Camden County Schools



Camden County Schools
Student Handbook

Important Notice:

Please check the school website for the most current version of the student handbook.

Dr. Mark Lang, Principal



PURPOSE OF STUDENT HANDBOOK

This student handbook is designed to serve as a means to communicate important information regarding school rules and procedures to St. Marys Middle School parents and students. It also serves as a guide to students throughout the school day and can be an important means of communication between school and parent. A link to the student electronic handbook will be available online.

VISION

The faculty and staff at St. Marys Middle School are committed to the educational success of middle school students in preparation for graduation, achievement of lifelong goals and contributions to society

MISSION

We will ensure educational excellence in a safe and nurturing environment where all students can reach their potential to become productive citizens...

SMMS STEM VISION STATEMENT:

The SMMS STEM vision is to prepare learners for the demands of the 21st-century workforce by maximizing the individual potential in all students through a challenging and engaging STEM interdisciplinary project-based curriculum.

STEM & PBL (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math/Problem Based Learning)

The Georgia Department of Education, Camden County BOE, and SMMS are dedicated to preparing students for 21st Century workplace careers by providing high quality educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. In Georgia, STEM education is defined as an integrated curriculum (as opposed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics taught in isolation) that is driven by problem solving, discovery, exploratory project/problem-based learning, and student-centered development of ideas and solutions. The saturation of technology in most fields means that all students – not just those who plan to pursue a STEM profession – will require a solid foundation in STEM to be productive members of the workforce. SMMS was certified as a programmatic STEM school in 2017 and continues to be a STEM Focused school.

BELIEFS

BOBCAT CULTURE –

Believe
We believe in ourselves and others. We teach students to believe in themselves.

Outperform
Any opportunity we are given to perform, we will seek to outperform expectations.

Build up
The words I use can build up or tear down. We encourage, we motivate, we inspire, we share positive words and messages. We Build up.

Community
We value relationships and understand they are the foundation of student engagement, teacher growth, and community support.

Accountable
We all expect each other to do our jobs well. We do not excuse things that are not done well. We identify areas that need improvement, and we help each other grow.

Transform
We do not conform to the world around us, but we transform ourselves and everyone around us for the better with passion, energy, innovation, and determination.

PHILOSOPHY

Because we recognize that the early adolescent years are a transitional period in which boys and girls possess unique characteristics and needs, the middle schools have adopted the following philosophy and objectives:
The pre-adolescent period is a distinct and crucial period of individual development—physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally and aesthetically. As the student passes through this period of all – encompassing and powerful changes, he/she is faced with the task of making significant progress toward becoming an independent person, of learning to work with others, and of organizing his/her knowledge of the world around him/her.
Assuming the uniqueness of this period of human growth and development, a period characterized by immense variability among learners, we recognize the need to provide for the students in Camden County an educational program focusing on the individual child in the transition from childhood to adolescence.
SMMS seeks to provide for pre- and early adolescents a program that is relevant both to the student's individual needs and to the demands of society in a world where there is constant change and a rapidly expanding body of knowledge. Our goal is to assist in the continuing development of self-directing individuals. SMMS must provide an educational environment in which the child has opportunities for success. Such an environment must facilitate communication and interaction and afford opportunities for meeting interpersonal needs.

PBIS EXPECTATIONS AND CORE VALUES

Students are expected to follow C.A.T.S. positive core values set forth in the PBIS discipline plan:

Choose Wisely **A**ct Responsibly **T**ake Ownership **S**how Respect

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF STUDENT HANDBOOK 2
VISION 2
MISSION 2
SMMS STEM VISION STATEMENT: 2
STEM & PBL (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math/Problem Based Learning) . 2
BELIEFS 3
PHILOSOPHY 3
PBIS EXPECTATIONS AND CORE VALUES 3
HOURS OF OPERATION: 2
ABSENCES/TARDIES/MAKE-UP WORK 2
ZERO PERIOD 2
CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES 2
ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL 2
SELLING ITEMS AT SCHOOL 3
WALKERS/BIKE RIDERS/CAR RIDERS 3
LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS 3
BUS PASS PROCEDURE 3
MEDIA CENTER 4
CAFETERIA GUESTS & FOOD 4
SMMS DRESS CODE 4
SMMS ORGANIZATIONS/CLUB 2026-2027 5
SCHOOL WEBSITE: 5

HOURS OF OPERATION:

The instructional school day begins at 7:30 a.m. Students who are not in class by 7:30 will be considered tardy. School dismisses at 2:40 p.m.

ABSENCES/TARDIES/MAKE-UP WORK

Students who are absent from school must turn in a written excuse to the attendance clerk upon returning to school (or within 2 days) to receive an excused absence. Students who are tardy to school must report to the attendance window to receive a tardy pass. Excused absences and tardies to school include:

- personally ill and attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others
- in their immediate family, there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence from school
- observing special and recognized religious holidays of their faith
- mandated by order of governmental agencies (Examples: pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces or a court order)
- conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- the student registers to vote (one day only)
- attending college/career visitations according to the administrative regulations provided in JBD; or
- to visit with a military parent or guardian who has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting
- all excused absences are left to the discretion of the principal.

ZERO PERIOD

This time in the morning, Monday through Friday, beginning at 6:55 AM, is for students to receive academic remediation, acceleration and/or mentoring. Students are to pick-up their breakfast and go to the classroom for instruction. Cut-off time for zero period is 7:10.

CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students have no need for cell phones during the school day. **Cell phones and Electronic Devices must be turned off and placed in the backpack.**

Students found using a cell phone during the school day (6:55 AM – 2:40 PM or entering/exiting the building) will be subject to disciplinary action. Cell phones can be used outside the building before 6:55 and after 2:40. **Students are not to have their phones visible and may not be taken to the restroom, even in a backpack.**

Refusal to turn over a cell phone to school staff will be considered insubordination.

Confiscated cell phones and other devices must be picked up by a parent or guardian listed in the Student Information System.

Electronics include, but are not limited to: Cell phones, Smart watches, Smart Glasses, iPod, iPad, tablets, laptops, or air pods, etc.
Students will not take photos or videos of any type with any device while in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus, or at the bus stop. ***Students are subject to ISS/OSS if pictures or videos are taken at school...***

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

Since our purpose of coming to school is to learn, the following items are to be left at home: ***energy drinks***, glass bottles, alcohol, vapes, electronic smoking devices, any type of tobacco product, edibles, drugs, water guns, balloons, fireworks, toy guns, stink bombs, chains; skateboards or skates; hair paint or aerosol hair spray; hats, ***bandanas, pajama pants, blankets, house slippers***, or caps; firearms, tasers, including starter pistols; pepper spray, mace, tear gas, chemical sprays; knives, razor blades, or any other sharp object; lighters,

matches or other flammable objects; aerosol cans; pornographic material; lasers; ***or any other items that cause a disruption of the learning environment***. Although non-aerosol hair spray, make-up, perfumes, colognes, after- shaves, lotions, may be brought to school in a non-glass container, they are NOT to be used in the classroom or hallway.

SELLING ITEMS AT SCHOOL

Students may sell SMMS fundraiser items at school; however, any other items brought to school to sell must have administrative permission.

WALKERS/BIKE RIDERS/CAR RIDERS

Students will be dismissed at 2:40 PM. Sidewalks are provided along the entrance to the school from Martha Drive and also along Charlie Smith Highway for students who walk or ride bikes to school. Walkers and bike riders will enter the school through the front entrance (flagpole) if you are coming from Martha Dr. Walkers and bike riders coming from the ball fields (Bobcat Loop) will enter through the cafeteria. Students will also exit the school in the same locations. Bike riders are NOT to ride their bikes on the sidewalk. Walkers and bike riders should leave campus when dismissed.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Early dismissals are discouraged, but if it becomes necessary for a student to leave school during the day, arrangements should be made before leaving home, and the procedure outlined below should be followed:

1. The person picking a student up should come to the front office and sign the student out. ***No student is permitted to leave school early without being signed out and properly dismissed through the school's front office.***
   The person picking the student up must be on the student's pickup list and present a valid picture ID each time a student is checked out.
2. If a student returns to school the same day after checking out, he/she is to report to the office with a doctor or dental appointment verification slip.
3. In case of illness, the student should report to the nurse's station. If the student's illness requires that he/she leave school, the parent or guardian will be called, and the office personnel will release the student after the parent or guardian signs the student out using the procedure outlined in #1. **Students should not text or call without permission**.

Students who are checked out of school an excessive number of times may be required to provide the same excuses that are required of students who are tardy to school.

Students cannot be checked out of school after 2:00 PM. Students cannot be retrieved from the bus.

BUS PASS PROCEDURE

If a student is to get off his/her bus at a point other than his/her regular stop or must ride a different bus than normal, ***the student must have a note signed by his/her parents or guardian*** indicating where he/she is to get off the bus. The note will be verified by calling the parent/guardian at the phone number listed in the Student Information System. **This note is to be taken to student services before homeroom**. Students will pick up their bus pass at lunch from student services. The signed parent/guardian note will be exchanged for a bus pass signed by the principal or designee. Bus drivers do not accept handwritten notes. They will only accept a bus pass the student receives from the main office. Bus passes will not be issued for buses that the Transportation

Department has designated as overcrowded. Out of Zone students may not ride a bus. Students cannot be retrieved from the bus after dismissal.

MEDIA CENTER

Library Media Center Privileges and Responsibilities:

* Students may borrow two books at a time with a two-week borrowing period. Borrowers agree to take good care of books and return them on time. A student who loses or damages a book is asked to pay so a replacement can be purchased.
* Other library resources include e-books, audiobooks, magazines, and online research material subscriptions.
* Destiny online catalog helps students find good books by title, author, subject, keyword, or Lexile level.

CAFETERIA GUESTS & FOOD

Students desiring to eat breakfast should be in the cafeteria by 7:20 a.m.

Eating lunch with your child. SMMS has a special lunch area outside the school for parents to enjoy lunch with their child. The parent or authorized adult in the Student Information System will check the student out and check them back in after they have completed their lunch time. Only authorized adults in the Student Information System will be allowed to have lunch with the student.

Door Dash and Food Deliveries for Students

Parents may drop off food for students at the front office. Door Dash will not be allowed for students. Food must be dropped off by an authorized adult listed in the Student Information System.

SMMS DRESS CODE

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Students at St. Marys Middle School are expected to continue a tradition of appropriate dress for school and school-related events. There is a definite relationship between appropriate dress, good work habits, and proper school behavior. Recognizing the relationship between personal dress and personal attitude, students are encouraged to dress in a manner that demonstrates pride both in themselves and SMMS.

Since it is virtually impossible to address the appropriateness for school of every article of clothing, school administrators have the authority to interpret the dress code and make a case-by-case determination for appropriateness of dress and appearance that is or is not covered in these dress code guidelines.

Revealing clothing, including body suits, are not permitted for any student at SMMS. No mid-drift, open back, under garments hanging out, tank tops, or holes above mid-thigh are permitted. Shorts and skirts should not be above mid-thighs. Leggings and yoga pants must have a top that covers to mid-thigh.

It is within this spirit of educational excellence we ask your SMMS Bobcat student to dress for success and safety

No inappropriate insignias, emblems, badges, bandanas, or other clothing/symbols which may cause the interruption of instruction

SMMS ORGANIZATIONS/CLUB 2026-2027

Organization/Club Name	Faculty Sponsor	Mission
Bird Brains Bird Club	Amanda Carroll	"Inspire students through bird identification, hands-on learning, and mentorship, fostering lifelong skills and environmental stewardship."
Bobcat Barista	Heather McMillan	Support PALS students with Life skills
DECA	TBD	"Preparing emerging leaders for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management."
FBLA	Jennifer Stein	"Inspiring students to become community-minded business leaders through career preparation, leadership, and service."
FCA	Kimberly Brinson	"Promote leadership skills and develop positive relationships among students."
FFA	Wyatt Drawdy	"Growing the next generations of leaders through agriculture that will change the world."
Garden / Nature Club	Leslie Gatson	"Cultivating sustainability and STEM skills through hands-on learning and living habitats."
Honey Bee Club	Kim Huyer / Lessli Johnson	"Fostering a love for bees through education and hands-on learning."
Jr. Beta Club	Sydney Daniel / Najuana McGraw	"Recognize and develop students who show academic achievement, leadership, character, and service."
Lego Robotics Club	TBD	"Learn coding, engineer design, teamwork, and leadership skills."
The PAW Print Yearbook	Karen Wilson	"Capturing memories, celebrating community, telling our story."
Running Club	Elizabeth Cooke	"Improve physical fitness, build confidence, and foster healthy habits in a fun environment."
Skills USA	Lessli Johnson	"Empowering students to become skilled professionals, leaders, and responsible community members."
Student Council	Daniel Slone/ Anna Slone	"To represent students, promote school spirit, foster leadership, and create a positive, inclusive school community."
Writer's Club	Nicole Solano	"Creative writing club with mini lessons to boost skills."

SCHOOL WEBSITE:

St. Marys Middle School Homepage: http://smms.camden.k12.ga.us/

Camden County Schools Homepage:http://www.camden.k12.ga.us/

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Please check the school website for the most current version of the student handbook.