R. Max Abbott Middle School
Student & Family Handbook



2026-2027

590 Winding Creek Road ~ Fayetteville, NC 28305
Phone: 910-323-2201

http://mams.ccs.k12.nc.us/

https://www.facebook.com/mamspanthers/

R. Max Abbott Middle School
Student Handbook 2026-2027

All Cumberland County Schools district-level and school-based communications or guidance (e.g., handbooks, websites, social media communications, etc.) are subject to change.

WELCOME

Welcome to R. Max Abbott Middle School. Our students and staff have established standards of excellence in academic and co-curricular accomplishments. We have high expectations of our students, and we challenge you to set high standards for yourself.
Our Motto this school year: Leap Beyond Limits!

Your success depends on the choices you make and is directly related to your efforts. Invest your time and energy wisely each day, and you will be successful in all you do.

We would like to help each student be an effective, responsible, and productive citizen in our society. Education is a team responsibility, which begins with your family, extends to the school, and encompasses the entire community. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher(s) throughout the year so that together, we are doing all we can to help your child be successful.

The R. Max Abbott Middle School Handbook is prepared to help you develop and accept the responsibilities and obligations of good citizenship in our school and community. Each student and parent is responsible for knowing and understanding this handbook, as well as the Cumberland County Schools Code of Conduct.

Set goals and challenge yourself to excel in academics by completing assignments, homework, and by participating in class; in attendance by being here each and every day; in behavior by making good choices and decisions and by treating others with respect; and in co-curricular activities by being involved in your school through the arts, athletics, and academic clubs.

Make it a Meaningful Year!

Sharley Ditmore, Principal
Kristen Kelton, Assistant Principal
Sha-Necia Head, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director

MAMS Vision: Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment where teachers will inspire students to be self-driven, life-long learners that display good character and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

MAMS Mission Statement: The mission of R. Max Abbott Middle School is to inspire our students to improve their lives and the world around them.

ASSEMBLIES/AWARDS

Celebrations are held at the end of each grading period to recognize students who have achieved perfect attendance, A and A/B Honor Rolls, and special honors for academics, conduct, and good character. Students are expected to be attentive, respectful of presenters and performers, and to sit in designated sections with their teachers and class. You may show appreciation only through clapping hands.

2026-2027 Scheduled Awards Programs (subject to change):

1st 9 weeks Awards: Nov. 6th, 2026, 8th- 8:15am, 7th- 10:15am, 6th- 1:30pm
2nd 9 weeks Awards: Jan. 29th, 2027, 8th- 8:15am, 7th- 10:15am, 6th- 1:30pm
3rd 9 weeks Awards: Apr. 9th, 2027, 8th- 8:15am, 7th- 10:15am, 6th- 1:30pm
4th 9 weeks Awards: 6th Grade, May 25th- 1:30pm; 7th Grade, May 26th- 1:30pm; 8th Grade, May 27th-1:30pm

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Battle of the Books
Forensics
Yearbook
National Junior Honor Society
3D Printing Club
JS2S
Spelling Bee
Others TBA

ATHLETIC REQUIREMENTS

Our athletic program consists of football, baseball, basketball, soccer, track, wrestling, softball, and volleyball. In order to participate in the athletic program students must meet the following guidelines and requirements:

- A student must be in attendance at least 85% of the previous semester or miss no more than 13.5 days of school in one semester to be eligible to participate in athletics the following semester.
- A student must reside in the school district or meet local BOE policy.
- A student must pass at least one less than the number of required core courses each semester.
- Must have a weighted 2.0 GPA or a 70% average or better for the previous semester.
- A physical must be completed and received by the athletic director PRIOR to the first practice. Forms are available in the office and should be submitted online through Final Forms. Final Forms is available on the school website.
- A student may not turn 15 on or before August 31st of the current school year.
- Voluntary transfer students may not participate in sports for 365 days from the first approved date of the first year of eligibility.
- Student athletes may not attend practice or games on days they are marked absent for the day.
- Any student athlete who is in RJC or suspended from school may not attend practice, play, or attend any school functions on the school campus on those given days. Students with discipline issues are subject to removal from any athletic team.
- All student athletes are to be picked up within 15 minutes after the practice or contest ends or they may be in jeopardy of forfeiting their right to be on the team.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

State law and board policy requires students attend school daily and be present for all classes. Regular and punctual attendance is critical to student success in school. In order to be counted present, all students must be checked in before 10:44 am or checked out after 10:45 am.

In order to be considered in attendance, a student must be present in the school for the school day, or at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official for the purpose of attending a school activity, which has been officially authorized under the policies of the Board of Education. Such activities may include: field trips, student conventions, musical festivals, or any similarly approved activity. The Cumberland County Board of Education authorizes school principals to record as present those pupils attending school related activities as designated by the Superintendent, providing the pupil's attendance at a school-related activity has prior approval of the principal or the appropriate school official.

Please check for special restrictions under each lawful reason. Documentation will be required for any of the foregoing to be considered lawful. Acceptable documentation can be a doctor's note with the doctor's signature, date, and time of appointment, subpoena, or parent's/guardian's note with student name, date, days of absences, reason for absence and parent's/guardian's signature. Documentation should be given to the homeroom teacher the day the student returns to school after an absence. If the note is not received explaining the absence within 5 days after the student returns to school, the absence will be coded as an **"unlawful"** absence. All other absences not defined above as "lawful" are coded unlawful.

Policy Code: 4400 Attendance

School attendance and class participation are an integral part of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Regular attendance develops patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school. Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily. State law also prohibits any person from encouraging, enticing or counseling a child to be unlawfully absent from school.

A. Attendance Records

School officials shall keep an accurate record of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. A student must be present at least one-half of the instructional day to be recorded as in attendance for that day. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

To be in attendance during remote instruction days (with the exception of the initial enrollment day), students must: (1) complete their daily assignments, either online or offline; or (2) have a daily check-in through two-way communication with (a) the homeroom teacher for grades K-5 or (b) for all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled. School officials shall communicate the attendance procedures to students and their families before the first day remote instruction begins.

B. Excused Absences

The superintendent, principal or the superintendent or principal's designee is authorized to excuse a student temporarily from attendance due to sickness or other unavoidable cause. When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be turned into the student's teacher or front office on the day the student returns after an absence. The number of parent or guardian written excuses for attendance due to sickness or other unavoidable causes is limited to 10 per school year for grades K-8, and limited to 10 per semester for grades 9-12. After the 10th parent or guardian written excused note has been submitted, any other parent or guardian written notice will result in the absence being marked as unexcused. Additionally, parents and guardians will have within five school days of the student's return to school to turn in written excused notes and/or physicians notes. Notes that are turned in after the fifth school day of the student returning to school will not change the absence from unexcused to excused. The student is also required to provide other satisfactory evidence of the excuse upon request by the teacher, principal or principal's designee. An absence may be excused for the following reasons:

1. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;

2. isolation ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health;

3. death in the immediate family, including, but not limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters;

4. medical or dental appointment;

5. participation as a party to an action or under subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding or administrative tribunal;

6. a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent or legal guardian with written approval from the principal. The superintendent or designee may approve additional absences, provided they do not interfere with the education of the student. The student shall have the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to the excused absence for a religious observance;

7. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal or designee and in accordance with any requirements established by the principal or superintendent;

8. absence due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary; or

9. a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student's parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty or inactive member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

In addition, a student whose parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to five additional excused absences upon approval by the superintendent or designee to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian.

Absences due to extended illnesses generally require a statement from a physician.

In the case of excused absences, short-term out-of-school suspensions, and absences under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school) the student will be permitted to make up his or her work in accordance with section D of this policy. (See also policies 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission, and 4351, Short-Term Suspension.) The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and arranging a time with the teacher to make up assignments missed during class time.

C. School-Related Activities

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. Principals shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to an absolute minimum. The superintendent is responsible for designating which school-related activities are permissible and consistent with State Board policy. Specifically, the following school-related activities with prior approval from the principal or designee will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. field trips sponsored by the school;

2. job-shadowing and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a);

3. school-initiated and -scheduled activities, such as student conventions and music festivals;

4. athletic events that require early dismissal from school;

5. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal; and

6. in-school suspensions.

Assignments missed for these reasons are eligible for makeup by the student in accordance with section D of this policy. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and arranging a time with the teacher to make up assignments missed during class time.

D. Opportunities to Make Up Assignments

Makeup of any missed assignments by an elementary, middle or high school student attending school on a regular schedule must be completed within five school days of the student's return to school. Makeup of missed assignments by a high school student on a 4 x 4 schedule must be completed within three school days of the student's return to school.

If the teacher is unable to give a student the original assignment as makeup work, then the teacher shall provide an alternative but comparable assignment to be completed by the student. A teacher may allow for an extension of makeup assignment deadlines in the case of valid, extenuating circumstances.

E. Excessive Absences

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement. Students are expected to be at school on time and to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class. Students who are excessively tardy to school or class may be subject to suspension for up to two days for such offense. The Superintendent will

develop guidelines for implementation.

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences. Students may be subject to suspension for up to two days for truancy.

A. Three Unexcused Days, First Notice, Compulsory Attendance Law. If a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences in a school year, the Principal or a designee shall notify the student's parent, guardian, or custodian in writing, of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences.

B. Six Unexcused Days, Second Notice, Compulsory Attendance Law. If a student in grades K through 12 who is subject to the Compulsory Attendance Law has been absent without an acceptable excuse for six (6) cumulative school days during the school year, the Principal or a designee shall notify the student's parent, guardian, or custodian, in writing, of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences and (unless the student is over sixteen (16) years of age) the student and the parent/guardian may be prosecuted under the Compulsory Attendance Law (NCGS 115-378) if the absences cannot be justified.

C. Ten Day Notice and Action, Compulsory Attendance Law. If a student between the ages of seven (7) and sixteen (16) accumulates ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year the Principal shall:

1. Notify the parent, guardian, or custodian in writing of the student's excessive number of absences and (unless the student is over sixteen (16) years of age) the student and the parent/guardian may be prosecuted under the Compulsory Attendance Law (NCGS 115-378) if the absences cannot be justified.

2. Truancy Mediation Council (TMC) - Schools are expected to utilize the Truancy Mediation Council as an intervention to mitigate barriers and offer services to promote regular school attendance. If the referral to the TMC does not result in improved attendance, then school personnel will coordinate with the Social Work Coordinator to bring the matter to the district court.

D. K-5 – Denial of Student Promotion. A K-5 student is expected to attend 180 days unless absent for lawful reasons. Any student who accumulates and exceeds ten (10) unexcused absences during a semester is in immediate jeopardy of being retained.

a. After more than twenty (20) unexcused cumulative absences for the year, the teacher shall notify the social worker and the principal or designee. The parent/guardian shall be notified that the student will not receive credit for the year and be retained unless a waiver is obtained.

b. If a student is absent (unexcused) twenty (20) or more days in a given year, his/her parent/guardian may apply for a waiver of the attendance requirements in order to demonstrate extenuating circumstances or legitimate illness. The parent/guardian must present written verification acceptable to the principal or his designee within five (5) days of receipt of the retention notification. It shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to apply for the waiver. The Student Services Team (SST) will consider whether this policy should be waived. The SST will review other measures of academic achievement, the circumstances of the absences, the number of absences, and the extent to which the student completed missed work. The SST will recommend a decision to the principal, but the principal shall have the final decision whether or not to grant such a

waiver. In the absence of a request by the parent/guardian to apply for a waiver, the principal shall decide on this matter and notify the parent/guardian by letter.

i. If the waiver is denied by the principal, a student will have the option of making up work, attending RTA summer camp, or a combination of curriculum resources as available and as prescribed by the individual schools.

E. 6-12 – Denial of Course Credit. A secondary student is expected to attend school for 180 days unless absent for lawful reasons. Secondary students should be in attendance a minimum of seventy (70) days per semester or 140 days per school year to receive credit for a course. Any student who accumulates and exceeds ten (10) absences during a grading period for any course during a semester is in immediate jeopardy of receiving a failing grade and receiving no credit for the course.

a. After more than twenty (20) cumulative unexcused absences for the year for grades 6-8 and more than twenty (20) cumulative unexcused absences for the semester for grades 9-12, the teacher shall notify the social worker, and the principal or designee. The parent/guardian will be notified that the student will not receive credit for the course and may be retained.

b. The student or parent/guardian may apply for a waiver to overturn denial of course credit. The Student Services Team (SST) will consider whether this policy should be waived or whether the student's grades should be reduced because of the absences. The student or parent must submit a waiver request form to the SST and other documentation that supports the student's request. The SST will review other measures of academic achievement, the circumstances of the absences, the number of absences, and the extent to which the student completed missed work. The SST may recommend to the principal and the principal may make any of the following determinations:

i. The student will not receive a passing grade for the semester (an FF will be awarded), which may also lead to retention;

ii. The student's grade will be reduced;

iii. The student will receive the grade otherwise earned, or the student will be given additional time to complete the missed work before deciding the appropriate grade.

Students with excused absences due to documented chronic health problems will be exempted from this policy. In addition, for students experiencing homelessness (see board policy 4125, Homeless Students), school officials must consider issues related to the student's homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

Excessive absences may impact eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics. See policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

Students and teachers at R. Max Abbott Middle School should be able to attend school and function in a bully-free zone. For an act to be considered bullying it must meet certain criteria. This includes hostile intent, imbalance of power, repetition, distress, and provocation. Bullying will not be tolerated and will be handled by the teacher and/or administrator at the occurrence.

A computer or electronic device used to intimidate or torment a student or school employee is considered cyber-bullying. If someone repeatedly posts (through social media, chat, or text) information or photos of or about someone else, makes statements, whether true or false, intended to provoke or harass an individual, they are participating in cyber-bullying. If the acts happen at school or affect another student's performance in school, school administration will address the incident per the Cumberland County Student Code of Conduct

CAFETERIA - SCHOOL MEALS

Everyone at MAMS has the right to eat lunch in a clean, safe environment. Students will be encouraged to use and demonstrate acceptable social manners while using the café facilities. Lunch should be conducted at a Level 1 (whisper talk) to Level 2 (normal talk).

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. Lunch menus will be posted at the beginning of each month. R. Max Abbott Middle School is a Title I/CPS school -therefore, all students will receive FREE school breakfast and FREE school lunch.

All food items brought to school must be consumed during breakfast or lunch. After eating, students are asked to leave tables clean and carry lunch trays and plastic ware to the trash area. Trash must be placed in proper receptacles. Food and lunch trays may not be taken out of the cafeteria without permission. **Water bottles may be brought to school. No outside food or drink will be allowed during instructional time.**

Lunch items may be dropped off at the front desk for your child. The student will be called to the office to pick it up prior to their lunch time. Parents/Guardians may only drop off meals for their own children (not for friends). Parents/Guardians who would like to eat lunch with their children are invited to do so, and will be able to eat together in a designated area during the child's scheduled lunch time. Meal delivery companies are not able to deliver to students.

CELL PHONES/EAR BUDS

Many students have cell phones/electronic devices for communication with parents after school. Student cell phones/electronic devices are not allowed to be used from 7:00 am until dismissal. Cell phones must be placed in lockers. Any cell phone, electronic devices, or any other non-educational item that is seen by school personnel, will be confiscated and turned in to the office. If a parent needs to reach their child during school hours they may call the school at 910-323-2201 and ask for their child to come to the office to call them.

Any student who refuses to give up their cell phone, electronic device or other prohibited item to school personnel will automatically be referred to a school administrator.

Earbuds are NOT to be used or seen during the school day and will also be confiscated. Wired headphones may be used at the discretion of the assigned teacher for educational purposes, but wired headphones may only be connected to the school device.

After a device is taken from a student the first time, the student may sign for the device at the end of the school day at the front desk. After a device is taken from a student the second time and thereafter, a parent/guardian must pick up the device in the office the next school day.

CHANGES IN STUDENT INFORMATION

It is imperative that the school office be notified immediately of a change of address, home or office telephone number, or of a change in emergency information during the academic school year. Please request a change of address form from the data manager or complete the required information in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

COMPUTER USE POLICY

At MAMS, students who have turned in an Internet Use Agreement will be allowed to access the Internet. When you use the computers, you have a responsibility to use them correctly. This means that they should not be used to access or create materials that don't belong at school. This includes, but is not limited to, images and messages that are sexually explicit, grotesquely violent or seek to demean or harass others. Please be aware that the privilege of computer use depends on your ability to use them correctly. You may lose that privilege if you are unable to act responsibly.

All laptop computers are the property of R. Max Abbott Middle School and Cumberland County Schools. Laptops are for students' academic use during the school year. Students are held responsible for damages to laptops assigned to them by the school. These laptops are to be handled carefully. Satisfactory settlement will be required for damage to laptops. Disciplinary action may be taken for each incident of misuse. R. Max Abbott Middle School uses a software monitoring student computer use. Any student found tampering with, disconnecting from, or altering the system will have disciplinary action taken.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

Positive Student Behavior is the goal at R. Max Abbott Middle School. There are school wide and grade level incentives rewarded for positive behavior. However, occasionally students do not respond to positive incentives and a disciplinary action is required. When this occurs the following steps may be taken:

Step 1: The teacher will give the student a verbal warning.

Step 2: The teacher(s) will conference briefly with the student. They will discuss what is happening, how to fix the issue, how to avoid the issue, and any next steps. Contact with parent/guardian is optional at this level. (Note Educator's Handbook.)

Step 3: The teacher may use other interventions including moving the student's seat, brief removal from support personnel, or silent lunch, if needed. Contact with a parent/guardian is required at this level. (Documented in Educator's Handbook)

Step 4: A referral will be made to the grade-level administrator to issue a disciplinary action. Administrative contact with parents/guardians is required. (Office referral in Educator's Handbook)

** **Severe actions will result in an immediate referral to an administrator.**

DRESS CODE

High standards of dress promote good citizenship and a positive, professional, and safe learning environment. The appearance of our student body reflects upon the climate of our school. Students are expected to adhere to standards of dress and grooming that are acceptable in a positive learning environment. Teachers and administrators have discretion in making judgments relating to the appropriateness of dress.

- ***Hoodies* - WILL BE ALLOWED**. However, any student found in violation of wearing the hood portion in the building will **immediately lose their privilege of being able to wear a hoodie in the school building** for the remainder of the school day. Persistent violations may result in an administrative referral.

- BOOK BAGS –Book bags may not be worn or carried during the school day, they must be left in the lockers until needed. No rolling book bags allowed, unless a doctor's note is provided. All PE clothes may be kept in a small drawstring bag – but must be left in lockers until elective time or designated locker time before electives.

- No oversized purses, laptop bags, trapper keepers, satchels, cross-body bags, or book-bag type purses are allowed. Only a small clutch purse may be used for personal hygiene items.

- No clothing will be worn that is offensive to any race or sex, or which displays profanity, weapons, alcohol, or drugs in any form. Also, no clothing that advertises inappropriate movies, cartoons, or activities will be permitted.

- Hats, hoods, bandanas (all colors), head wraps, ski masks, headbands with ornaments such as ears, puff balls, stars, or other decorations will not be worn for any reason during the school day. Slide-on headbands, plain or patterned, are permitted and must be no more than 2 inches wide. Note: Head coverings for religious purposes are permitted.

- Sunglasses or non-prescription glasses may not be worn during the school day.

- "Sagging" pants are not permitted, this also includes low-rise pants. Boxers or gym shorts should not be seen below waistbands.

- No clothing is to be worn that will allow a student's undergarments to be visible.

- Any form of gang evidence is prohibited. This includes bandanas, rolled up pant legs, and specific markings on clothing or body.

- Rips or holes in pants, skirts, shorts, or other bottoms must be below fingertip length.

- Skirts, dresses, and shorts must pass the fingertip test and meet administrative approval. Long t-shirts are not allowed in place of a dress.

- Pants, Shorts, Skirts, and dresses may not have writing across the bottom area.

- Biker Shorts are NOT permitted.

- No bodysuits and catsuits.

- No tying or tucking up of tops that exposes the back or midriff.
- Sheer, see-through, or lace shirts are not permitted, the body's midsection/torso should be covered at all times. Strapless/spaghetti straps, shirts with cutouts on the body, or that show the midriff are not permitted.
- No tank-tops or sleeveless shirts with low underarm areas will be allowed.
- Bedroom clothes, pajamas, lounging pants, or slippers may not be worn.
- Blankets, stuffed animals, and other similar items are not permitted at school.
- Facial stickers/bandaids are not permitted unless there is an injury to the face.
- All new fashion trends or fads will be reviewed at the administrator's discretion.

All dress code violation consequences are at the discretion of the administration, students who break the dress code repeatedly may receive disciplinary action.

All Cumberland County Schools will make any necessary religious accommodations for any type of headgear or head coverings otherwise restricted or prohibited under existing individual school dress codes. No student shall be suspended out of school based solely upon violation of an existing individual school dress code.

If a student is thought to be out of dress code, they will be asked to report to the office where they may call home to get an appropriate change of clothing. If a parent/guardian is not able to bring clothing the administrator will make a determination on student placement for the remainder of the day.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If a student needs to leave during the school day, a parent/guardian must pick the student up and sign him/her out in the main office. **Students will not be allowed to check out of school after 2:20 pm.** R. Max Abbott Middle School maintains a 100% ID check when students are checked out. All persons checking out students must be listed on the student's information form.

EIGHTH GRADE DANCE

Depending on parent volunteer and participation numbers, an eighth grade dance may be scheduled for the end of the school year. This activity will be for eighth grade Max Abbott Middle School students only. All current eighth grade students will have the opportunity to purchase a dance ticket and attend the end of year dance. All participating students must meet the behavioral requirements listed below.

Behavioral requirements:

- Students who have been assigned to the alternative school during the school year may not attend the dance.
- Students that have been suspended 3 or more times may not be able to attend the

dance.
- Students that have been suspended from school for a period of time including the day of the school dance may not attend the dance.

Dress Code requirements for eighth grade dance:

- Dresses with spaghetti straps will be permitted, no strapless dresses, no shorts or shorts outfits, no exposed midriffs, no fully exposed backs, dresses must meet the fingertip length requirement
- A collared or polo shirt is appropriate. Ties and/or suits are optional

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

In the event of inclement weather, school may be closed or may require a delayed starting time or an early dismissal. Local radio and television stations will announce these conditions. This information is also available at the Cumberland County Schools website.

FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

Only school-approved clubs and organizations are entitled to have fundraising activities. All fund-raising activities must be pre-approved by the R. Max Abbott Middle School Administration. Students may not sell unauthorized items at school for profit.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted each month throughout the school year. Check the posted instructions in each classroom indicating how to exit the building in case of fire or where to report for safety during a tornado. Students are expected to follow all directions given by the school personnel.

GOOD CONDUCT

One of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline. It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper respect for self, other people, and property. All R. Max Abbott Middle School students and staff have the right to expect to be able to learn and teach in an atmosphere free from unreasonable and unwarranted disruptions. We value our class time and our activity time.

Each student is required to enter class prepared with pencils, pens, paper, textbooks, and all class-related materials necessary for each class. Non-instructional items are not permitted at school unless directed by a staff member.

Assignments, both class work and homework, are necessary components of the curriculum at MAMS. Students must complete and turn in these assignments in a timely manner. Assignments should be the work of the individual, copying another student's work or plagiarism are honor code violations and may result in an office referral. Students should utilize their handbooks for all assignments.

In order to maintain a positive academic environment conducive to high standards in teaching and learning, students will be accountable for responsible, respectful behavior. Students must adhere to the rules contained in the Cumberland County Schools Student Code of Conduct, and the R. Max Abbott Middle School student handbook.

If changes or additions to the rules occur, all concerned parties will be notified through announcements and/or written handouts and will be held responsible for knowledge and compliance thereof.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Comprehensive school counseling programs promote students' academic careers, as well as their personal-social development. Our counselors are available to assist students in attaining maximum benefit from their school experiences. Please ask your teacher to call your counselor to see if they are available. The counselors will see students as quickly as possible to assist with the needs of our students.

GRADING SCALE

R. Max Abbott Middle School and the Cumberland County Schools follow a 10-point grading scale.

A = 100 - 90% B= 89 - 80% C= 79 - 70% D = 69 - 60% F = 59 <

HALL ETIQUETTE/ HALL PASSES

Students should only be in the halls at the beginning and end of the school day and while moving from one class to another. It is the student's responsibility to ask for and secure a hall pass from their assigned teacher before leaving the classroom to visit the restroom, office, etc. Students are asked to be courteous at all times and to keep to the right when walking in the halls.

INJURY AT SCHOOL/ILLNESS/SICK PHONE

Any student injured at school must immediately notify school personnel. In case of injury, an accident report will be completed by the supervising teacher and the parents will be notified. If a student is sick, they will be sent to the main office where the reception will ask them to sign the sick log and call their parent(s), they will then return to class until a parent can pick them up. If the student is vomiting or has a fever, they will wait in the side office for a parent to pick them up.

INSURANCE

Student accident insurance plans selected by the School Board are made available on an optional basis to all students. At the beginning of the school year printed information and application forms will be given to each student. The completed application forms must be mailed directly to the insurance company.

LOCKERS

Lockers are provided for students' convenience to keep books and other property needed at school. All students must provide their own lock to use with their assigned locker. All books and personal items, when not in use, including heavy coats, are to be kept in your locker. Cell phones and other technological devices not administered by the school should remain in lockers. Please adhere to the locker schedule assigned by each individual team. Students who are continuously late for class may lose the right to have a locker for their use.

All students must store all of their school items in their assigned locker.

1. Use only the locker assigned to you, and do not share lockers with others.
2. You may use any combination lock that you would like to provide. The lock combination must be provided to the homeroom teacher.
3. Do not give your locker combination to other students.
4. Lockers must be kept clean at all times. Writing or adding stickers to the outside or inside of lockers is prohibited.
5. Lockers must be kept in good condition. If a locker is knowingly abused, you will lose the use of the locker and pay for damages.
6. Do not leave valuable personal property in lockers.

7. Lockers remain the property of MAMS and may be subject to inspection by the school administration at any time.
8. Storage of inappropriate or illegal items is not allowed and is subject to disciplinary action.
9. Lockers should be cleaned out prior to leaving for winter break (teachers will schedule this).

LOST AND FOUND

Personal belongings found on school grounds should be turned in to the front office. Lost and found items may be claimed in the designated area. The school cannot be responsible for any lost items. Items not claimed by the last day of each 9 weeks will be donated to a charitable organization.

MEDIA CENTER

The media center is open to students from 7:00 am to 2:55 pm daily. Students can either visit with their class or individually before or after school, or during a class with permission/pass from their teacher.

- Each student may check out three books at one time.
- Books are checked out for two school weeks, and can be renewed once.
- A replacement fee will be charged to cover the cost of any lost or damaged books.
- Students with an overdue book must turn it in or renew it before checking out other materials.
- All overdue fines and lost book fees must be paid by the end of the school year in order for students to participate in end-of-year celebrations, field days, etc.
- Destiny, the online library catalog, can be accessed at http://destiny.ccs.k12.nc.us
- NCWiseOwl is a group of subscription online databases for student research and includes full-text journal articles, newspaper articles, and reference materials. Access for free at www.ncwiseowl.org.

MEDICINE

Students required to take oral medications during school hours must have an official physician's medication form properly completed and on file in our office. This medication form requires written instructions, student's name, name of drug, dosage, time of day the medication is to be given, and signatures of the physician and parent. Parents are responsible for transporting to and from school all medicines to be administered by school personnel in a container properly labeled by the pharmacy or physician. The pharmacy label on the bottle must match the physician medication form exactly. All medication must be kept in the office. No student is to have any medication(s), whether prescription, or over-the-counter drugs in his/her possession at any time during the school day.

However, if a student has an emergency self-medication authorization form on file with the office to self-carry an asthma inhaler or an EpiPen, then that student may have that item in their possession at all times.

MESSAGES

In order to preserve valuable instructional time and to promote the safety of our students, personal calls and messages to students will be allowed only in an emergency. Pre-planning is essential. Students need to make appointments, bus plans, alternate car rides, etc. before leaving home for school. When there is a cancellation or change in the schedule by the school during the school day, students will be permitted to call a parent/guardian to inform them of the change.

OUTSTANDING SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS

Students with outstanding obligations (lost or damaged books, fundraising money owed, etc.) may be restricted from participating in co- or extra-curricular activities (i.e. field trips, special programs, field day activities, celebration day events, dances, etc) per Principal discretion.

PARENT PORTAL

Keep track of your child's attendance and grades by accessing the parent portal at https://260.ncsis.gov/campus/portal/parents/psu260cumberland.jsp?status=login. If you have not already activated your account, it will be available at Open House and through the Data Manager throughout the year.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Personal items are the responsibility of the students. Please leave valuables (cell phones, jewelry, electronic equipment, cameras, large sums of money, etc.) at home. **We are not held responsible for lost personal items.** Books and personal items should be safeguarded. Special care must be given to securing band and orchestra instruments. Never leave these instruments unattended. Never leave books, pocketbooks, etc. unattended on bleachers, steps, or in desks. Please ensure your name is on all your property.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is a required class. Students are required to dress out for participation. "**Dressing out"** means changing from your school clothes into appropriate clothing for physical activity and changing back into your school clothes after class. To be successful in physical education class it is imperative that you dress out and participate in each class. The items that you need are as follows:

T-Shirt – A clean, plain white or light colored pullover shirt. Tank tops and half shirts will not be permitted.

Shorts – A clean pair of athletic shorts that are acceptable in length and fullness for freedom of movement, but will stay in place without being held by the hand or a belt. Shorts made of denim or other heavy material with zippers or belts are not appropriate.

Pants – Sweat pants or jogging suits may be worn during cold weather days at the teacher's discretion. Coats, hoodies, and heavy jackets are not acceptable.

Socks – Clean athletic socks.

Shoes - Rubber-soled tennis shoes. No open-toed shoes, boots, or other casual shoes will be allowed.

We will not allow any student to dress in a manner that distracts others from learning, is offensive to others, or violates health or safety requirements. The school dress code applies for Physical Education.

PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS

Progress Reports will be posted in the Parent Portal and Report Cards will be given to students once during each nine-week period and available in the Parent Portal.

Progress Report will be available on the following schedule:

Thursday, September 24, 2026
Friday, December 4, 2026
Friday, February 19, 2027
Friday, April 30, 2027

Report Cards will go out on the following schedule:

Friday, October 30, 2026
Wednesday, January 27, 2027
Wednesday, April 7, 2027
Friday, June 04, 2027

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

(CCS Board Policy IHE)

In order to be promoted to the next grade students should earn a passing grade of a 60 in:

- Language Arts
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- One Elective Course

Students that do not pass one or more of these subjects may be considered for retention.

Final promotion decisions shall be based on mastery of grade-level skills as measured by teacher assessments, North Carolina End of Grade Tests, and other local and state recommended assessments.

PUNCTUALITY

Promptness to school and class is very important! Students should arrive at school by 7:25am, so that they can be in homeroom class by the 7:30am Tardy Bell. Students should be in their seats by the start of each class period as well. **Students who arrive at school after classes are in session must report to the school office with a parent/guardian to sign in and secure an admittance pass to class.**

A student is tardy to class if they do not arrive at the designated time per the daily schedule and do not have a note from the previous teacher or from the office. When a student is tardy to the same class for the third (3) time in a nine weeks grading period, they will receive an automatic office referral. Students who do not report to class and are more than 10 minutes late to class may be reported as skipping. Skipping classes will be an automatic office referral.

QUESTIONS – WHO TO ASK

Sharley Ditmore serves as our Principal. She will visit classrooms regularly and meet with students both individually and in groups about data and student progress. She will have the principal's round-table meeting to gain input about the school from the students' perspective. She is always available to meet with students regarding concerns or needs.

Kristen Kelton serves as an Assistant Principal. She handles all of the 6th grade and the seventh grade Tropics team discipline. She also serves as our school's testing coordinator, handles all field trips. She is always available to meet with students regarding concerns or needs.

Sha-Necia Head serves as an Assistant Principal. She handles the seventh grade Islanders team and all of the 8th grade discipline. She also serves as our athletic director, manages buses and bus drivers, and oversees the building and grounds maintenance, as well as custodians. She is always available to meet with students regarding concerns or needs.

Audra Bramble and James Burt will serve as our Safe Schools Coordinators. They will assist the administrative team as needed in disciplinary concerns, monitor lunches, and be available for student issues.

Students who have questions or concerns may speak with any of their teachers at any time. We also have a wonderful Student Support Team made up of our school counselors and social workers. They are available to all of the students at Max Abbott Middle School each and every

day. Our counselors and social workers assist with peer mediation, problem solving, attendance issues, assist students and their families in gaining community resources, work with families who are homeless, and look out for the general needs of the students.

REPORTING INFORMATION

If you have information you would like to report, please speak with any of your teachers, any staff member, your assistant principals, or your principal. However, if you would like to report anonymously, you may do so by visiting the Say Something site.

Max Abbott Middle School will follow Cumberland County Board of Education Policy Code 4342 pertaining to student search and seizure.

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND PROPERTY

Extreme care should be taken in the use of all school equipment and property. Microscopes, Band and Orchestra instruments, physical education equipment, textbooks, computers, lockers, and even chairs and desks should be used with proper care. You may be held responsible to pay for damages to school property assigned to you which has been intentionally abused.

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are from 7:30 am until 2:40 pm each day. Students should **NOT** arrive earlier than 7:00 am or remain on the campus later than 2:55 pm unless they are participating in a supervised activity.

THE SCHOOL DOORS WILL NOT OPEN UNTIL 7:00 am EACH SCHOOL DAY.

Supervision WILL NOT be provided for students prior to 7:00 am or after 2:55 pm. Parents who continuously do not abide by these guidelines, and allow their students to be at school long before and/or after school, may be referred to a child protective agency.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY

By 7:00 a.m. – Teachers and assistants sign in and report to classroom or duty assignment
7:00 a.m. - Bell rings - School opens for students
Immediately following entering the school all book bags, athletic bags, or similar items MUST be deposited in the student's locker.
7:00-7:30 a.m. - Students get breakfast, go to locker, and then report to their homeroom
7:25am- Warning Bell
7:30 a.m.-7:40a.m– Homeroom
7:40 a.m. - 2:40 p.m. – Core and Elective classes
2:40-2:55 p.m. - Bell rings **-** Students dismissed to cars and buses
3:30 p.m. - Office closes

SICK STUDENT

If a student is sick, the classroom teacher will give them a hall pass to visit the main office. Students will speak to the receptionist and ask to use the sick phone to call their parent(s). The student will sign-in on the sick log and then call their parent(s), the student will then return to class until a parent can pick them up.

If students have a fever or are throwing up or if they are displaying other severe symptoms, the student will remain in a designated location until parent/guardian arrival.

STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Students who are car riders will be dropped off/picked up each day at the sidewalk area in front of the school. Students are not to be dropped off/picked up at the bottom of the entrance hill on Winding Creek or on the roadway on Executive Place. The safety of all of our students is very important and enforcing these drop-off and pick-up routines will help make the drop-off and pick-up times safer for all of our students. When exiting the parking lot onto Winding Creek at drop-off and dismissal all vehicles must turn right (this is not optional).

The School doors will not open until 7:00 am each school day. Supervision WILL NOT be provided for students prior to 7:00 am or after 2:55 pm. Parents who continuously do not abide by these guidelines, and allow their students to be at school long before and/or after school, may be referred to a child protective agency.

STUDENT WORK - GRADING POLICY

Student progress is evaluated in a number of ways including projects, homework, daily assignments, and tests both teacher-made and standardized. Failure to do projects, presentations, and performances will result in a reduction of one letter grade from the original grade for each day late. After five days, no credit will be given for these assignments. All student work is expected to be completed in a timely manner.

MATH & ELA should have a minimum of 20 grades by the end of each grading period. SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES should have a minimum of 15 grades by the end of each grading period. ELECTIVES - ARTS/COMPUTERS/PE should have a minimum of 10 grades by the end of each grading period.

STUDENT WORK - HOMEWORK

Students may have approximately 10-15 minutes of practice work (per teacher) per day. Projects and long-term assignments are not included in this time frame.

STUDENT WORK - MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

Students are responsible for securing make-up assignments for absences <u>on the day they return to school</u>. All work missed due to a lawful absence must be made up within five school days upon the student's return to school. Assignments that are not made up will be reflected in the student's grade. A student who is present when a test is announced is expected to take the test as scheduled or upon returning to school.

In laboratory classes such as cultural arts, physical education, computer technology, and science, which do not lend themselves to make-up work, the teacher will determine the make-up procedure. It is anticipated that make-up work (including tests) will be completed outside the normal class time.

STUDENT WORK - LATE WORK

Students will be responsible for submitting all assignments, to include performances, presentations, and projects on the due date determined by the teacher. Failure to do so may result in a reduction of **one letter grade** from the original grade for each day late. Work submitted more than five school days after the due date may not receive credit.

TARDY POLICY PROCEDURES

If a student arrives to class late without a hall pass, the consequences will be as follows (per class, per nine weeks):

1st offense – Student receives warning and must sign the tardy log

2nd offense – Student must sign the tardy log and parent may be contacted
3rd offense- Student must sign the tardy log and an office referral is submitted (1 day RJC)

NOTE: This Policy does not include Late Check-Ins: Please refer to the attendance section of this handbook.

MAMS Definition of Skipping: Any student who is not in class for more than 10 minutes after the class start time and returns to class without a pass is considered skipping. A student in an unauthorized area of the school without a pass or permission is considered skipping class.

TRANSPORTATION

SCHOOL BUSES

School bus transportation is only available to R. Max Abbott Middle School students residing in our attendance areas. To ensure the safety of all passengers, students must adhere to the following while riding the bus:

- Students shall stay in their seats and face forward.
- Students shall refrain from throwing waste paper on the floor of the bus.
- Students shall not consume food or drinks on the bus.
- No part of the body shall be extended through the bus window at any time.
- Students must be quiet while the bus is stopped for railroad crossing.
- Students shall not open the emergency door unless an emergency exists.
- Students must sit in assigned seats at the discretion of the driver or administrator.
- Students are liable for all damages to school property.

Students will not be permitted to ride a bus not assigned to them. Non-bus students may not not ride a bus at any time.

School bus transportation is a privilege. Students who do not follow the above rules, may be suspended from riding the school bus. Bus suspensions may vary from 1-5 days, 10-15 days, or for the remainder of the year, depending upon the type of violation and the number of prior violations. Questions about bus transportation, safety questions, or bus suspensions should be directed to Sha-Necia Head, Assistant Principal.

VISITORS

Our school policy is to welcome visitors who have legitimate business at school. Guests and visitors must report to the main office and sign in for authorization before proceeding through the school to volunteer, attend events, or scheduled conferences. All volunteers must complete the CCS volunteer form, found on the CCS website, before they will be permitted to volunteer in classrooms, with clubs, or on field trips. Athletic coaching volunteers have different requirements and should contact the Athletic Director for guidance.

Students may not bring visitors to school to attend class.

Parents are also encouraged to make appointments to see their child's teacher(s) during his/her planning time so that all teachers will be given the opportunity to attend.

VISITOR ENTRANCE POLICY

1. **Check In at the Main Office**
   - All visitors must enter through the Main Office.
   - All visitors must pass through the Weapons Detection System (it is best to leave bags/purses in your locked vehicle).
   - The main office staff may ask you to pass through the Weapons Detection System a second time if they did not see you pass through the first time or if the system alerted. (A detection wand may also be used if necessary.)
2. **Identification Required**
   - Visitors will be required to present a valid government-issued photo ID.
   - The school will scan a valid ID through Raptor Technology to verify identification before granting access beyond the main office.
3. **Visitor Badge**
   - Approved visitors will receive a visitor badge or pass.
   - The badge must be worn and visible at all times while on campus.
4. **Purpose of Visit**
   - Visitors must state the reason for their visit.
   - Access is limited to authorized areas and approved activities.
5. **Escort Requirements**
   - Visitors may be required to be accompanied by a staff member while on campus.
   - Classroom visits typically require prior approval from school administration.
6. **Sign Out**
   - Visitors must sign out at the office before leaving.
7. **Prohibited Activities**
   - Disruptive behavior, unauthorized photography or recording, and access to restricted areas are generally prohibited.
   - Asking a teacher to meet with you during their instructional/planning time without a previously scheduled conference.
   -
8. **Denial of Access**
   - School administrators reserve the right to deny or revoke visitor access if a visitor poses a safety risk or violates school rules.

Failure to comply with school procedures may result in removal from campus and possible restriction of future visits.

CCS NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Please refer to www.ccs.k12.nc.us and the Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievances page for a detailed statement.

Max Abbott Middle School Shared Responsibilities

Student expectations:

- Showing respect and cooperating with all adults in the school.
- Coming to class prepared to work and completing all assignments to the best of my ability.
- Following the school dress code.
- Following all school/classroom procedures and routines.
- Monitoring PowerSchool and personal goals on a weekly basis.
- Respecting the rights of others to learn without distraction and disruption.
- Showing respect for people and property by not using profanity, stealing, or vandalizing.
- Practicing safety by not running, pushing, or fighting on campus.
- Asking my teachers questions when I don't understand something.
- Discussing with my parent(s) what I am learning in school.
- Following the Code of Student Conduct.

Teacher expectations:

- Providing a safe and pleasant atmosphere for learning;
- Explaining assignments to students clearly.
- Providing continuous feedback of student progress and achievement to students and parents.
- Providing students with goal setting opportunities.
- Providing motivating, interesting, and rigorous learning experiences in my classroom.
- Utilizing scientifically research based techniques and methods that work best for the students.
- Explaining the Code of Student Conduct to the students.
- Communicating and cooperating with each parent to enable the best education possible.
- Explaining my expectations, instructional goals, procedures, routines, and grading system to students and parents.

Parents expectations:

- Getting my child to school on time and avoiding unnecessary absences.
- Providing a time and place each evening for quiet study or reading at home.
- Helping my child in any way possible to meet his or her responsibilities.
- Finding out how my child is progressing by attending conferences, PTO meetings, calling the school, and monitoring my child's progress in PowerSchool.
- Encouraging my child to read to complete assignments, but also, for enjoyment.
- Talking with my child about his/her school work and activities every day.
- Reinforcing the Student Code of Conduct.
- Keeping my child's teachers abreast of unique circumstances.
- Contacting my student/teacher through school phone systems.
- Supporting the school and my child's teacher in its efforts to maintain proper discipline.

Administrators/counselors expectations:

- Creating a welcoming environment for students and parents.
- Communicating to students and parents the school mission and goals.
- Ensuring a safe and orderly environment.
- Reinforcing the partnership between parent, student, staff, and community.
- Acting as the instructional leader by supporting teachers in their classroom.
- Setting high standards and implementing effective programs.
- Allocating resources to ensure that high standards are met for all students.
- Providing a variety of opportunities for involving parents in decision making, providing input, and volunteering at the school.
- Providing the appropriate growth opportunities for students and teachers.

This year we will participate in PBIS.



Thank you for joining us in helping your child to Leap Beyond their Limits!