is Mrs. Rosa Deloach

Y CLUB

The "Y" Club is a school-sanctioned organization under the direction of the State YMCA of Georgia adhering to the "Y" Club purpose – "To create, maintain and extend, throughout the home, school and community, high standards of Christian character." Membership is open to grades 6-12 for a yearly fee of $30, which includes $10 for State YMCA membership, a tee shirt, and the remainder for the club treasury to begin club activities. Membership makes one eligible to attend conferences, to take part in school and community

projects, and assures the Club of the support and leadership resources of the State YMCA.

4-H CLUBS
Candler County 4-H Clubs
Advisor: Susannah Lanier, Candler 4-H Program
(912) 685-2408

The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society.

Affiliation: As a youth development program of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension System, 4-H is part of the nationwide Extension network.

Activities: 4-H meetings are held with all 4th to 7th grade groups each month. Eighth graders (and high school students) may choose to join 4-H and meet monthly. All members participate in "hands on" learning experiences, focused on agriculture and environmental awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship.
Club officers receive leadership training. 4-H members may also participate in out-of-school project work, service learning and camps.
Membership requirements: All students, age 9-19, are eligible to be 4-H members. 4-H members must complete a 4-H Enrollment Card. No dues are required although there may be fees for some out-of- school activities, conferences, and camps.

MMS BETA CLUB
The purpose of the National Beta Club shall be to promote the ideals of character, service and leadership among elementary and secondary school students, to reward meritorious achievement and to encourage and assist students in continuing their education after high school. There is a one-time membership fee of $13.00 to join the junior National Beta Club along with a yearly $10.00 local fee.

23. Athletic Eligibility
(1) Every nine weeks midterm grades will be checked for academic probation for all students who are failing two or more subjects. (2) A student is place on academic probation and cannot participate with the team if he/she is failing two or more subjects at the end of the nine-week grading period. (3). Eligibility may be reinstated following the 41/2 week mark of the following nine weeks if the student is no longer failing two or more subjects.

22. ISS/OSS
The In-School Suspension (ISS) program is an alternative to out-of-school suspension (OSS). Students will be assigned to ISS for certain infractions. ISS provides students with an opportunity to receive credit for their academic work while being disciplined.
When an administrator assigns a student to ISS, he/she will spend the assigned time in a designated area under a strict set of rules. If the student does not complete his/her assigned time in ISS due to early dismissal or illness, the time missed will be completed on the next day the student attends school.
Students will not have a chance to socialize with other students and will not be allowed to participate in school functions during the day or in extra-curricular activities while assigned to ISS.
Students must adhere to the dress code while in ISS. The principal or assistant principal will determine students assigned to ISS.

The following rule will apply and be strictly enforced:
IF A STUDENT IS SUSPENDED IN ISS OR OSS, HE/SHE WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE PROHIBITED FROM COMING ON THE SCHOOL CAMPUS FOR ANY ACTIVITY AFTER 4:00 p.m. FROM THE DATE OF REFERRAL THROUGH THE END OF PUNISHMENT DAY, UNLESS APPROVED BY THE PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL.
EX: band activities, dances, athletic practice, playing in a game, being a spectator, etc.

Objectives of the In School Suspension Program:
1. Provide an alternative for dealing with students guilty of misconduct other than removal from the academic setting.
2. Reduce the number of suspensions by providing assistance to students to positively modify behavior that usually leads to suspension.
3. Reduce the number of school behavior problems that ultimately result in juvenile offenses.

24. COMMITTING PROHIBITED ACTS
Any teacher, administrator, or other person employed at a public or private elementary, middle, or secondary school who has reasonable cause to believe that a student at the school has committed criminal act(s) on school property or at a school function has a duty to make an immediate oral and written report of that act and the name of the student who committed the act to the school Principal and/or his/her designee. The Principal or

designee will then file subsequent reports with proper authorities. Criminal offenses which must be reported under Georgia law include but are not limited to aggravated battery, carrying deadly weapons at school or at other public gatherings, possession/use and/or sale of marijuana or other illegal substance(s), drugs, and sexual offenses. Commitment of these acts could result in ISS, OSS, or expulsion from the Candler School System.

25. OFF CAMPUS CONDUCT BY STUDENTS

Any student who has engaged in violent behavior involving injury or threat of injury to another person, who has engaged in or committed a criminal act which could include but not limited to, a felony or an offense which would be considered to be a felony if the student were an adult, or an assault upon another student, or a violation of the drug laws, or sexual misconduct of a serious nature, whether or not the student's action(s) were on the school campus, at a school activity, or off campus, the student shall be recommended for long-term or permanent expulsion if the student's presence on the school campus will or is reasonably certain to endanger the welfare and/or safety of other students or staff, or if the student's presence will or is reasonably certain to cause disruption at school, or if the student's presence will or is reasonably certain to be immediately detrimental to the ongoing program of the school.

26. Extra-Curricular and Sporting Events

Students that have been placed in In-School or Out-of-School Suspension may not participate or attend any after school activities until the last day of detention has been served. Students will remain in the appropriate areas designated for either participating or viewing such activities. Unacceptable behavior and language will not be tolerated. No warning will be offered. Students must leave the premises and are subject to school disciplinary actions. Students may not loiter at the end zone, gate, or parking lot areas at football games. This includes both middle and high school activities.

27. Fights, Threats, Intimidation, Assault or Battery of School Employee, Students or Other Person on a School Campus or at School Activity

A student shall not fight, threaten, verbally or physically, by act or demeanor, or by any means (including, but not limited to, notes, internet, any computer, telephone, public, governmental, or private means of communication) to physically harm the person or property of a school employee or of any other person on school grounds at anytime, off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event, in a vehicle or otherwise in route to or from school or to or from a school activity, or at anytime or under any circumstance when the assault or threat might reasonably be considered school-related. The specific punishment for the violation of this rule depends upon the circumstances surrounding the alleged offense and can, at the discretion of the Principal, result in a short term suspension from school or a recommendation of long-term or permanent expulsion from the Middle School and from the Candler County School System. ***Horseplaying (p. 26)*** is prohibited among students as it could initiate physical aggression between the students or result in physical harm to one of the participants. ***Students engaging in horseplay will receive a documented verbal warning for the first offense and one day of ISS for ensuing incidences of this behavior.***

Fighting Consequences–
1st offense – ISS or up to 3 days of OSS;
2nd offense – ISS or up to 5 days of OSS;
(possible alternative school referral ;)
3rd offense – 5 days of OSS and referral to tribunal for alternative placement;

28. BULLYING

Bullying - Bullying, including cyberbullying, is strictly prohibited. Bullying is defined consistent with Georgia law and includes any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, any intentional display of force that causes fear of immediate bodily harm, or any intentional written, verbal, physical, or electronic act that a reasonable person would perceive as intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate and that causes harm, substantially interferes with a student's education or rights, creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school."

Metter Middle School believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the district have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or

humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation. The school district policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any student who engages in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to acts that occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, at school-related functions or activities, including extracurricular activities, and through the use of data, software, or electronic technology accessed through Candler County Schools technology resources

I. **Prohibited Behaviors**

Bullying, harassment and intimidation may include many different behaviors which ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student or school employee. Prohibited behaviors must occur on the property of the public school, at an event within the jurisdiction of a public school or at a school-sponsored event. Disciplinary action may also be necessary if off-campus behavior results in a disruption to the school environment. Examples of prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Unwanted teasing
- ❖ Threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures
- ❖ Physical violence and/or attacks
- ❖ Extortion
- ❖ Destruction of school or personal property
- ❖ Theft of money and/or personal possessions
- ❖ Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- ❖ Public humiliation
- ❖ Social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- ❖ Rumors or spreading of falsehoods
- ❖ Stalking
- ❖ Cyberstalking or engaging in conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to the victim
- ❖ Cyberbullying means bullying that involves the use of electronic communication, including communication devices and services such as cellular telephones, computers, computer platforms, social media platforms, text messages, chat platforms, and internet sites. Cyberbullying using school equipment, school networks, district accounts, or school-sponsored online activities is strictly prohibited."
- ❖ The use of cameras or camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students or school employees and posting them online
- ❖ Sending abusive or threatening text messages or instant messages
- ❖ Using websites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students

Candler County Schools may use technology resources, including filtering and monitoring tools, to help prevent, identify, and respond to possible cyberbullying involving school equipment, district networks, or school-issued accounts.

Bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus
- Reassignment of classes
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Detention
- Expulsion (through appropriate due process hearing)
- Assignment to an alternative school (through appropriate due process hearing)

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs

of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.

Reports of bullying or cyberbullying may be made anonymously or by name to a teacher, counselor, administrator, or other staff member. Anonymous reports will be reviewed and investigated to the extent possible." s Georgia Department of Education's Say Stop hotline can also be used by calling **877-SAY-STOP (877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline.**
*Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (Cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school shall keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal designee.

The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

1. **Investigate**
   Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School police, school counselors, school social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

2. **Notify**
   When a student is found to have committed an act of bullying or cyberbullying, or when a student is identified as a target or suspected victim, the principal or designee shall notify the parent or guardian by telephone, written notice, or electronic communication, as appropriate."

3. **Discipline**
   Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

   Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals.

   Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

4. **Follow Up**
   Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. Implement a planned method to provide after-care and follow up. Reiterate to all the previously stated prohibition on retaliation.

The MMS Student Handbook shall be interpreted and applied in alignment with Candler County Board Policy JCDAG: Bullying and Cyberbullying

29. GANGS AND GANG RELATED ACTIVITIES

Metter Middle School has a responsibility to maintain a school environment free of violence, intimidation, or other behaviors which threaten the safety and well being of students and staff. Anti-social and/or criminal activities of gangs or gang-like groups threaten the school environment and interfere with the educational process. Anti-social and/or gang activities will not be tolerated and Metter Middle School hereby bars all gangs, gang affiliations and gang related activities from school buildings, school buses, school related activities and school property at all times.

A "gang" is defined as any identifiable group or club which exists without the sponsorship or authorization of the school and which engages in anti-social or criminal behavior or activity which is disruptive of the school environment.

Activities of gangs/associations/organizations including recruitment, initiations, hazing, intimidation, retaliation and/or related activities which could potentially cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace and result in physical or mental harm to students are prohibited as are all forms of criminal activity. The use of language, hand signals, graffiti, tattoos, haircuts, or the presence of any wearing apparel, footwear, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, symbol or any other attribute indicates

or implies membership or affiliation with such a group is hereby prohibited.

****Students violating this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and/or recommendation for Tribunal.**

30. DRESS AND GROOMING

Students in the Candler County School System are expected to dress and groom themselves in such a way as to reflect neatness, cleanliness and good taste. All students shall be modestly dressed and groomed so as not to attract unreasonable attention or interference with the educational program, the orderly operation of the school and for safety of the entire school body.

Our policy on dress and appearance has been adopted with the main interest of creating a positive learning atmosphere and wholesome attitude for each individual and the school as a whole. School is a place of business. Students need to dress for the "business" of school. Responsibility rests primarily with the parents. They should see to it that their children are properly dressed for attendance at school. If in doubt, be conservative.

Extremes in dress and grooming are not appropriate and include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Clothing** is to be appropriately fastened and worn in good taste. Lack of cleanliness in person or dress is inappropriate. "See through" clothing or visible undergarments and skintight clothing (spandex or lycra) are not allowed. **Clothing should not have holes that expose the student's skin above the knee.** Wearing skin tight clothing (spandex or lycra) is prohibited.
- **Length:** The hem of all dresses, skirts, and shorts **(boys and girls)** must be worn to the top of the knee when the student is standing in an erect position. All shirts must cover the midriffs at all times. Pants must be worn at the waist (belted, underwear and bottom are not showing and must be able to see belt loops)
- **Shirts-** Shirts can be worn outside the garment. However, if the shirttail hangs below the pocket, it must be tucked into the garment. All shirts must be long enough to touch the top of the pants/skirt when the hands are raised over the head. No halter-tops, bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, cutoff tops, fishnet tops, muscle shirts, tank tops, low cut, tight, see-through tops or strapless tops. Straps must be at least 2 inches wide.
- **Sagging**-Students should appropriately fasten their pants and use belts to keep them above the hip. Sagging is not allowed.
- **Foundations:** Proper and acceptable undergarments must be worn at all times.
- **Shoes**: Shoes with adequate protection must be worn at all times. Flip flops may be worn with exception of locations/activities whereby protective covering is required. Examples: (Science Lab Activities, Physical Education Courses, Agriculture Labs, JROTC etc..)
- **Accessory prohibitions:** Sunglasses, facial/oral piercing (nose, tongue, cheek, lip, eyebrow etc.), hats, bandanas, doo-rags, sweatbands, combs, picks, sunglasses or any object that could be worn on the head or in the hair. Long chains connected to wallets or keys are prohibited as well. **Any and all accessories are prohibited as directed by the Principal or designee.**
- **Suggestive and inappropriate messaging**: No clothing or jewelry relating to drugs or drug usage, suggestive language, violence or clothing which promotes racism, hate groups, violence or is gang related may be worn
- **Hair Designs**: Hair designs, colors or styles which draw **unnecessary attention from students so that the education process or school function is interrupted**
- **Pajama:** Pajamas, pajama pants are prohibited from being worn.

Discipline Options Include the Following:

-1st offense: Parental contact, correction of dress violation and warning.

-2nd offense: Parental contact, correction of dress violation, Detention

-3rd offense: Parental contact, correction of dress violation, 2 days of ISS.

-4th offense: Parental contact, correction of dress violation, 2 days of OSS

-5th offense and subsequent offense are considered to be insubordinate behavior and will follow the consequences inclusive of but not limited to ISS, OSS, or referral to Tribunal: (Alternative School, Expulsion)

***Disclaimer: The final judgment of appropriate dress will be left to the discretion of the administration.**

31. Cell Phones and Personal Communication Devices

Metter Middle School now has "one-to-one" technology which means that all students have access to a device during the day for instructional purposes. While cellphones and other electronic devices will still be permitted at school, such items must be powered off and put away at all times. This means that cell phones should not be visible during the school day. Devices that are powered on, in use, or not put away (out of sight) may be taken up by school staff. This includes smart devices used for personal communication (Apple Watch or other smartwatch, etc.). Students must comply with adult

directions regarding cell phones and electronic devices at all times.

Consequences for violating cell phone policy:
1st offense- Phone taken up- Returned to student that afternoon.
2nd offense – Phone taken up– Parent retrieves that afternoon.
3rd and ensuing infractions – Phone taken up for 1 week and must be retrieved by Parent.
***If the student or the Parent refuses to adhere to the above mentioned consequences, it will be viewed as insubordination and the student may receive OSS.**

Appropriate usage time shall be limited to before/after school. Students will not be allowed to make calls from their cell phones or use personal technology to communicate during the school day. If a call is to be made, the student is to obtain permission from the teacher and call from the telephone in the front office.

The Candler County School District does not condone or accept the inappropriate usage of phones in any way. Phones found to be used in such a way are subject to appropriate punishments as established by discipline policy.

Refusal to give cell phone to School Board employee will be viewed as insubordination and result in appropriate consequences at administrations discretion.

****Please be advised that the Candler County School District is not responsible for and will not be held liable for the theft, damage, or loss of cell phones or accessories at any time.**

32. Textbooks

Textbooks will be issued to the student free of charge the first time. Charges for damages to the book will include but are not limited to the following:

- Damage inside (water, marks, torn pages) $15.00
- Broken spine of book **full replacement cost**
- Extensive/severe damage **full replacement cost**

33. Nonresident Students

Students who reside outside the Candler County School District may enroll in Metter Middle School after approval by District administrators. Enrollment of out-of-District students is a privilege and not a right. Once enrolled, students must abide by all Metter Middle School and Candler County Schools' policies and procedures. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal from Metter Middle School at the discretion of the school administration with the expectation that students enroll in the school district where they reside.

34. Learning from Home

Metter Middle School will continue to offer an online learning model for students. Because of our commitment to student learning, Learning from Home will not be made available to all students. Students must demonstrate the study habits, self-regulation, and technology proficiency necessary to be successful in the online learning environment in order to participate in the Learning from Home program. **Students who were unsuccessful in the Learning from Home program during the previous school year will not be allowed to participate**. Parents who are interested in signing students up for Learning from Home must complete an application. All applications will be reviewed by a team consisting of the principal, Learning from Home teacher, and guidance counselor. Written approval is required prior to the start of the Learning from Home program. Additional approval by the district Special Education director will also be required for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 Plans.

35. Social Media

Metter Middle School will follow the approved CCSD Social Media Policy inclusive of the following items pertaining to students:

Student Guidelines

1. Respectful Behavior:
- Follow the district's code of conduct when posting on social media.
- Bullying, harassment, threats, or inappropriate content are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

2. Cyberbullying and Reporting:
- Any instance of cyberbullying should be reported to a teacher, administrator, or school counselor.

VI. Consequences for Violations

Violation of this policy may result in:
- Revocation of social media privileges (for students).
- Disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion (for students)
- Legal consequences, if applicable.

Georgia Laws:

1. Corporal Punishment and In-School Suspension (ISS)

State law delegates specific authority and responsibility to school officials concerning the control and discipline of students. A school principal or his designee has the authority, by law, to administer corporal punishment to students.

Corporal punishment will be administered by the principal or principal's designee and is done only after other resources have been used in correcting the behavior. Corporal punishment will always be administered in the presence of another professional staff member. Parents requesting that corporal punishment not be used must put their objections in writing and deliver it to the principal's office.

2. Student Threats

Any student who threatens, demands money or other property of another student by threatening the other student with physical harm or intimidation of any sort is punishable by suspension and may be reported to local authorities.

3. Assault on staff members, bus drivers…

Any student in/or above grade 4 shall be required to appear before a student disciplinary tribunal for a hearing in the event that a student allegedly assaults or commits a battery or wrongfully touches any teacher, other school officials, or employees. Under these circumstances, a hearing is mandated under Ga. law whether or not any of the persons involved, including the teacher or employee is of the opinion that the touching by the student was wrongful or intentional, the hearing must be scheduled (Code Section 20-2-751.6 Mandated Tribunals.) Any student who intentionally makes physical contact causing physical harm to a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee will be permanently expelled from school and referred to juvenile court "with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior."

4. Searches by drug-sniffing and weapons-sniffing canines

In the continuing effort to maintain safe schools free of drugs, weapons, and other unlawful or dangerous items, student lockers, and/or vehicles located on or near the school campus shall be subject to search by a drug-sniffing or weapon-sniffing canine(s) at any time or under any circumstances deemed by school officials to be appropriate. Students should understand that school safety searches might be conducted by the Tri-Circuit Drug Task Force of the Atlantic, Middle and Ogeechee Judicial Circuits of Georgia with the cooperation of school officials on several unannounced dates during the school year.

5. Crime Violation by Students

Georgia law states that any child that engages in any criminal acts of aggravated battery, specified weapons offense, any drug related offense, or any sex-related offense at school must be reported to the principal. The principal must report these alleged crimes to the local law enforcement and District Attorney.

6. Child Abuse or Neglect

State law dictates that teachers **must** report to a child welfare agency any child under 18 years of age that is believed to have suffered abuse or neglect.

7. Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Education to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the district staff to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a member of the school staff to a student or when made by any student to another student constitutes sexual harassment when:

1) Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of an individual's education.
2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual.
3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

1) Verbal harassment or abuse
2) Pressure for sexual activity
3) Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications
4) Unwelcome touching
5) Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, jobs, etc.

Any person who alleges sexual harassment by a staff member or student in the school district may complain directly to a principal, guidance counselor or other individual designated to receive such complaints. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment, grades or job assignments.

NOTICE Regarding Possible Sexual Harassment: A student or any other person associated with the school who believes he/she or anyone else at school or at a school activity has been the victim of sexual harassment should immediately report the incident to a teacher, to a counselor, to the principal, or to any other staff member on campus.

Students who are guilty of sexual harassment may be subject to OSS or alternative school placement.

7B. .<u>Notification Regarding Sexual Offenders</u>
House Bill 1054 amends Code Section 42-1-12 relating to the State Sexual Offender Register to require the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to notify all elementary and secondary school, day-care and group day-care centers within a county the names and addresses of all registered sexual offenders residing within that county. **THIS BILL BECAME EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2002.**

8. Ga Code Section 16-11-127.1
There is a fine of not more than $10,000.00 and imprisonment for not more than ten years for possessing certain weapons while within a school safety zone, at a school building, a school function, on school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school.

9. NOTICE OF WEAPONS
It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess or have under control any weapon at a school building, school function or on school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school.

The term "weapon" means and includes any pistol, revolver or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any Dirk, Bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor or razor blades, spring stick, metal knuckles, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, of any disc, or whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, and any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of O.C.G.A. 16-11-106.

A fine of not more than $10,000; mandatory imprisonment for not less than two years. Students or others who violate the provisions of this law shall be referred to appropriate law enforcement officials. (O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1)

State law now mandates that a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school should be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year.

<u>WEAPONS</u>
A student shall not possess, handle, transmit, conceal, discharge, display, or use in a threatening manner such as a razor, ice pick, box cutter, explosive loaded cane, sword cane, machete, pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, pellet gun, BB gun, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any Dirk, Bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife whether or not the knife has a blade of 3 or more inches, straight-edge razor, spring stick, metal knuckles, blackjack, and flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way to allow them to swing freely which may be known as a nun chahka or fighting chain, throwing star, oriental dart, or any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon prohibited on school campuses by Georgia law or any other object reasonably calculated to inflict injury or harm to others or which could do injury or harm to others if in the possession of someone with an intent. "Possession" shall be strictly defined as having a weapon on one's person, including, but not limited to, holding a weapon in one's hand for any length of time, including even a few seconds. "Possession" shall also mean having a weapon under one's control, for example, in one's pocket, book bag, purse, auto, locker, etc. Violation of this policy shall result in confiscation of the weapon with the principal having the discretion to impose additional more severe punishment including but not limited to, five-day suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion. If a student is in possession of a firearm at any time, or is in possession of any weapons prohibited by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated Sec. 16-11-127.1, or in possession of any weapon during a fight, or uses any weapon to threaten or inflict upon another person while on the campus, school activity, function or event, while in a vehicle or otherwise en route to or from school or to or from a school-related activity, or at any other time, or under any other circumstances that might be considered school related, the principal shall recommend his/her expulsion for one (1) calendar year or such longer periods that the principal shall deem appropriate including permanent expulsion from Metter Middle School and from the Candler County School System.

10. Senate Bill 396
MMS will participate in a "minute of reflection" as passed by the 1994 Ga. General Assembly. The required procedure will be conducted by exact specification in O.C.G.A. 20-2-1050.

11. Nondiscrimination Law
Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in

athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sport Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that the Candler County School System does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic program. The sports equity coordinator for this school system is Dr. John Jordan, 210 South College Street, Metter, Georgia 30439, (912) 685-5713 ext. 0560. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the sports equity coordinator.

Employees, students and the general public are hereby notified that the Candler County School District does not discriminate in any education programs or activities or in employment policies.

The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the Board's effort to implement this non-discriminatory policy:
Section 504 and ADA: Roslyn Pittman
Perkins Act: Mr. Robbie Dollar
Title VI: Tami Wallace/Dr. John Jordan
Title IX: John Jordan
Inquiries or complaints concerning the application of the Perkins Act, Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 or ADA to the policies and practices of the department may be addressed to the persons previously listed at the Candler County Board of Education, 210 South College Street, Metter, GA 30439. Telephone (912) 685-5713. FAX (912) 685-2076.

12. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
Each year Candler County Board of Education is required to give notice of the various rights accorded to parents or students pursuant to the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents and students have a right to be notified and informed. In accordance with FERPA, you are notified of the following:
1. Right to Inspect: You have the right to review and inspect substantially all of your education records maintained by or at the school that your child attends in the Candler County School System.
2. Right to Prevent Disclosures: You have the right to prevent disclosure of education records to third parties with certain limited exceptions. It is the intent of the Candler County School System to limit the disclosure of information contained in your education records to those instances when prior written consent has been given to the disclosure, as an item of which you have not refused to permit disclosure, or under the provisions of FERPA which allow disclosure without prior written consent.
3. Right to Request Amendment: You have the right to seek to have corrected any parts of an education record that you believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of your rights. This right includes the right to a hearing to present evidence that the record should be changed if the Candler County School System decides not to alter the education records according to your request.
4. Right to Complain to FERPA Office: You have the right to file a complaint with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, D.C., 20202, concerning the Candler County School System's failure to comply with FERPA.
5. Right to Obtain Policy: You have the right to obtain a copy of the written institutional policy adopted by this institution in compliance with FERPA. A copy may be obtained in person or by mail from Candler County Board of Education, 210 South College Street, Post Office Box 536, Metter, GA 30439. Telephone (912) 685-5713; FAX 685-2076.

Notice of Designation of Directory Information
The Candler County Board of Education has designated certain information contained in the education records of the students of the Candler County School System as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
The following information regarding students is considered directory information: name, address, telephone number, electronic mail address, date and place of birth, school, grade level, enrollment status, program of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, diplomas, certificates and other honors or awards received, the educational agencies or institution attended by the student, audio statements and/or performances, photographs, video images, and other pictures of the student for school and System publications.

Directory information may be disclosed by the Candler County School System for any purpose in its discretion, without the consent of a parent of a student or an eligible student. Parents of students and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent or student, or as otherwise allowed by FERPA.

Any parent or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file a written notification to this effect with the principal of the school which the student attends on or before 1st day of September, 2017. Forms for this purpose are available in the principal's office. In the event a refusal is not filed, the Candler County School System and the school that the child attends

assumes that neither a parent of a student or eligible students objects to the release of the directory information designated.

13. Parents Right to Know
Every Student Succeeds Act Sec. 1112
In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Candler County School District would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:
• Whether the student's teacher—
o has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
o is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
o is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
• Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.
If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact **Will Thigpen at (912) 685 – 5050.**

Elements of an Effective code of Conduct:
Code of Conduct (20-2—751.5)
The purpose of this code is to provide students in the Candler County School System an effective and safe learning environment. This handbook has been prepared in accordance with the discipline Procedures of the Candler County School System. It contains information for school personnel, students, and parents. Included in the handbook is an outline of expected behaviors and the consequences relating to various violations. Expected behavior is behavior that promotes learning and encourages maturity during the school day as well as during all school-related activities. Students and their parents need to know and understand this code in order to achieve these goals. **Students SHOULD participate fully in the learning process.** Students need to report to school and class on time, attend all regularly scheduled classes, remain in class until excused or dismissed, pay attention to instruction, complete assignments to the best of their ability, and ask for help when needed.
Avoid behaviors that impair their own or other students' educational achievement. Students should know and avoid the behaviors prohibited by this code, take care of books and other instructional materials, and cooperate with others.
Show respect for the knowledge and authority of teachers, administrators, and other school employees. Students must obey reasonable directions, use acceptable and courteous language, and avoid being rude, and follow school rules and procedures.
Recognize and respect the rights of other students and adults.
All students should show concern for and encouragement of the educational achievements and activity participation of others.

Students are expected to:
- Demonstrate respect for self and others.
- Demonstrate courtesy to others.
- Behave in a responsible manner.
- Attend class regularly.
- Be prepared for class.
- Take seriously the course of the study.
- Dress appropriately.
- Cooperate with school officials.
- Respect others property.
- Avoid violation of student code of conduct.

Disciplinary action for violations of expected behaviors will include appropriate hearings and reviews. In all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected. The Candler County School System will make every reasonable effort to administer the discipline code consistently in all schools. When applicable, individualized plans (i.e. IEP, 504, and SST) will be reviewed for appropriate consequences.

Behavior support processes consistent with the Discipline Rule (Georgia RULE 160-4-7-.10) will be made available to all students.

All schools in the Candler County School District are deemed Safe Public Schools. If at any time, any school in this district is named an Unsafe School as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.16, students will be allowed to transfer to a safe public school outside of the district.

All office referrals will be processed in a timely manner by the principal or principal's designee and written notification will be sent to the teacher and parents/guardians of the student. A reasonable attempt shall be made to confirm receipt of such written notification by the student's parents or guardians. Written notification will include information on how to contact the principal or principal's designee.

Any staff member participating in the Tribunal process in the Candler County School District as a

Tribunal Hearing Officer or a Panel Member shall complete a mandatory initial training course and have an annual update to continue to serve in such capacity.

The Candler County School District has established disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals of school officials to impose suspension or expulsion for students who have committed infractions that warrant removal from the normal school environment. If a student transfers from another school system and has been subject to the tribunal process of that school system, the consequence imposed upon that student will be honored by the Candler County School District until the consequence issued prior to enrollment has been served.

DISCIPLINE GLOSSARY

General Terms

Bus Suspension – The student is suspended from the bus for a specified period of time by the local school administrator. The student is expected to attend school, but the parents are responsible for providing transportation.

Detention – Student attends a work/study session outside of regular school hours. Transportation will be provided as long as the student is a resident of Candler County unless the student is serving bus suspension in concurrence with the detention.

Disciplinary Probation – A student found guilty of certain offenses might be placed on probation by the local school and/or the Student Disciplinary Panel. Probation is a trial period during which a student violating school and/or school system rules is subject to further disciplinary action.

Due Process – A student is afforded oral or written notice of the charges against him/her and is given an opportunity for a review, hearing or other procedural rights in accordance with state and federal laws.

Horseplaying - Rough or rowdy play that can often result in unintentional physical harm.

In-School Suspension – The student is removed from regular classes for a specified period of time at the local school. The teachers send class work assignments to the student.

Long-Term Suspension – The student is suspended out-of-school for more than ten (10) days.

Non-Prescription Drug – Over-the-counter drug not authorized by a registered physician and not prescribed for the student. Student use is prohibited except in accordance with local school policy.

Permanent Expulsion – The student is removed from all public school property and activities or events for an indefinite period of time. This action may be taken only by the Board of Education. Schoolwork may not be made up or credit given.

Prescription Drug – Use of a drug (medication) authorized by a registered physician and prescribed for the student. Students or parents should inform the school on the use of medically prescribed drugs.

Short Term Suspension – The student is suspended out of school up to ten (ten) days by the local school administrator. The student may be suspended for an accumulation of offenses, as well as a major offense. Suspended students shall make up those tests and assignments that the teacher determines will have an impact on the student's final grade and mastery of course content. Assignments that the teacher does not require to be made up will not count towards a student's final grade. Students will be able to make up work during the suspension. The work will have to be sent electronically or picked up by a parent from school. If unable to make up the work during the suspension, **it is the students' responsibility to make arrangements within five school days of their return to school to make up work.** During the term of suspension the student is not allowed to be on the school campus, or attend any school activity or school-sponsored event.

Student Tribunal Panel – A three-member panel composed of an administrator, teacher, counselor, social worker or central office staff member. The Tribunal Panel hears evidence presented by the school system, the student, and parents when the local school principal or his/her designee refers a student. The Panel has the authority to make decisions ranging from alternative school placement to recommending permanent expulsion of the student to the Board of Education.

Transmission – Any substance, article, or weapon passed to another person.

Waiver of Right to Attend Student Tribunal Hearing – Parents may sign a waiver if they agree to alternative school placement or other disciplinary measure. In the event a parent does not sign a waiver or attend the tribunal hearing it will proceed as scheduled.

Zero Tolerance – There will be consequences for serious drug, weapon, and youth gang/hate group offenses on school property or at a school activity, function or event. The school system will be proactive. Each individual case will be reviewed.

Discipline Violation Terms

AWOL – Unauthorized absence and/or leave from class, school, activity, or event.

Bus Misconduct – Failure to comply with rules of bus safety or Student Behavior Code.

Cheating – to break the rules of an examination or assignment; to claim another's work as your own;

Chronic Lack of Supplies – Repeatedly reporting to class without necessary materials such as books, physical education attire, supplies, etc.

Disobedience/Insubordination – Failure of the student to comply with a reasonable direction or instruction by staff.

Disrespect – Responding in a rude and impertinent manner.

Disruption – Behaving in a manner which interferes with educational activities.

Fighting – Involves the exchange of mutual physical contact such as pushing, shoving and hitting, with or without injury.

Harassment/Intimidation/Verbal Abuse – Disturbing **consistently**, by pestering or tormenting in the classroom, on the school bus, **through texting, social media**, or elsewhere on the school site.

Inappropriate Dress – Dressing in a manner that disrupts the teaching and learning of others.

Inappropriate Personal Property – Possession of personal property that is prohibited by the school rules, such as food, beverages, toys and electronic equipment, and that is otherwise disruptive to the teaching and learning of others.

Insubordination – Refusal to carry out a reasonable request of a faculty or staff member.

Profanity/Vulgarity – Writings, speech, or gestures that convey an offensive, obscene, or sexually suggestive message.

Tardiness – Failure to be in a place of instruction at the assigned time without a valid excuse.

Truancy – The student stays out of school without permission or valid excuse.

Law Violation Terms

Arson – Intentionally starting or attempting to start any fire or combustion.

Assault – With criminal intent, the act of threatening to strike, attack, or harm any person in school or at any school-sponsored or supervised activity. Intentional offensive/physical contact without consent.

Battery – (1) Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting and provoking nature with the person of another; or (2) Intentionally making physical contact that causes physical harm to another unless such physical contact and/or physical harm were in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Code Section 16-3-21.

Bomb/Explosive – A device containing combustible materials and a fuse, including fireworks M-80 or above.

Burglary – Unauthorized entry into a school district building (unoccupied) with the intent of committing a felony when the building is closed to the students and the public {see: Theft}.

Disorderly Conduct – Behaving in a violent or seriously inappropriate manner, which disrupts the educational process. [Note: This category is used only when the police are called to cite a student or person for extreme disruption.]

Drug/Alcohol/Chemical Offense – Any controlled substance or alcohol; includes any transfer of a prescription drug or any substance alleged to be a drug, regardless of its actual content.

Extortion – Use of "mild" threats or intimidation to demand money or something of value from another (no weapon).

False Fire Alarm – Reporting a fire to school or fire officials or setting off a fire alarm without reasonable belief that a fire exists.

Felony – Any offense punishable as a felony under Georgia or federal law.

Gambling – Playing any game of skill or chance for money or anything of value.

Loitering/Trespassing – Entering any school property or school facility without proper authority (includes student entry during a period of suspension or expulsion).

Robbery – Taking property from a person by force or violence, or threat of aggression.

Sexual Assault/Offenses – Intentional sexual contact of a harmful or offensive manner.

Theft/Larceny – Unlawful taking and carrying away of property belonging to another person (while the building is occupied) with the intent to deprive the lawful owner of its use {see: Burglary).

Threatening/Menace – With criminal intent, the act of threatening to strike, attack, or harm any person in school or at any school-sponsored or supervised activity.

Vandalism/Graffiti – The willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property.

Weapon – An article or implement that can cause bodily harm. This includes guns, knives, razors, clubs, and nun chahka, or any other object intended to be used to inflict bodily harm.

Acceptable Use Policy…Student Information

Please read the following carefully. Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy may cause a student's access privileges to be revoked, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

Any student who utilizes the computer lab(s) or any computer equipment at the school must be aware of certain policies for use of the equipment and/or facilities. Procedures are in place for the protection of students and equipment. Students will be held accountable for any violation of the following policies (as would be the case for any classroom disciplinary matter). A student and his/her parents will be responsible for damages and will be liable for costs incurred for service or repair.

Students are only allowed to utilize the computers and network to retrieve information and run specific software applications as directed by their teacher. Students are not permitted to go into the operating system to look around, run programs, or attempt to do anything they are not specifically authorized to do.

Students bringing flash drives from outside the school must have them scanned for viruses by an authorized staff member prior to their use on a computer or the network.

Safety Issues:

1. Any on-line communication should always be at the direction and with the supervision of a teacher
2. Never provide last name, address, telephone number, or school name on-line.
3. Never respond to, and always report to the teacher or parent, any messages that make you feel uncomfortable or that are from an unknown origin.
4. Never send a photo of yourself or anyone else.
5. Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you met on-line.
6. Never open attachments or files from unknown senders.

Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to the following:

A. Accessing, sending, creating or posting materials or communications that are:
1. Damaging to another person's reputation,
2. Abusive,
3. Obscene,
4. Sexually oriented,
5. Threatening or demeaning to another person's gender or race,
6. Contrary to the school's policy on harassment,
7. Harassing, or
8. Illegal

B. Using the network for financial gain or advertising.

C. Posting or plagiarizing work created by another person without their consent.

D. Posting anonymous or forging electronic mail messages.

E. Attempting to read, alter, delete, or copy the electronic mail messages of other systems users.

F. Giving out personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, driver's license or social security numbers, bankcard or checking account information.

G. Using the school's computer hardware or network for any illegal activity such as copying or downloading copyrighted software or violation of copyright laws.

H. Loading or using games, public domain, shareware or any other unauthorized program on any school's computer or computer system.

I. Purposely infecting any school computer or network with a virus or program designed to damage, alter, destroy or provide access to unauthorized data or information.

J. Gaining access or attempting to access unauthorized or restricted network resources or the data and documents of another person.

K. Using or attempting to use the password or account of another person or utilizing a computer while logged on under another user's account.

L. Using the school's computers or network while access privileges have been suspended.

M. Using the school's computer hardware, network, or Internet link in a manner that is inconsistent with a teacher's directions and generally accepted network etiquette.

N. Altering or attempting to alter the configuration of a computer, the operating system, or any of the software.

O. Attempting to vandalize, disconnect or disassemble any network or computer component.

P. Utilizing the computers and network to retrieve information or run software applications not assigned by their teacher.

Q. Providing another student with user account information or passwords.

R. Connecting to or installing any computer hardware, components, or software that are not school system property to or in the district's technology resources without prior approval of the district technology supervisory personnel.

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT
2026-2027

What is a School-Parent Compact?

Our annual school-parent compact offers ways that we can work together to help our students succeed. This compact provides strategies to help connect learning at school and at home.

Effective Compacts:

- Link to academic achievement goals
- Focus on student learning
- Share strategies that staff, parents, and students can use
- Explain how teachers and parents will communicate about student progress
- Describe opportunities for parents to observe, volunteer, and participate in the classroom

Jointly Developed

The parents, students, and staff worked together and shared ideas to develop the school-parent compact. Biannual Parent-Teacher Academic Meetings and Title I Committee meetings are held each year to review and revise the compact based on the school's academic achievement goals and students' needs.

Parents are welcome to provide feedback at any time. All feedback will be collected and reviewed during the annual revision meeting with parents.

Building Partnerships

There are many opportunities at our school for parents to volunteer and play a role in their child's education. (See our parent & family engagement plan event appendix or the Annual Title I Parent & Family Engagement Calendar.) Please consider joining the faculty, staff, and fellow parents through some of the following events and programs:

- Open House
- Title I Family Night
- Parent Orientation
- School Governance Participation
- November Family Luncheon
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Amazing Shake

Communication about Student Learning

Metter Middle is committed to frequent two-way communication with families about children's learning. Some of the ways you can expect us to reach you are:

- Current grades available through Infinite Campus Student Information System
- Parent-teacher conferences twice a year
- Progress reports 4 times a year and report cards once per quarter
- School website and School Facebook page
- You may contact your child's teacher at any time. You may email your teacher directly or call the Prek-8 Complex at (912) 685-5050 and leave a message.

Our Goals for Student Achievement

District goals:

- 90% of students will graduate on time
- 100% of Students will be career or college ready
- CCSD will increase the percentage of students reading on Lexile by 3% as measured by the FY27 Georgia Milestones ELA assessments in grades 3-11.

School goals and focus areas:

- MMS will increase the percentage of students reading on Lexile by 3% as measured by the FY 27 Georgia Milestones ELA assessments in grades 6-8.
- 100% of Metter Middle School students will finish with an Individual Graduation Plan and Career Portfolio.

Focus Areas:

- Use of SWIRL (speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, listening) all content areas to improve literacy across the curriculum
- Use YouScience with fidelity to ensure college and career readiness

Teachers

- Will provide resources via students' Google Classroom and the school website
- Will share students' individual graduation plans and career inventories with parents (8th grade)
- Will send work samples home in order for parents to review learning focus, student work, and teacher feedback
- Will host a parent night as well as two parent/teacher academic meetings in order to collaborate on learning goals and to share strategies with parents

Parents

- Will provide time and support for homework and 20 minutes of reading each day
- Will review work samples with my child to help improve his or her work
- Will use resources shared via Google classroom and the school website as well as information from Infinite Campus and Parent/Teacher conferences to support my child's academic progress

Students

- Will complete all homework and read at least 20 minutes each day
- Will use teacher feedback to improve work and prepare for assessments
- Will complete IGP and Career Inventories
- Will use Google Classroom and school website resources to increase understanding and progress toward meeting learning goals

Revised on July 11, 2026

Parents' Right-to-Know

Every Student Succeeds Act Section 1112

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Candler County School District would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

• **Whether the student's teacher:**
- has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
- is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

• Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact **Will Thigpen at (912) 685 – 5050.**

Video/ photographs Consent Form

Dear Parents:

From time to time our school may select students to participate in educational activities and initiatives that require video/ photographs that serve as a model for implementation of effective instructional strategies and/or publicize students' accomplishments.

For valuable consideration, I give permission for my minor child to be photographed, video taped, and interviewed for stories, articles or documentaries that may be produced to promote

our school, the school system, the Georgia DOE and other educational affiliations as it relates to promoting education.

I consent to release the right and permission to copyright, publish or republish, and use in all forms and media and manners for advertising, trade, promotion, exhibition, or any other lawful purpose in connection with professional development for teachers or publicizing students' accomplishments. Signing the form below or the Consent to Video/Photograph statement on page 3 of this agenda book or a separate consent form sent home by the teacher gives permission for the school to videotape or photograph your child as described above.

Field Trip Permission Form

Dear Parents:

Teachers at Metter Middle School believe in an activity-based instructional program that might involve some field trips to areas within Candler County. Please sign the form below giving your child permission to participate in these local field trips. We will walk or possibly ride buses. While we will try to notify you of the date and time of these local trips, we will not transport your child for field trips out of the county without your written permission for each specific trip.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Consent for Extracurricular Activities and Medical Authorization

Your child is invited to participate in our extracurricular activity program. It is understood that "extracurricular" refers to those school-sponsored activities taking place before or after school. These programs may include but are not limited to interscholastic sports, intramural sports, student organizations, and clubs. Participation in these activities is voluntary, but you must give permission before your child can participate.

Your signature below or on page 3 of this agenda book in the section entitled *Consent for Extracurricular Activities* or a separate consent form received from your child's teacher grants your permission for the student to practice, compete, perform, and /or participate in extracurricular school-sponsored activities and to accompany any school group of which he/she is a member on any of its local or out-of-town trips. It is further agreed that the parent(s), guardian(s) and student will assume all legal responsibility for the personal safety and actions of the student while the student is traveling to extracurricular activities when parents choose other transportation for return.
Teachers, coaches, and/or volunteer leaders will supervise your child but every program has certain unavoidable risks attached to it. We cannot enumerate every risk, but we believe that you are generally familiar with these activities and your child; therefore, you are in the best position to decide whether your child should participate.

By signing this form or the *Consent for Extracurricular Activities* statement on page 3 of this agenda book you agree, in the absence of negligence and willful misconduct, to release the Candler County School District personnel from any and all damages or injuries occurring to the student in the course of extracurricular activities including travel. Should it be necessary for

your child to have medical treatment while participating in an activity and a parent cannot be reached, your signature gives the school district personnel permission to obtain medical service for the child and gives permission for the physician to render medical treatment deemed necessary and appropriate. It is agreed that the financial responsibility for securing care of any injuries is a matter between the parent(s), guardian(s), and health care providers and that the Candler County School District cannot pay health care providers for treatment of any student.

Child Find Notice

In accordance with IDEA regulations, the Candler County School District seeks to ensure that all disabled students (ages birth-21) who are in need of special education within its jurisdiction are identified, located, and evaluated, including those attending private school and home school. Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and a determination by a Multidisciplinary Placement Team.

If the "child find" process indicates that a student may require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the Multidisciplinary Placement Team to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.

If you know a child with a disability who is not being served, please notify:

Dr. Robbie Dollar
Special Education Director/CTAE Director
Candler County School District
Special Education, Response to Intervention, and Assessment
210 South College Street
Metter, Georgia 30439
(912) 685-5713 Ext. 0590
Fax: (912) 685-3755
rdollar@metter.org

BYOT / Personal Device Prohibition Policy

Students are not permitted to bring, use, or connect personal electronic devices to the school network

or school-owned technology systems.

• Personal laptops

• Tablets

• Cell phones

• Smartwatches

• Gaming devices

• Personal hotspots

• USB storage devices

• Any privately owned device capable of network access, data storage, or communication

All instructional technology needs must be met using school-issued devices and approved school

systems.

Students who bring unauthorized devices may be required to turn them in to school administration.

Repeated violations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct.

Exceptions may only be granted by school administration for documented medical, accessibility, or

instructional needs.

***Handbook was Revised 07/11/2026**