NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

Oglethorpe County Middle School

270 Buddy Faust Road
Crawford, Georgia 30630
Telephone: (706) 743-8146
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www.oglethorpe.k12.ga.us

Student Handbook
2026-2027



Excellence for every student, every day!

Mr. Mack Baldwin
Principal

Mrs. Alecia Casper
Assistant Principal

Ms. Annie Murphy
Counselor

The Oglethorpe County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in education programs, activities, and employment practices.

Oglethorpe County Middle School Calendar of Events 2026-2027

THIS CALENDAR IS TENTATIVE & SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT/CANCELLATION. FOR THE LATEST CALENDAR OF EVENTS RELATED TO OCMS, VISIT THE CALENDAR LINKS PROVIDED AT OCMS.OGLETHORPE.K12.GA.US.

August 3-6	Pre-Planning	
August 5	Open House	4:00-6:00 PM
Aug. 7	First day of school	
Sept. 7	Labor Day Holiday	
Sept. 8	School Council	7:45 AM
Sept. 9	Progress reports go home	
Sept. 14-18	Book Fair	
Sept. 15	Parent Visitation	4:00-6:00 PM
Sept. 15	Annual Title I Parent Meeting	5:00 PM
Sept. 21	Fundraiser Kick-off	
Sept. 25	Fall Middle School Dance	7:00-9:00 PM
Oct. 2	Fundraiser Fun Run	
Oct. 9	End of 1st Quarter	
Oct. 12-13	Fall Break/Student and Teacher Holiday	
Oct. 14	In-Service Day (Student Holiday)	
Oct. 15	OCMS report cards go home	
Oct. 20	Fall Band Concert	6:00 PM
Oct. 22	Picture Day	
Nov. 3	School Council	7:45 AM
Nov. 12	Progress reports go home	
Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving holidays	
Dec. 8	Winter Band Concert	6:00 PM
Dec. 18	End of 2nd Quarter/Early Release Day for Students	
Dec. 21-Jan. 1	Christmas Holidays	
Jan. 4	In-Service Day (Student Holiday)	
Jan. 5	System In-Service Day (Student Holiday)	
Jan. 6	Students return from holidays	
Jan. 7	OCMS report cards go home	
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Holiday	
Jan. 26	School Council	7:45 AM
Feb. 4	Progress reports go home	
Feb. 8-12	Tentative Book Fair	
Feb. 9	Parent Visitation	4:30-6:00 PM
Feb. 10	8th Grade Tour at OCHS	
Feb. 16	Pre-LGPE Band Concert	6:00 PM
Feb. 18	In-Service Day (Student Holiday)	
Feb. 19	System In-Service Day (Student Holiday)	
Feb. 25	Rising 9th Grade Registration at OCHS	6:00 PM
March 11	End of 3rd quarter	
March 12	Student and Teacher Holiday	
March 15	In-Service Day (Student Holiday)	
March 17	Report cards go home	
March 19	Spring Middle School Dance	7:00-9:00 PM
March 26	5th Grade Band Recruitment Visit to OCES	
April 5-9	Spring break	
April 13	School Council	7:45 AM
April 22	Progress reports go home	
April 26	Rising 6th Grade Parent Orientation	6:00 PM
April 27	Spring Band Concert	6:00 PM
April 29	OCMS FFA Banquet	6:00 PM
May 4-6	Georgia Milestones – ELA	
May 7	Georgia Milestones – Make-Up	
May 10-11	Georgia Milestones – Math	
May 12	Georgia Milestones – Science	
May 13	Georgia Milestones – Social Studies	
May 14	Georgia Milestones – Make-Up	
May 14	8th Grade After Party	Until 10:00 PM (8th Grade Only)
May 18	Student Recognition Programs (By Grade During Connections Blocks)	
May 19	Georgia Milestones – Algebra I	
May 20	5th Grade Visitation to OCMS	
May 24	Field Day & Variety Show	
May 26	8th Grade Convocation	8:30 AM
	Last Day of School/Early Release for Students	
May 27-28	Post-planning	
May 31	Memorial Day (Office Closed)	
May 29-June 3	Report Cards available for pick-up	
June 1-11	Summer School / Summer School Testing	
June 4	Report Cards mailed home	3:00 PM

PREFACE

This Student Handbook contains useful information. It is recommended that both the parent(s) and the student read & discuss the handbook. It will familiarize you with the school's expectations; likewise, it will provide you with an overview of what you can expect from the school. It will prove to be a valuable resource for you, and it will help make your middle school experience a more positive one. As you read this, there are two points to bear in mind. First, this handbook is not an exhaustive document; it does not cover every potential situation that can arise relative to school or school-related activities. Secondly, it does not limit the actions that school officials can take to maintain a safe and effective school environment or remedy a particular situation. We encourage you to keep this handbook, along with any other important school records, and refer to them whenever the need arises. A copy of this handbook along with the most recently updated policies are posted on the school website. Please refer to them and other related documents on the school web site that help clarify various items as needed changes to policies or procedures are sometimes made. If more information is needed, please consult the main office or an administrator.

Mission Statement

In partnership with our community and families, the Oglethorpe County School System provides excellence for *ALL* to achieve their full potential.

Visitors

Oglethorpe County Middle School is operated for the benefit of our community. Citizens are invited to schedule conferences with school employees and attend parent meetings and student assemblies and events. Anyone wishing to visit the school must, upon arrival on school property, report immediately to the front office via the main entrance to the school building. Following entry, contact the principal or his/her designee to obtain permission to be on campus. If permission is needed before entering school property, call the school's office and speak with the principal or his/her designee. Since our purpose is to educate our students and ensure their safety, visitors are not allowed to roam at will & students may not invite anyone to visit them at school during the day.

Daily Bell Schedule (Subject to change)

8:00	Dismiss from cafeteria or gym and head to 1st block
1st block	8:10 – 9:40
2nd block	9:44 – 11:52 (includes lunch)
3rd block	11:56 – 1:26
4th block	1:30 – 3:00
Car rider Bell:	3:00
	**All students should be picked up from the car rider line by 3:20.
	**Students whose rides cannot arrive for pick up by 3:20 should ride the bus home.

Bus Loads A/B/C: Approximately 3:00/3:05/3:10 or when called by intercom

Grades, Progress Reports, Report Cards

Numbers are used for grades at Oglethorpe County Middle School.

Meaning of Grades

A = 100-90
B = 89-80
C = 79-70
F = Below 70
I = Incomplete (if work is not completed within 10 days, the grade will be calculated as is).

Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter. A progress report for each student is sent to the parents via their child approximately four and one half weeks into each term.

Collectively, between progress reports and report cards, there are eight times each year when the middle school provides invaluable information about the academic progress of each student. These reports are given to each student during the school day, and it is the responsibility of the student to carry the report home. We strongly encourage parents to know when these reports are being issued (see the Middle School Calendar of Events in this handbook).

Parent-Teacher visitations are scheduled twice during the year. These are scheduled during the week following the distribution of September and February progress reports. The September visitation is an excellent time for parents to discuss their child's progress.

Access to Grade Information Through *PowerSchool*

PowerSchool is the internet-based, computer software system that <u>all</u> Oglethorpe County schools use to manage student data, including grades and attendance. Parents/guardians may contact OCMS to secure the necessary online ID and password which will enable them to access current information about attendance, grades, and any schoolwork that is missing. This valuable tool helps a parent/guardian keep up with his/her child's progress at school as serves as a means to find contact information. Please be sure that your contact information (email address, mailing address, current phone numbers, etc.) are kept up to date in PowerSchool

Special Education, 504, English Learners and Gifted Services

A full continuum of services is provided to meet the needs of students determined eligible for these programs. If you feel your child may meet the qualifications for one of these programs or if you would like additional information, please contact the Director of Teaching and Learning at 706-743-8128.

XLT (Extended Learning Time)
XLT is an intervention that provides additional time and support during the regular school day to better ensure that all students are academically successful. Students who are failing more than one class at times when report cards or progress reports are distributed are required to attend XLT. **Students exit XLT at set times with teacher consensus IF they are passing ALL of their classes**; not just when all of their grades are passing. This helps to assure and instill continued, adequate academic efforts. To address the needs of students at particular times of the year, grade levels may choose to vary their XLT parameters. However, students assigned to XLT under any parameters may not attend middle school dances and may be prohibited to attending various other events. We are serious about students being successful in the classroom, thus we have little tolerance for students who want to misbehave while in XLT or those who try to avoid it.

Requirements for Promotion
1. Each student must pass at least five (5) classes for the school year.
2. Each student must be present at least 165 days.

**When available, summer school may be assigned to help meet these requirements.

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
What is MTSS In Georgia? A Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a "tiered system of supports that integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral problems. MTSS promotes systems alignment to increase efficiency and effectiveness of resources" (Adopted from National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). Elements of This Definition Further Explained Integrating Assessment and Intervention A Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a data-driven prevention framework that uses Assessment (Screening and Progress Monitoring) to identify and predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes or who experience social/emotional needs, and/or behavioral concerns that impact learning. More information can be found at https://www.oglethorpe.k12.ga.us/o/ogs/page/multi-tiered-system-of-supports

Pyramid of Interventions/Student Support Team (SST)
Student progress is monitored throughout the school year. Support is provided through these programs when a student is not making sufficient progress towards meeting grade-level standards.

Student Support Processes
The Board of Education provides a variety of resources that are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. These resources include Student Support Teams, attendance support teams, school counselors, risk reduction panel and student behavior plans.

Notice to Parents/Guardians & Eligible Students of Rights Under FERPA
The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) or older, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent or designee will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and its implementing regulations authorize disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including school nurses and school resource officers); a member of the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or online educational services provider); a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the school district has outsourced services, such as electronic data storage; or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee) or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. The District allows school officials to access only student records in which they have a legitimate educational interest. School officials remain under the district's control with regard to the use and maintenance of PII, which may be used only for the purpose for which disclosure was made, and cannot be released to other parties without authorization.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) FERPA requires the school district, with certain exceptions, to obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student's education records. However, the district may disclose appropriate designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent or eligible student has advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from the student's education records in certain school publications, such as the annual yearbook, graduation or sports activity programs, and honor roll or other recognition lists.
The School District has designated the following information as directory information:

(a) Student's name, address and telephone number;
(b) Student's date and place of birth;
(c) Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
(d) Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
(e) Electronic mail address
(f) Dates of attendance at schools within the district;
(g) Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
(h) Photograph; and
(i) Grade level.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers unless parents have advised the school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 10 days after officially enrolling in school or within 10 days of the date of the release of this notice.

(5) You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event; unless you, as a parent/guardian object in writing to the principal to your student being photographed, videotaped or interviewed. You must notify the principal of your objection by the date specified above. The principal will take reasonable steps to control the media's access to students. However, your submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that your student will not be interviewed in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

(6) You have the right to file with the United States Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA or the regulations promulgated there under. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20212.

Parent Notice of PPRA Rights
The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires school districts to notify parents and obtain consent or allow them to opt their child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas ("protected information surveys"):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
3. Sex behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and certain physical exams and screenings.

This notice and consent/opt-out provision transfers from parents to any student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The school is required by federal law to give this notice to parents. However, the school does not have scheduled any such activities as are described above. If any such activities are initiated during the school year, parents will be notified accordingly and will be afforded all the rights described herein.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20212-8520.

TADRA (Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibilities Act)
Students must present documentation to the Department of Driver Services that they are currently enrolled and not under expulsion from school in order to apply for a driver's license/permit. A Certificate of School Enrollment may be obtained at the school office.

Grievance
Any employee, student, or parent of students, of the Oglethorpe County Board of Education, who has a grievance under Title IX, P.L. 93-318, dealing with discrimination on the basis of sex, may file said grievance by contacting the Curriculum Director at 743-8128, or by writing to the Coordinator at Oglethorpe County Schools, Lexington, GA 30648. A complaint may also be lodged directly with the superintendent of schools or directly with the Office of Civil Rights. A hearing will be held within ten (10) days of filing of the complaint.

Steps of Grievance

1. File complaint with Title IX Coordinator.
2. Hearing with complainant, Title IX Coordinator, and Superintendent of Schools. If problem is not resolved at this point, the Board of Education of Oglethorpe County will become involved.

Section 504 Parent Notice
Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for the Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system's central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

Parents who want more information about Section 504, a 504 Plan or their Section 504 Procedural Rights may contact the Superintendent's office.

Family Engagement Plan
In support of strengthening student academic achievement, OCMS receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by section 1116(b) and (c) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy 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). If you do not have access to the Oglethorpe County Schools' Parent & Family Engagement Plan via the school district website and would like a hard copy of this plan, please contact, the Federal Programs Director at 706-743-8786.

Guidance
Because many personal and school problems can be improved by talking with a counselor, services are available to all students from the school guidance counselor(s). The main purpose of our counselor(s) is to help students attain their highest potential in academic, vocational, social, and personal pursuits. Note that various other school & system personnel may be used along with the guidance counselor to address student needs.

Trusted Adults
As part of the Social Emotional Learning activities at OCMS, every student is asked to identify at least one adult in the building whom they trust and will go to if they or a friend are struggling with an issue and need an adult's help. Additionally, students are sometimes asked to identify a trusted adult in the community, such as a parent, coach, pastor, relative, or neighbor whom they can go to for help during those times when they are not at school.

Student Advocacy
At OCMS, we strive to empower students in reaching their full potential. During the week following each progress report, each student will meet one-on-one with their last academic block teacher, who will serve as the student's advocate. During this advocacy time, teachers will discuss the student's grades, attendance, & behavior to help them set goals for improvement if needed.

Oglethorpe County Schools' Student Attendance Protocol
The Oglethorpe County School System believes that good attendance is the foundation for success at school. Students with good attendance generally achieve higher grades and have a more enjoyable school experience. It is our goal to see that all of our students are at school as much as possible.

Students should be absent from school only for the following reasons which are defined by Georgia law:

(a) Personal illness or attendance in school that endangers a student's health or the health of others.
(b) A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
(c) A court order or an order by a government agency mandating absence from school;
(d) The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school;
(e) Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety;
(f) A period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
(g) A student whose parent is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five (5) school days per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to such parent's deployment or during such parent's leave.

Excuses must be submitted within three (3) days of return to school. Students are required to present appropriate written medical documentation or other documentation (parent note or legal document) to the school for the purpose of validating that an absence(s) is excused. If an excuse is not submitted within three (3) days of return to school, the absence(s) will be recorded as unexcused. Excuses may be submitted in person or emailed or uploaded in ROOMS. *At OCMS, students should bring notes to the teacher assigned to the front table in the cafeteria before school or turn them in to the office.*

Parents/guardians can write notes to excuse the first ten (10) days of being absent in each school year, provided they meet the conditions set forth above. After a student has been absent for ten (10) days, a valid third-party excuse (e.g., doctor's note) is required to excuse any additional absence. **After 10 absences, only a medical excuse will be accepted.**

Students who are in school for at least one half of the instructional day will be considered present. School days missed as a result of an out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy. The Oglethorpe County School System provides the services of a hospital/homebound teacher when appropriate. Students are not counted absent when served by the hospital/homebound teacher.

It is the policy of the Oglethorpe County Board of Education that students will be expected to make up work for both excused and unexcused absences. It is the expectation of the Oglethorpe County Board of Education that all work missed due to any absence will be made up. The responsibility for arranging to complete work missed is to be assumed by the student and parent/guardian in conjunction with the teacher.

Student Withdrawals
The Oglethorpe County School System is authorized to withdraw a student who:

- Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences;
- Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and
- Is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Parental Notification of Student Withdrawal
The principal or the principal's designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge of the student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance. The Oglethorpe County School System is authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance only if the principal or the principal's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

The Following are the Consequences for Excessive Unexcused Absences

- Various interventions will be employed when students reach certain numbers of unexcused days missed. For more details on this, see the Student Attendance Protocol on the Oglethorpe County School System web page.
- The school system will make a good faith effort to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who is in charge of a student who has a chronic attendance problem.
- When appropriate, the school will also use different forms of positive reinforcement to encourage students to attend school on a regular basis. Prizes, attendance ceremonies, and special field trips are examples of incentives that may be used.
- Interventions may include, but are not limited to notification of absences, attendance contracts, school-based consequences/interventions, school and district attendance review teams, referral to the district social worker, referral to the Risk Reduction Team, coordination of community agencies and support services, Referral to Juvenile Court (CHINS process), seeking to obtain a warrant against the parent/guardian in violation of O.C.G.A 20-2-690.1 from the Magistrate Court of Oglethorpe County. Agencies used along with interventions may include but are not limited to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Oglethorpe County Sheriff's Department, the Oglethorpe County Department of Family and Children Services, the Oglethorpe County Family Connection, the Oglethorpe County Health Department, the Juvenile Court Judge, and the Magistrate Judge.

Tardy Policy

- A student is "tardy to class" when he/she arrives to class after the tardy bell.
- Examples of excused tardies include events that are physically out of your control such as an accident, roads closed due to an accident, power outage, etc.
- Examples of unexcused tardies include over-sleeping, heavy traffic, running errands for parents, train crossing delays, etc.
- Early check-out includes a student's removal from school before the end of the school day and which does not satisfy any of the conditions of an excused absence.
- It will be the responsibility of each school's principal or principal's designee to classify tardies and to determine what action will be taken regarding a student's tardies and early check-outs.
- At the discretion of the principals, a student may be brought before an attendance review team for excessive tardies and/or early check-outs.

Statement of Receipt

By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the Oglethorpe County School System, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local system's policy. The principal of each school or their designee will be responsible for carrying out this responsibility.

Tardiness at OCMS

Students should report to school on time everyday.

- Students are considered tardy to school at 8:00.
- Students who arrive at school late should go to the office to obtain a late slip and take it to their teacher.
- Students with 5 unexcused tardies will be issued a warning letter and assigned to lunch detention for each unexcused tardy moving forward.
- Students with 10 unexcused tardies will be issued a tardy contract.
- Students with 15 unexcused tardies to school will be referred to the Risk Reduction Panel/The Student Attendance Protocol Committee.

Students must be in class on time.

- Teachers may define what tardy means for their class.
- Teachers may hold students from recess due to excessive tardies, employ the use of conduct cuts for tardies, or turn students in to be held for lunch/recess detention once they reach three tardies.
- Students detained in the office or by a teacher, should request a slip from the person causing the tardiness.
- Repeated tardiness to class could result in disciplinary action beyond detention.

Attendance at OCMS

Credit toward promotion may be withheld for any course in which the student has been excessively absent. This policy is based on the premise that students with good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are better prepared for making a living after leaving school. It also requires students to accept responsibility for their own attendance. The major points of the Oglethorpe County Middle School Attendance Policy are:

1. Students must bring a note from home following an absence from school with the home and/or cell phone number or parent's work phone number written on it. Students should bring notes to the teacher assigned to the front table in the cafeteria before school or turn them in to the office.
2. Students at Oglethorpe County Middle School must not be absent more than 15 days for the year.
3. In cases of extended illnesses, the student will be placed on the Hospital/Homebound Program by the school district designee. Class work from the student's teachers and help with lessons will be provided by a school district representative. Assignments will be returned to the teachers for grading. During the Hospital/ Homebound period, the student will be counted present.
4. If a student is absent more than the allotted number of days due to extended illness or extenuating circumstances, the student may file an "appeal for credit." This appeal may be approved by the principal/designee and credit may be granted if the student has made up all work missed before the end of the semester. Only those cases involving extenuating circumstances or illnesses accompanied by a doctor's excuses will be considered.

Note: If a student is absent on the day of an athletic contest, extra-curricular activity or dance the student is not permitted to participate in that event. If the student is absent on a Friday, the student is not able to participate in school-related weekend activities. This includes students who check-out early from school or those who are sent home for disciplinary reasons (including *potential* discipline problems).

STAR Time

Students Taking Academic Responsibility (STAR Time) is celebrated on most Fridays throughout the school year. Students who are passing all of their classes and who have completed all of their school work earn an extra recess and may participate in a STAR activity (e.g., basketball, soccer, computer lab, Media Center, football, etc). Students who are not passing all classes or those who have not completed all of their school work or those who need re-teaching are placed in Rising STAR Time. During Rising STAR Time these students will report to a specific teacher to receive extra time and support on their academic skills, etc. STAR Time is done by grade level during that grade level's connections period. STAR Time has proven to be an overwhelming success as it has helped to motivate many middle school students to be more successful in the classroom. We are all about students being successful academically, thus we have little tolerance for students who want to misbehave while in Rising STAR or those who try to avoid required attendance at Rising STAR. *Failure is NOT an option!*

Athletics
Athletics at OCMS strives to support the academic, emotional, and physical development of students through the promotion of teamwork, sportsmanship and athletic competition. Additionally, athletics at OCMS focuses on preparing student-athletes for high school competition. All student-athletes, coaches, and individuals involved in the athletic program are required to work hard, play hard, and serve as positive ambassadors of OCMS. Any student wishing to participate in an inter-scholastic sport should contact the appropriate coach and must be academically eligible to participate. Eligibility requires passing 5 subjects the previous semester. Students must also have a current parent permission form and current physical form on file with the clinic to participate. Students who quit a team mid-season will not be able to participate on other teams during the remainder of the academic year. Because preparing student-athletes for high school competition is a focus, some aspects of middle school sports may be different from other levels of play. **Playing time, team strategy, play calling, and game decisions are not appropriate topics of discussion for coaches and parents. These items are determined at the coach's discretion based on the information they have to make winning, productive decisions. No individual is guaranteed playing time. Furthermore, fans must always exhibit sportsmanlike behavior. Negative comments, including but not limited to online comments towards/about players, coaches, opponents or their fans, or officials may result in being removed from watching games or attending future events.**

Student Organizations
At OCMS, opportunities are provided for students to participate in school sponsored clubs which are organizations under the sponsorship, direction, and control of the school that organize and meet for common goals, objectives, and purposes. State law requires that parents have the right to withhold permission for their students to participate in any school sponsored club or organization designated by them. The following school sponsored clubs will be in operation during this school year, for which information is provided regarding the name of each club, its purpose, and the faculty sponsor. Planned activities for the year may be acquired upon request from the organization's sponsor. You, as the parent/guardian, have the right to withhold in writing your permission for your student's participation in any club or organization. For your convenience, a parental opt-out form will be included in the welcome to school packet given to your student if you do not wish for your student to participate in the club you have designated on the form. If a club is added during the school year, you will be provided information on the club and your written permission will be required prior to your student's participation. The school sponsored clubs available to students at OCMS include those listed below:

- Academic Bowl: This organization offers students the chance to compete in scholastic competition against other middle schools in a quiz bowl format. (Sponsors: Penny Miller)
- Anime Club: This organization strives to give students a means to share with others their interests in Anime. (Sponsor: TBD)
- Beta Club: This is an academic honor organization that recognizes students who achieve at high levels. It is a service oriented club and membership is by invitation only. (Sponsors: Kristen Byce & Codi Collins)
- Chess Club: This club allows students the opportunity to meet and compete in a manner designed to help them hone their chess skills. The Chess Club operates differently with regard to each grade. (Sponsor: TBD)
- Drama Club: This organization offers students interested in the theater an opportunity to develop skills in acting, group-building and performance. (Sponsor: TBD)
- FCA: Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a group for all students, teachers, and coaches that meets Wednesdays at 7:45AM. (Sponsors: Steve Irwin)
- FCCLA: Family, Career, Community Leaders of America, founded in 1945, is a dynamic and effective national student organization that helps young men and women become leaders and address important personal, family, work, and societal issues through family and consumer science education. (Sponsor: Robyn Benton)
- FFA: Founded in 1928, the former "Future Farmers of America" brings together students, teachers, and agribusiness to solidify support for agricultural education while also developing leadership through agriculture. (Sponsor: Katherine Throne)
- GEM: Girls Empowering Movement, is a statewide initiative to increase physical activity and fitness levels of Georgia's middle school girls and motivate girls to get moving and engage their communities by taking action to implement physical activity programs that are designed by girls, for girls. (Sponsor: Joni Gabriel)
- Guitar Club: This club is open to all students with interests in playing guitar from others. This is not meant for lessons, but rather to provide a venue for guitar enthusiasts to share their common interest in playing the guitar. (Sponsor: Dave Gerow)
- Media Production Club: This club offers students the opportunity to work with modern media production software, use recording equipment, and collaborate with others to produce multimedia productions. (Sponsor: TBD)
- Robotics: This club is open to all students. Members will eventually compete in the First Lego League competitions. (Sponsors: Brandon Mealer)
- Scrapbooking Club: This club offers those students who are passionate about scrapbooking the opportunity to develop and share skills in this area. The club meets once a month. (Sponsors: Kelly Allgood & Penny Miller)
- Science Club/Science Olympiad: For the group that is interested in all things science. Open to all students. (Sponsor: Steven King)
- Yearbook Staff: This organization has the primary responsibility for putting together the school's annual yearbook. Participants take pictures, learn about yearbook production, & publication. (Sponsors: Kelly Allgood, Codi Collins & Missy Queen)

School Spirit
Students will demonstrate school spirit by exhibiting the following qualities:

1. Courtesy toward teachers, school employees, fellow students, guests, community/parent volunteers and officials of school athletic activities.
2. Pride in our school's efforts and accomplishments.
3. Good sportsmanship both when we win and if we lose.
4. Tolerance of others.

Band
The instrumental music program is open to any interested student. For advanced 8th grade students, the high school's marching band program may be available.

Field Day & Variety Show
The Field Day & the Variety Show are held in May. Those students who have been suspended or sent home due to disciplinary events since the winter dance, have been written up for vaping, theft, or vandalism, or owe fees or fines may also be restricted from participating. Students on the current XLT list may also be withheld from Field Day/Variety Show activities.

Dances & the 8th Grade After Party
The middle school sponsors a few dances (& the 8th Grade After Party) each year (see the OCMS Calendar of Events for dates). Attendance is restricted to Oglethorpe County Middle School students only. Once students enter these events, they are not able to leave unless a parent picks them up. Tickets for these events are sold to pre-approved students in advance and a student must purchase a ticket in advance in order to attend. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Pre-approved students must remember to bring their purchased ticket to these events or they will be charged again at the door.

Students who have been suspended previous to the dance are not eligible to attend. Students who have been written up for vaping, theft, or vandalism will also not be eligible to attend dances for a prescribed time. Students who owe fees or fines may not be eligible to attend dances. Additionally, students in XLT (Extended Learning Time) are not eligible to attend and any student on Intensive Supervision must have a parent/guardian chaperone the entire time that he/she is in attendance at these events. Students must be present on the day of these events in order to attend and may not check out early. The school dress code is enforced at these events. All parents are encouraged to chaperone.

Fundraisers
Students may have the opportunity to participate in PTO-sponsored fund raisers. These items may be sold at school. No other items may be sold at school without prior approval from the principal. Items sold without permission will be confiscated without consideration for monetary loss.

Lockers
For a nominal fee of $2.00, students may rent a locker for the year. Each locker has a built-in combination lock. No personal locks may be brought from home. Lockers are school property thus school officials have legal access to all lockers. Students are to keep lockers locked at all times and should not share their locker or the combination with another student.

Flowers, Balloons, etc.
The school will not accept delivery of flowers, balloons, or other items not vital to the needs of the student at school.

Tuition for Out-of-County Students
Oglethorpe County Schools accept students who reside outside of the county. Tuition is set by the Oglethorpe County Board of Education each year and can be found by contacting the school board office. Tuition must be paid by money order when the application is turned in. If for any reason the student does not meet the criteria for enrollment, the tuition payment will be returned. Otherwise, tuition payments are nonrefundable. Out-of-county students wanting to enroll should complete the enrollment process with the central office.

Vending Machines
Coke sponsored vending machines containing water and juice are available around campus. Students may make purchases before and after school and at lunch/recess time. Only bottles of water may be taken into the classrooms. All other drinks will need to be discarded or placed in lockers. Neither the front office nor the cafeteria is able to make change for students. Refunds will not be issued from school. If students lose money in the machine there is a toll free number to call.

Field Trips
Field trips can be fun and educational if certain expectations are met. We do not anticipate anyone being denied the privilege of attending field trips. However, any student who meets one or more of the following criteria in the six weeks prior to the field trip might be required to have a parent/guardian attend as a chaperone or may not be able to participate in the field trip:

1. Students with three (3) or more school write-ups OR two (2) or more bus write-ups, or
2. Students who have been written up for vaping, theft, vandalism, or owe fees or fines or
3. Students who have been suspended from school for one or more days

*Additionally, students may be denied the privilege of attending field trips if recent academic efforts or performance are collectively determined to not be satisfactory by the student's teachers and/or administration.

Hall Passes
Students are not permitted in the halls during class periods unless they are accompanied by a teacher or have a hall pass from an authorized staff member. Under certain administratively approved circumstances, teachers may reserve the right to require some students to leave their cell phone in class while visiting the restroom if they've shown a history of irresponsible behavior or time management outside of the classroom or if other circumstances apply.

Disaster Alert
In case of a fire or other emergency, the signal to evacuate the building will be a repeated sounding of the fire alarm and repeated flashing of emergency warning lights. There is an evacuation plan posted in each room which shows the evacuation route for that particular room.

Passes for Leaving School
Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds at any time during the school day without permission from the school office. If a student must leave the building because of illness, a medical appointment, or an emergency, a parent/guardian must sign him/her out in the office. Failure to follow the proper procedure will be considered an unexcused absence and/or skipping.

Withdrawals and Transfers
The procedures for withdrawals or the transferring of students to another school district are as follows:

1. Secure authorization of withdrawal or transfer note from parent or guardian.
2. Obtain appropriate forms from the office.
3. Have the forms filled out by teachers, return all school books, devices, and property, and make sure all fees are paid.
4. Empty your locker of all items.
5. Take completed forms to the office for final clearance.

Personal Property
Most personal property should remain at home. Playing cards, gaming cards, dice, toys, squishies, expensive items, electronic devices, all other personal items and large sums of money should *not* be brought to school. Teachers may collect these from students. Confiscated items may be claimed from the office by a parent. The school shall not be responsible for replacing lost or stolen personal items.

Lost, Abandoned or Prohibited Items
Throughout the school year, students occasionally lose or misplace items of personal property. On some occasions, students also bring items to school that are in fact prohibited under one or more rules in the school code of conduct. Unless seized by law enforcement for criminal prosecution, parents are encouraged to retrieve items from the lost/found as soon as possible. However, please be advised that the school cannot store lost, abandoned, or prohibited items indefinitely, and that at a minimum, the school will donate to charity or otherwise dispose of ALL property maintained in lost/found at the end of each quarter of school. Students found to have taken lost items that do not below to them may be subject to disciplinary action. Also, please be reminded that the school is not responsible for lost, stolen, damaged, or destroyed items or articles of personal property students bring to school.

Class Transitions
When students change classes there will be a large number of people in the hallway. In order to keep the noise and disruption at a minimum, students are asked to walk quietly and quickly on the right-hand side of the hall. The four minutes allotted for changing classes is adequate time if it is not wasted. Wasted time in the restroom between classes may result in being assigned to only use the clinic restroom.

Rooms
Rooms is a secure, two-way messaging platform that allows families to communicate directly with their child's school. Teachers can send broadcasts, announcements, and individual messages to parents, guardians, and students. In turn, guardians can message teachers and school staff. Rooms is built into our Oglethorpe County Schools mobile app, so there's no need to download a separate app to stay connected. You can easily chat with teachers and access important district-wide information—including lunch menus, events, announcements, and more—all in one place. For detailed instructions specific to Oglethorpe County Schools, please visit our support page: https://www.oglethorpe.k12.ga.us/page/room-support.

Media Center
OCMS faculty and staff encourage frequent use of the media center. Students may check out books for a two week period. The media center is available for study or reference work at other times if a student has a pass. Items thought to be harmful to minors as defined by Oglethorpe County Schools Board Policy IKBC may be reported according to steps defined within the policy.

Right to Know Statement
In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Oglethorpe County School System 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 principal of Oglethorpe County Middle School at 706-743-8146.

Cafeteria

Students are encouraged to participate in the lunch program. A choice of meals is provided to students. Students are to use the cafeteria in the following manner:

1. A student should take his/her turn in the lunch line.
2. If it seems necessary for any individual or group to be served out of order, permission must be secured from the teacher supervising lunch.
3. Students should leave the lunch table in a clean and orderly condition. Milk containers, napkins, etc., must be put in the waste container. Dropped items should be picked up from the floor and from under the table.
4. After eating, trays and silverware should be returned to the dish washing area. No utensils (plastic or otherwise) should leave the cafeteria.
5. No food (breakfast and lunch) may be taken out of the lunchroom without teacher permission.
6. No glass or squirt bottles may be brought to school.

****Students who have issues with messes or behavior issues may be assigned to a particular seat in the cafeteria.**

Meal Charge Policy

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to deposit money into their meal account at the beginning of each month. However, prepayments can be made on a daily or weekly basis or as far in advance as they would like. Student payments by cash should be placed in a sealed envelope that has the child's name and lunch number on it. Checks should have the child's name and meal number on it.

Meal Charges

1. Students may charge meals, but no more than five (5) meals may be charged at all Oglethorpe County Schools (PreK-12). Extra milk or juice can be deducted from the meal account if money is available. Extra items or a second meal must be paid for when purchased and must meet the Smart Snack standards. Upon approval by the school principal, report cards may be held at the end of the year until outstanding bills are paid.
2. Procedure for letting parents know about charges:
    - Cashiers and/or managers will make phone calls to the parent/guardian and may e-mail the parent/guardian when charges start to occur.
    - If there is no response from a parent/guardian, charge letters will be sent home with students at least once a week.
    - If there is still no response from a parent/guardian, the cashier will notify the parent/guardian by letter that a substitute lunch may be served to the student after five lunch charges. This letter is placed in his or her teacher's mailbox. The teacher will give it to the student to take home.
    - If necessary, the School Nutrition office will also try to contact the parent/guardian either by email or phone to inform them that their child is subject to receive a substitute meal if charges are not paid. This lunch will consist of a cheese sandwich or a peanut butter sandwich, fruit and milk. Breakfast will consist of two pieces of toast, fruit and a milk. The student will receive this lunch until charges are paid.
    - Each parent/guardian should check to see if their child has information from the school's lunchroom, just as they would with their child's school work.
3. Delinquent and Bad Debt Collection Procedure
    - Once unpaid meal charges are more than 30 days overdue, it is considered a delinquent debt. This debt is classified as delinquent as long as it is considered collectable and efforts are being made to collect it.
    - Once the delinquent meal charges are considered uncollectable, they shall be converted to bad debt and is written off as an operating loss. This loss may not be absorbed by the nonprofit school food service account, but must be restored using non-federal funds. These funds will come from private donations.

Free and Reduced Applications

Free and Reduced Meal applications are provided to all students at the beginning of each school year. A FAMILY FORM WILL BE USED. **ONLY ONE FORM PER FAMILY SHOULD BE SUBMITTED.** PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD SEND THIS FORM BACK TO SCHOOL BY **ONE** OF THEIR CHILDREN. A new application must be filled out each year. All applications are confidential. All new students must pay for meals until their application has been approved unless they have a sibling that already has the free or reduced status. **At any time during the school year, if a family's income decreases or the size of their family increases, an application for a Free or Reduced Price Meal may be completed to determine eligibility.**

Guidelines for Administering Medication

The administration of medication by school staff shall be permitted during the school day if it is not possible for the parent, guardian, child's physician, or some other person authorized by the parent or guardian to administer the medication. The guidelines set forth below should be followed:

1. Students should bring prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or dietary supplements to school only when it is necessary for the student to take it during school hours. Any student not complying with this policy, possessing any medication on the school campus, and/or sharing/distributing prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or dietary supplements shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the school district drug policy.
2. Any medication brought to school must be in its original container with the nature of the medication clearly indicated. All prescription medication must be in the original container with the name of the student, prescribing physician, and instructions regarding dosage clearly indicated.
3. All prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or dietary supplements must be brought to the nurse's office as soon as the student arrives on the campus in the morning and must be accompanied by a note from the parent or guardian stating what the medication is, why the student is required to take it during the school day, the dosage to be taken by the student, and at what times. Where applicable, the note should also state any potential adverse reaction the student may experience.
4. Written parental permission must be given each school year and/or when changes in the medication occur.
5. The parent or guardian shall authorize the staff member administering the medication to speak or correspond directly with the child's physician in the event the staff member deems it appropriate or necessary.
6. Medications will be stored in a locked enclosure in the school office. To the extent practical, medication will be administered in a private manner, away from other students.
7. The staff member administering the medication shall be responsible for maintaining a log for each student specifying the name of the student and the name of the medication.
8. Parents must immediately notify the school of any changes in medication. The school will attempt to notify the parent one week before more medication is needed at school.
9. No over the counter medication or feminine products will be provided by the school to the students.
10. Any unused or expired medication should be picked up by parents by the last day of school. Any leftover medication will be properly discarded in keeping with local health department policy.
11. A student for whom the school has on file supporting medical documentation may carry at all times with parental/guardian permission inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine for allergic reactions, and all necessary supplies and equipment to perform monitoring and treatment functions authorized by the student's diabetes medical management plan. Students authorized to self-administer such medications shall be instructed not to permit any other student to handle, possess, or otherwise attempt to use his/her medication and shall be informed that violations of such instructions will be dealt with in accordance with the student code of conduct.
12. Nurses or other school employees are authorized to administer auto-injectable epinephrine, if available, to a student who is having an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse reaction and albuterol sulfate for respiratory distress, regardless of whether the students has a prescription for these medications.

**Students in violations of the above guidelines are subject to disciplinary action.

A Note Regarding Implied Curriculum

Formal Curriculum (also known as explicit or written curriculum) refers to the standards and lessons taught within each classroom. Implied Curriculum (also known as implicit or hidden curriculum) refers to the lessons learned indirectly through the organizational structure, nature, and established routines dealing with the operation of the school. Although the primary focus of the school deals with learning within the classroom in order to prepare students for graduation and beyond, much of the preparation may be imparted through routines, procedures, policies, and rules that hold students accountable and responsible for various tasks in order to instill in them the life skills needed as future adults and citizens. The student code of conduct, the sportsmanship policy, the attendance policy, the tardy policy, the cell phone policy, the dress code, and various other components dealing with the operation of OCMS are utilized to ***imply*** the importance of being the best person one is capable of being.

OCMS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct/Discipline Plan is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On school buses and at school bus stops.

Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board Rule 160-4-8-.16, Unsafe School Choice Option.

The General Assembly of Georgia requires that this code of conduct include language encouraging parents and guardians to inform their children on the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community. Parents and students are required to acknowledge receipt of the code of conduct.

Authority of the Principal

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

Teacher Authority

The Superintendent fully supports the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-737 and 738.

Progressive Step System of Discipline

The Student Code of Conduct and the step system of discipline sets high standards of behavior for the students to follow and gives students incentive to improve their behavior. Students who break school rules often face predetermined consequences that are ascending in severity. One important exception is that severe inappropriate behavior (e.g., fighting) will result in severe consequences that don't necessarily fall under the step system. A real plus to the step system is that it gives students a chance to redeem themselves and move back down the ladder or steps. If a student stays out of trouble for three weeks, his or her step on the discipline ladder may be frozen at the administrator's discretion. Record keeping by the teachers and administrators is an important part of the step system. Teachers will post and review classroom rules with all their students at the beginning of the school year.

*Minor offenses are those that are less severe and are often handled in the classroom by the teacher. Examples include loud talking, gum chewing, throwing paper, coming to class unprepared, etc. Students may be kept from going on field trips or participating in reward activities, etc. if they are continually referred to administration because of these behaviors.

*Major offenses are those that are more severe in nature. These offenses will be handled by the administration. Examples are:

a. Fighting, physical assault, or battery of other students, school personnel, or persons attending school related functions;
b. Verbal assault and/or aggression, including threats of violence against school personnel, other students or persons attending school-related functions (this includes any type of electronic communication as well);
c. Defiance of authority, insubordination, or disobeying the directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff;
d. Inappropriate physical contact of any type, including contact of a sexual nature;
e. Disrespectful conduct or interaction, including use of vulgar or profane language, toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions;
f. Classroom disruptions, refusing to complete school work, not staying awake, or disrupting the operation of the school;
g. Bullying;
h. Use of tobacco or tobacco products or items of a tobacco like nature or used as a substitute for tobacco products (this includes, but it not limited to e-cigarettes, electronic vape pens, vaporizers, and the like);
i. Use of vulgar or profane language;
j. Skipping class, being out of an assigned or permitted area, or any violations of compulsory attendance laws;
k. Any possession of a weapon at school, on school grounds, or at a school function or activity;
l. Sexual and or/racial harassment of school personnel or other students;
m. Stealing;
n. Inappropriate use of personal or school-issued electronic devices including but not limited to bypassing school monitoring software/filters or making use of virtual privacy networks (VPNs);
o. Damage, defacement, or destruction of school or personal property, including willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of another student, the school, or any person legitimately at the school, as well as marking, defacing,

vandalizing, applying graffiti to, or destroying the property of another student, the school, or any person legitimately at the school during school hours or off school hours;

p. Unlawful use or possession of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, vapes & electronic smoking devices or supplies, or substances represented to be alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, vapes & electronic smoking devices or supplies;
q. Failing to comply with health regulations, guidelines, or instructions set forth by the school or school personnel
r. Encouraging, inciting, advising, or counseling others to engage in any prohibited act;
s. Anything that is illegal;
t. Willful, persistent, and/or excessive referrals to administration for violations of the student code of conduct or other miscellaneous basic rules of conduct;
u. Any action that interferes w/ the school's responsibility to teach & the student's or their classmates' opportunity to learn.

**Violations such as possession or use of alcohol and/or drugs, use of a weapon, bullying, threats of violence, physical contact of a sexual nature and other serious offenses may skip the step system. These offenses may lead to a discipline hearing which could invoke expulsion, suspension, assignment to the alternative school program, etc. These types of violations will almost certainly result in a required parent conference, and/or referral to the juvenile authorities and/or referral to the school counselor.

NOTE: Georgia law mandates that upon a tribunal finding that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

Referral to law enforcement or juvenile court officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The school will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer as outlined in Code Section 20-2-754.

Parents or students may elect not to contest whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved also by the disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer.

Before a student is suspended for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. If the student is suspended, the student's parents will be notified if possible. School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence surrounding a situation necessitates their involvement or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported.

School officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Students vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Cell phones/multi-media/electronic devices taken from students due to possession and/or use in violation of school rules are subject to having their contents searched. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities that occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

Restrictions of Social Time

When a student has repeated academic or behavior problems or a poor attitude or has committed one or more minor offenses, the consequence for these misbehaviors might involve loss of that student's social time. Examples of this include before-school detention, lunch/recess detention, and/or community (school) service tasks. Another restriction used is *intensive supervision* which minimizes a student's contact with his/her peers during class change times during the day. Students who are *non*-compliant with these various restrictions leave school administrators with few options besides in- or out-of-school suspension or alternative school.

Disciplinary Steps

The procedures set forth below represent a guideline to be followed when a student is referred to the office. Minor offenses, as determined by the administration, could result in any number of consequences including, but not limited to, various types of restrictions being placed on a student's social time, community (i.e., school) service, and/or increased and intensive supervision. The Step System itself involves the following:

1. 1 day of In-School Suspension (ISS)
2. 2 days of In-School Suspension
3. 3 days of In-School Suspension
4. 4 days of In-School Suspension. A parent conference is requested.
5. 1 day out of school suspension. Parent conference required before student may return to school.
6. 2 day out of school suspension. Parent conference requested. Offers to enroll in alternative school may be discussed.
7. 3 day out of school suspension. Parent conference requested. Offers to enroll in alternative school may be discussed.
8. 4 day out of school suspension. Parent conference requested. Offers to enroll in alternative school may be discussed.
9. 5 day out of school suspension. Parent conference requested. Offers to enroll in alternative school may be discussed.
10. 10 day out of school suspension w/ placement in an alternative school program or other severe consequences may be assigned.

*Consequences may also include additional restrictions or the loss of privileges (e.g., athletics/clubs, field trips, dances, reward days, field day, etc).

In-School Suspension (ISS) Guidelines

Philosophy: The purpose of ISS will be to provide a restricted environment for students who exhibit behaviors that make it necessary to restrict attendance in their regular classes. ISS will provide a structured learning environment with emphasis on behavioral change. Students will be counted as present while in ISS. They will report directly to a designated area once they arrive at school. They will not go to 1st period.

ISS Rules

- Students will attend every day assigned. All absences/time lost from ISS will be made up before returning to regular classes.
- Students will eat lunch separately from other students.
- Students must bring their own pencil, paper, and materials to ISS.
- Students must turn in personal electronic devices when checking in to ISS. They will be returned at the end of the day.
- Students shall sit appropriately in their seats and may talk only when given permission by the teacher.
- Students will complete all tasks to the level of their teacher's satisfaction before being released from ISS.
- All regular school rules and regulations will be enforced.

Violation of ISS Rules

Violation of the above rules may result in the following additional days in ISS, suspension from school, or various other outcomes.

Consequences for Fighting and Other Similar Behavior

- 1st Offense—Minimum of 1 day suspension + minimum of 1 day of ISS + parent conference
- 2nd Offense—Minimum of 2 days suspension + minimum of 1 day of ISS + parent conference.
- 3rd Offense—Minimum of 3 days suspension + minimum of 1 day of ISS + parent conference.

NOTES:

- Students will be sent home and/or to ISS for "time out" following fights.
- Parents will be called when a student is injured.
- Longer suspensions may be given for more serious fights or if the student continues to be combative after someone intervenes in the conflict (even if it is the student's first fight).
- Different consequences may be given to students involved in a fight according to the student's role and prior disciplinary record. For example, if the teacher or administrator establishes that one student was the aggressor and the other was not, the aggressor may get the maximum number of days suspension (e.g., 10 days) while the other student involved could be given lesser consequences. Consequences will be given to both participants despite who initiates a fight. It is understood that there is a fine line between self-defense and being engaged in a fight.
- Teachers, counselors or administrators will make the distinction between inappropriate physical contact such as shoving, playfully hitting, etc. and actual fighting.
- Students may get credit for school work done at home during a suspension if the family requests, picks up, and then returns completed assignments within 3 days of the student's return to school.

The Academy (Alternative School)

The principal may assign selected students to the alternative school program (The Academy) which operates separately from the regular school program. Candidates for the alternative school program (The Academy) are pupils who are chronically disruptive, uncooperative, and/or frequently absent, as well as those whose behavior has put them in conflict with legal authorities or anyone who may pose a threat to others. Students assigned to the alternative school program (The Academy) must remain in that program for at least one semester. Credit towards course completion is awarded while there. Transportation to or from the alternative school program (The Academy) may be denied if the student is assigned as a result of a bus problem or if bus discipline occurs after being assigned to the alternative school. Students assigned to the alternative school program (The Academy) may not attend school events outside of the school day (i.e. OCMS/OCHS athletic events, dances, etc.). Students returning to OCMS from alternative school will be required to agree to a behavior contract outlining expectations to avoid being reassigned to alternative school.

Furnishing Information to Law Enforcement Officials

Upon request from any sheriff, school resource officer, policeman, detective, state or federal drug enforcement representative, or other state or local law enforcement official, school officials shall furnish any information in their possession or control relating to any violation of these rules which reasonably might be considered to be a violation of any criminal law. Upon receipt of a request the disclosure of such information shall be made in the presence of the principal or his/her designee.

False Reporting

Any student misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student will be punished. During investigations of misconduct by students, those found to misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information will also be held accountable.

Interrogation and Searches

School lockers, bags, desks, confiscated cell phones or other electronic communication devices, and school property shall be subject to inspection by school authorities at all times without further notice to students or parents. Such searches may be conducted using "drug-sniffing" dogs or metal detectors. Students shall be advised each year that the school has reserved this right. Student searches shall be conducted by the school officials with or without the aid of law enforcement officers.

Georgia Law, the Code of Student Conduct and Parental Responsibility

As required by law (O.C.G.S. § 20-2-735), OCMS encourages parents to inform their children that criminal activity (which includes sexual misconduct) can lead to criminal charges and penalties.

Threats, Verbal, & Physical Assaults, & Violence
Verbal assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions may result in immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon a teacher or other school personnel and/or possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.

Physical assault or battery, including sexual battery, of other students, or persons attending school-related functions may result in possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.

Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel may result in immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher or other school personnel and/or expulsion for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public schools for acts of physical violence found by a tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact which causes physical harm to another unless such physical contact or physical harm was in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Code Section 16-3-21. The Board may authorize the student to attend alternative school for the period of the expulsion. Provided, however, that if such student is in kindergarten through grade six, then the Board upon the recommendation of the tribunal may permit the student to re-enroll in regular programs for grades 9 through 12 and provided further that if the Board does not operate an alternative education program for grades kindergarten through grade six, then the Board may permit the student in kindergarten through grade six who commits such an act to re-enroll in the public school system. The student shall be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior. Possible punishments may include expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension for students found by a tribunal to have intentionally made physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another.

Responsibility to Report Inappropriate Behavior
Students sometimes violate school rules. To help ensure that OCMS is a safe place for students, employees and others, students should always report misbehavior to school officials (i.e., teachers, counselors and administrators). Responsible adults need to be contacted immediately about any situation that violates school rules, substantially interferes with the learning process, and/or creates a safety issue of any type. This is especially true when it concerns drugs, alcohol, weapons, harassment and/or threats of ANY type. We operate with an "open door" policy – the main thing is to tell a school official the truth about what you know. It is your responsibility to do this, and when you do, we assure confidentiality.

School-Issued Electronic Devices & the Technology Acceptable Use Policy
Oglethorpe County Schools seek to offer students the very finest education possible. In today's fast-paced environment, digital access to content and continuous communication are integral to how we learn and work. Accessing information in a digital format allows students to work in real time with multiple media formats and a host of collaborators. Thanks to available resources, students at OCMS will be issued an electronic device to be used for instructional purposes. The use of a school-issued device is a privilege and not a right. **Unacceptable use or abuse of school electronics may result in the loss of such a privilege along with a host of other consequences. Damage to or loss of school-issued electronic devices may result in fees or fines associated with the repair or replacement costs of the device. Students owing fees or fines for damages to electronic devices may face disciplinary actions as well as be withheld from social time and/or school privileges/extra-curricular activities until fees and fines are paid in full.** School-issued electronic devices should never be taken home unless deemed allowable due to distance learning, should be appropriately stored at school while not in use, should be in a school-issued case while in transport between classes, should not be marked or defaced in any way, and should be returned to the appropriate location at the end of each day for charging. Students and parents must sign the OCMS Technology Acceptable Use Policy agreeing to abide by the policy before being issued an electronic device. The policy, in its entirely, can be found on the school website. Device insurance is available for purchase to avoid the cost of damages.

Account Sign In Record

Site Name	Web Address	Username	Password
Laptop login	X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X		
PowerSchool	_____@students.oglethorpe.k12.ga.us		
IXL	ixl.com/signin/oglethorpems		
Google Classroom			

Reminder: Logging in as someone else is a violation of the OCMS Technology Acceptable Use Policy and will result in disciplinary action. The information above should be kept private and not shared with others.

Miscellaneous Basic Rules of Conduct

Students are asked to observe the following basic rules of conduct. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in consequences which may include discipline referrals (see Step System of Discipline for more info about this).

1. Students should avoid vulgar and profane language as well as references to vulgar or profane subject matter.
2. The volume of a student's voice should not disturb others.
3. Students should keep the campus clean.
4. Fighting, bullying, harassing or threatening another person is unacceptable. Any of these incidents should be reported to a teacher, counselor or administrator.
5. Students are to obey and be respectful of all school employees, adult volunteers and chaperones.
6. Skipping class may result in disciplinary action. Students must attend all classes unless excused.
7. Students should always be where they are supposed to be, when they are supposed to be there; this includes class time as well as times allotted for breakfast, before school, during lunch, during recess, and while waiting for bus loads.
8. Inappropriate behavior in the restroom of any kind may result in being assigned to only be eligible to use the clinic restroom. Those assigned to only use the clinic restroom will receive an additional step referral if found in violation of using their assigned restroom. At no time is it appropriate to share stalls in the restroom as well as take pictures/videos in restrooms.
9. Academic dishonesty, commonly referred to as cheating, is not permitted. Students must do their own work unless otherwise instructed by the teacher. Students giving/receiving unauthorized information on any work may be given a "zero".
10. There will be no tobacco/electronic smoking device usage on school buses, in the school buildings, or on the school grounds. Students found in possession of or linked to the use of tobacco/electronic smoking devices/supplies will be given an assigned seat for the cafeteria, assigned to only be eligible to use the clinic restroom for a prescribed time (that could be for the remainder of the year), and may be assigned to take courses to mitigate the use of tobacco/electronic smoking devices. Dances, Field Day/Variety Show, and other social events may also be limited as well. Additionally, a juvenile complaint will be submitted to the OCSD for possession or use of tobacco/electronic smoking devices.
11. Being under the influence of or in possession of any type of alcoholic beverage or drug on any school property (including buses) or at a school-sponsored event will be cause for suspension with the possibility of a juvenile complaint to the Sheriff's Department, a discipline hearing and/or further consequences such as expulsion.
12. Possession or use of a knife or any other object that might be considered a weapon is prohibited.
13. Any act directed toward a person that degrades or demeans another person is prohibited.
14. Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, up to and including sexual harassment as used in connection with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
15. Transmitting sexually explicit or suggestive material to other students at school or circulating such material at school through electronic devices or in any other manner is prohibited.
16. Violating the school's/school system's acceptable use of the Internet/electronic resources agreement/policy is prohibited.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Illegal Drugs and Intoxicating Beverages

School Related Offenses:

It shall be a violation of school rules for any student to possess, use, or offer to sell, barter, give away, exchange, or to be under the influence of an intoxicating alcoholic beverage, narcotic drugs, drug paraphernalia, any controlled substances referred to in O.C.G.A. Section 16-13-21, et. seq., any drug substitute, CBD products with or without THC, or any products containing Cannabidiol (CBD) or THC, including but not limited to products containing THC-8, THC-9, and/or THC-10 whether in the form of electronic smoking/vaping cartridges, gummies, tablets, capsules, or any other form for consumption.

Non-School Related Offenses:

A) Administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for conduct which occurs: (1) on the school grounds at any time; (2) off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event; or (3 in route to and from school or a school activity. Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school related actions by students, at any time of the year, which have a direct and immediate impact on school discipline, the educational function of the school or the welfare of the students and staff. A student who has been charged with committing a criminal act while off campus is subject to disciplinary action and may be excluded from school. Such student whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare and/or safety of others, or whose presence poses a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which, disrupts the educational process are all subject to other disciplinary action.

B) It shall be a violation of school rules for any student to (i) sell, barter, exchange, give away, or (ii) offer to sell, barter, exchange or give away, or (iii) to possess with the intention to sell, barter, exchange or give away, any intoxicating beverage, beer, wine or any narcotic drugs or other controlled substances referred to in O.C.G.A. Section 16-13-21, et. seq., any drug substitute, CBD products with or without THC, or any products containing Cannabidiol (CBD) or THC, including but not limited to products containing THC-8, THC-9, and/or THC-10 whether in the form of electronic smoking/vaping cartridges, gummies, tablets, capsules, or any other form for consumption on school grounds or at any school sponsored meeting, event, athletic contest, or other function, or at any student-sponsored function or event held primarily for students or whenever students constitute a substantial part of the persons attending or for whom such event or function is directed, at any place, without regard to whether it is on school grounds or at any school or student-sponsored function or not.

Definitions:

As used in these rules, narcotic drugs or controlled substances shall include, without limitation, any of the following:

A) Any substance held out or offered by any student for sale, barter, or giving away where such student by his or her actions in any way suggests, implies, represents, or acts in such manner indicating that such substance is a narcotic drug or controlled substance as referred to above.

B) Any prescription narcotic drug or controlled substance where the student possessing or offering same for sale, barter, exchange or giving away same (i) is either not legally entitled to have such prescription narcotic drug or controlled substance; (ii) offers to sell, barter, exchange, or give same away; or (iii) where such prescription drug or controlled substance is not in the original, labeled container.

Penalties

A) Enumerated: Violation of any of these rules shall be punished by permanent expulsion from the public schools of the district, expulsion or suspension for the remainder of the quarter, semester, or school year, suspension for any lesser time, in-house suspension, assignment to special schools for disciplinary students maintained or provided for by the school district or any lesser punishment at the discretion of the board, hearing, or other responsible authority hearing and determining the matter.

B) Guidelines: In determining the penalty to be imposed, consideration shall be given to the age and intelligence of the student, the seriousness of the offense, the prior disciplinary record of the student, and any circumstances showing aggravation or mitigation. Where the prior record of the student is being considered, the student shall be advised thereof, and permitted to explain same or present evidence in mitigation thereof. Generally, offenses involving sale, distribution, bartering, exchanging, giving away or possession for any of these purposes, are considered to be of more serious nature.

Bullying

OCMS believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be allowed. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system. Bullying is defined as follows: An act that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
    a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
    b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education or otherwise substantially infringing upon the rights of a student;
    c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
    d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Simply put, bullying is aggressive behavior that is intended to cause distress or harm, involves an imbalance of power or strength between the aggressor and the victim, and occurs repeatedly over time. Bullying may take many forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyber.

The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities including, but not limited to, extracurricular activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

Procedures may be developed at each school encouraging a teacher or other school employee, student, parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in the person's name, at the person's option, to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity. Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying is required to immediately report it to the school principal. Any report will be appropriately investigated by the administration based on the nature of the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented and what other steps should be taken. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will also be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with school procedures.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school. Each school shall provide referrals, as appropriate under the circumstances, to age-appropriate interventions and services, including, but not limited to, counseling services, for students who have been found to have committed an offensive of bullying or are targets or suspected victims of bullying. Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a target or suspected victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically. Students and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the student/parent handbooks.

Student Transportation and Safety

Safety is the primary concern in transporting students to and from school. Any behavior that would distract the driver is inappropriate. The following rules are to be followed on the bus:

1. The driver is in charge of the bus and all pupils aboard. Students are expected to obey the driver or school administration promptly and respectfully.
2. Always be on time. The driver cannot wait beyond his/her regular schedule for those who are tardy.
3. Wait in an orderly line off the street or road.
4. Ride only the bus assigned by school officials.
5. Do not run toward a school bus while it is in motion.
6. Do not try to get on or off the bus or move about within the bus while it is in motion.
7. Pupils must occupy seats assigned to them by the bus driver or school officials and remain seated correctly at all times. Do not change seats unless given permission by the driver.
8. Behave on the bus as you are expected to behave in the classroom. Rude, discourteous, annoying behavior, vulgarity, unacceptable language, fighting, pushing, and offensive acts will not be tolerated.
9. Do not engage in any activity or excessive mischief which might divert the driver's attention, such as:
    a. Loud talking, laughing, or unnecessary confusion.
    b. Unnecessary conversation with the drivers.
    c. Extending any part of the body out of the bus windows or doors or into the aisle.
    d. Hitting, slapping, pushing, poking, etc. others.
10. Do not engage in any activity which might cause damage or excessive wear to the bus or other property. Also, make sure that all pens, pencils or other sharp objects remain in book bags
11. The following activities are prohibited at all times:
    a. Smoking, eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the bus; also, do not litter on the bus.
    b. Spitting or throwing anything in or from the bus.
    c. Possessing knives, sharp objects, or any other object that could be considered a weapon.
    d. Bringing animals/pets on the bus.
    e. Tampering with mechanical equipment, accessories, and controls of the bus.
    f. Sexual Harassment or any other sexual activity.
12. Students will not leave the bus on the way to school or home without permission of the driver. The driver will not give permission except in case of personal emergency or upon written request of the principal, assistant principal, or the c*ustodial* parents. No student will be allowed to meet the bus anywhere other than the designated bus stop.
13. Students must be courteous to the driver, fellow students, pedestrians, and drivers of other vehicles at all times.

Bus Discipline

As stated above, safety is the most important concern we have with regard to bus transportation. Oglethorpe County Schools transport about 1,800 students each day. We will not tolerate students who cause less than safe conditions for our riders. Generally speaking, the rules we have in the classrooms apply to the buses, plus all riders are expected to sit in a safe riding position and talk quietly among their seatmates.

Normally, the bus driver is the only adult on the bus, thus he/she is responsible for reporting any inappropriate behavior.

The procedural steps set forth below represent some of the actions that could be taken whenever a student is referred to the school administration. The actions shown below are intended solely as guidelines.

- 1st Step — Written warning
- 2nd Step — 1 Day off ALL OCS buses
- 3rd Step — 3 Days off ALL OCS buses
- 4th Step — 5 Days off ALL OCS buses
- 5th Step — 10 Days off ALL OCS buses
- 6th Step — Removed from ALL OCS buses remainder of school year

Serious offenses on the bus such as bullying, fighting, drugs, weapons, sexual harassment, disrespect towards the bus driver, etc. could result in more serious consequences. These consequences may include a meeting between the parent/guardian and appropriate school officials to develop a bus contract, removal from the bus, suspension from school, exclusion from graduation exercises, and/or referral to law enforcement by school personnel.

The following specific provisions shall govern student conduct and safety on all school buses:

(1) All provisions of the Student Code of Conduct apply to behavior on the school bus, including but not limited to, acts of physical violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, bullying as defined by subsection (a) of the Code Section 20-2-751.4, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, 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;

(2) A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district officials must be held to form a school bus behavior contract whenever:

- A student is found to have engaged in bullying; or
- A student is found to have engaged in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

The school bus behavior contract shall provide for age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Provisions may include, but are not limited to, assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

These provisions regarding use of a bus behavior contract are not to be construed to limit the instances when other code of conduct violations may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

(3) Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones; pagers; audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus; and

(4) Students 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.

When a student is removed from the bus for the remainder of the year, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision by contacting the Transportation Director.

Consideration may be given to those who have a prolonged length of time between offenses. At the discretion of the bus driver and/or administration, one or more steps in the preceding procedures may be redeemed.

Bus drivers and/or school administrators will gladly discuss your child's behavior. Your up-front cooperation is needed to help your student to become a safe passenger. The safety of our students is always our primary concern. Your child's school and your child's bus driver need to know about any changes regarding "after school" transportation. If you wish for your child to leave school on another bus or with another person, you must send a written note to school with a specific request. Your help is needed to make the bus experience a positive one.

Weapons at School

Possession or use of a weapon, as provided for in Code Section 16-11-127.1:

A student shall not possess, use, handle, or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon. Weapons may include, but are not limited to:

1. Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.
2. Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, dermablade or other cosmetology tools containing a razor, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of 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 instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, any stun gun or taser, any items deemed by administration to be a weapon imposter or analogue. Such terms shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year expulsion. The Superintendent shall have the authority either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing to reduce the mandated one-year expulsion under circumstances where the one-year expulsion appears excessive to the Superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment. Students who possess other weapons or hazardous objects as described in paragraph 2 will be subject to discipline as determined by the principal to be appropriate based on the seriousness of the offense, the age of the student and other relevant factors. This may include ISS, OSS, and referral to tribunal.

Any item used as, or seen as, a weapon represents a serious threat to the safety of students and staff. If a student is discovered to have a weapon in his/her possession (which includes the weapon being in his/her locker, purse, bag or other belongings), or if the student is found to have handled a weapon, the following consequences may be imposed:

1. 10 day suspension from school.
2. Request for district level discipline hearing.
3. Recommendation of expulsion from school for one calendar year.
4. Notification to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

NOTES:

- Threatening to use a weapon to injure a student or staff member in person or online could also result in the above consequences.
- **If a student discovers that he/she has brought a pocket knife or other such potential weapon to school without intending to do so, he/she can avoid the above consequences by voluntarily turning it over to a school employee (e.g., teacher, administrator, etc) upon entering school property.**

Academic Dishonesty

At OCMS, the definition of academic dishonesty (cheating) is defined as, but is not limited to:

1. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid or access on tests or other assignments
2. Providing access to computer accounts or files with or without passwords
3. Copying homework, assignments, maintenance sheets, and the like
4. Using unauthorized study aids
5. Going against directions in seeking outside assistance
6. Turning in work completed by someone else
7. Plagiarism

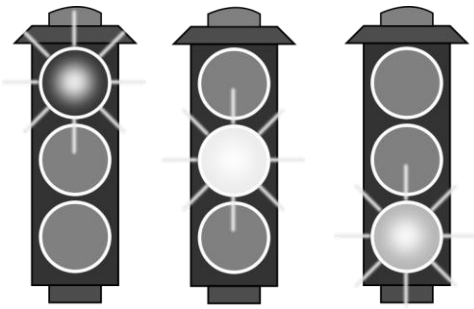
**Note: Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to taking another person's ideas, work, or writings or the imitation of them and presenting them as your own, including from the Internet, without proper referencing.

8. Stealing tests or using stolen tests or answers
9. Altering grades (grade book, report cards, tests, computer grade programs, etc.)
10. Making unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) resources unless explicitly allowed by the teacher for specific assignments.

Penalties for Cheating

A student who is caught cheating will be subject to the following penalties:

1st incident: 0 on test or assignment and 1 day ISS unless another consequence is agreed upon by teacher and administrator
2nd incident: 0 on test or assignment and 2 days ISS unless another consequence is agreed upon by teacher and administrator
3rd incident: 0 on test or assignment and 3 days ISS unless another consequence is agreed upon by teacher and administrator
4th-∞th incidents: Administrative Discretion



Teachers May Use This AI Use Stoplight Guide

RED – No AI use is permitted; all independent work is to be completed on your own; use your own ideas and skills.

YELLOW – Use of AI is allowed with teacher permission; AI may be used as support or help; use of specific tools is allowed.

GREEN –Be creative and use AI to add to, enhance, and support (but not replace) your work.

****Due to unauthorized uses of electronic devices/apps to cheat on assignments, teachers may require personal and/or school assigned electronic devices to be turned in while assignments are completed in class. Those caught not in compliance may be subject to disciplinary action.**

Student Dress Guidelines

- Students should select clothing that is long enough and full enough to ensure modesty in appearance. Clothing must completely cover the mid-section/midriff and buttocks areas when standing, bending, sitting, kneeling, or stretching.
- Dresses and shorts need to extend to the fingertips. No spaghetti straps or tank tops. Sleeveless shirts must be 3 (adult) fingers wide at the shoulders.
- Pants need to be worn above the hips.
- No caps, hats, shower caps, bonnets, or sunglasses will be worn in the building, including the gym. Head/sweatbands may not be worn in the building unless engaged in athletic activity.
- Hoodies may not be worn over the head inside the building. Students who cannot follow hat/hoodie rules, may be prohibited from bringing/wearing hats/hoodies to school altogether. Furthermore, hats/hoodies may be confiscated and kept elsewhere away from the student to avoid power struggles.
- No student will wear a t-shirt, jewelry, or other clothing that contains words or decorations that in any way symbolize/represent/promote any of the following: drugs, alcohol, gang-related activity, violence, obscenity, offensive language, negative stereotyping, or other demeaning symbols. Costumes and cosplay attire are not school appropriate.
- Shoes will be worn at all times. Pajamas, bedroom slippers, and like attire are also prohibited.
- Leggings can only be worn with a shirt that is fingertip length or covers the body modestly at the administration's discretion.
- Pants with holes above the bottom of the fingertips must have leggings or shorts underneath to cover skin beneath the holes.
- Students wearing athletic shorts must have compression shorts/sliders underneath.
- Students may not write, draw, or paint on themselves and will be sent to wash markings off before being allowed to return to class. Students may sometimes wear face/body paint on designated spirit days only when it is applied at home. Face/body paint may not be applied or distributed at school due to potential messes.
- Pillows and blankets are prohibited.
- Anything deemed inappropriate for school (covered above or otherwise) by administration will be addressed before the student is allowed to return to class. Students will wait in ISS until appropriate attire can be brought to change into.

Policy Regarding Cell Phones & Other Devices Used for Communications
While on school property, including buses, students are permitted to have cell phones/other similar communication devices. HOWEVER, these must be **turned off**, secured, and **out of sight**. Students are encouraged to secure such devices in their locker at the beginning of the day. Use or sight of such items will result in confiscation and disciplinary action; refusal of confiscation may result in suspension. Note that "sight" of such devices includes when they are sticking out of one's pocket and when such items fall out of one's belongings, even by mistake. Prohibited "use" of such devices includes checking the time, texting, taking pictures, and the like and applies in the cafeteria, in classrooms, while at recess, in hallways, in restrooms, in locker rooms, and in other areas. Teachers reserve the right to require students to leave their phone in the classroom while leaving the room (i.e. taking a restroom break) in order to assure compliance with the cell phone policy. Due to unauthorized uses of electronic devices/apps to cheat on assignments, teachers also may require personal and/or school assigned electronic devices to be turned in while assignments are completed in class. Those caught not in compliance may be subject to disciplinary action. Students are prohibited from using school resources to charge their phones at all times. To avoid confiscation, please put such devices in a secure place (a school locker) where they are not blatantly in plain sight. Use of these devices is permitted once students are in a car leaving campus or on a bus leaving campus (with their bus driver's permission). Students should not have devices out while waiting at car rider or while waiting for their bus. At the end of the day, students remaining on campus for school-sponsored activities may use their devices after 3:30PM with the permission of the adult supervising them. Violation of this policy will result in the consequences outlined below. Additionally, the content/data in confiscated cell phones may be reviewed by school officials.

Should a student's phone be confiscated or should events occur that result in a parent inquiring about something that most likely should not be known to them, it may be assumed that a student made contact to their parent without permission and this may result in a referral and/or phone confiscation. The objective of this protocol is not to prevent students from keeping their parents informed, but to avoid confusion and unnecessary communication that can be handled by the school. Students and parents should also be aware that filming fights, having, sending, or forwarding fights or pornographic material and/or any other inappropriate material as well as having, sending, or posting messages or images on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Kik, Snapchat, TikTok, BeReal, Locket, Coverstar, Retro, or other social media applications shall result in disciplinary action and may result in legal charges. Students are also prohibited from recording events at school or on the bus using their own device or a school-issued device. School resources will not be used to notify parents when devices are confiscated. Students should inform their parents of the time and procedure to pick up confiscated items on their own time.

1st offense	Device confiscated; parent may pick it up at OCMS after school. Teachers are not expected to be kept from teaching in order to turn in a confiscated phone. This is why after school pick up (after 3:30) is necessary for 1st time confiscations.
2nd offense	Device confiscated; parent may pick it up at OCMS during normal school hours 7 days *after* confiscation. Lunch/learn detention (1 day) or other consequences may be assigned.
3rd offense	Device confiscated; parent may pick it up at OCMS during normal school hours 14 days *after* confiscation. Lunch/learn detention (3 days) or other consequences may be assigned.
4th offense	Device confiscated; parent may pick it up at OCMS during normal school hours at *end* of the *semester*. Lunch/learn detention (5 days) or other consequences may be assigned.

**Students who cannot appropriately follow policies regarding cell phones and other electronic devices may be deemed ineligible from being allowed to be in possession of them. In these cases, students may be required to turn in any electronic devices to the office upon arrival at school and have items returned upon departure from school each day. Students under such circumstances would receive additional consequences if found in possession of such devices once deemed ineligible to be allowed to have them. Repeated refusal of confiscation and filming at school are sure ways to fall under such circumstances.
** The office telephone is a business phone and may be used by students for emergencies only.

Policy Regarding *Other* Electronic Devices
With the exception of what is previously noted and school-issued electronic devices, students are not permitted to have any electronic device on school property (including buses) or at school-sponsored activities. This includes (but is not limited to) ear buds, headphones, MP3's, laser lights, CD's/DVD's, radios, cameras, I-Pods, E-Readers and the like. Students violating this policy may be subject to lunch detention or other disciplinary action. **Students are not to wear/use earbuds unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.** This includes social times and times between classes. When allowed, only corded ear phones/ear buds are permitted for use at OCMS. Electronic entertainment devices brought to school will be confiscated and should be claimed by a parent within one week. The school will not be responsible for the replacement of lost, stolen, or broken electronic devices.

CELL PHONES SHOULD REMAIN OFF & OUT OF SIGHT AT ALL TIMES AT OCMS.

2026-2027 OCMS Bell Schedule

6th Grade Schedule	7th Grade Schedule	8th Grade Schedule
7:55—Move to 1st Period Bell	8:08—Announcements	8:10—Tardy Bell
8:10-9:40 1st Academic Block 90 Minutes	8:10-9:40 1st Academic Block 90 Minutes	8:10-8:53 1st Connections Period 43 Minutes
		8:53-9:40 2nd Connections Period 43 Minutes
9:44-10:36 2nd Academic Block 52 Minutes	9:44-11:14 2nd Academic Block 90 Minutes	9:44-11:14 2nd Academic Block 90 Minutes
10:36-10:55 6th Grade Lunch		
10:55-11:14 6th Grade Recess		
11:14-11:52 2nd Academic Block 38 Minutes	11:14-11:33 7th Grade Lunch	11:14-11:33 8th Grade Recess
	11:33-11:52 7th Grade Recess	11:33-11:52 8th Grade Lunch
11:56-1:26 3rd Academic Block 90 Minutes	11:56-12:39 5th Connections Period 43 Minutes	11:56-1:26 3rd Academic Block 90 Minutes
	12:43-1:26 6th Connections Period 43 Minutes	
1:30-2:13 7th Connections Period 43 Minutes	1:30-3:00 4th Academic Block 90 Minutes	1:30-3:00 4th Academic Block 90 Minutes
2:17-3:00 8th Connections Period 43 Minutes		
Car rider Bell: 3:00		
Bus Load A: Approximately 3:00 or when called by intercom		
Bus Load B: Approximately 3:05 or when called by intercom		

Revised 5/30/2026