

# **White House Middle School**

## **Student Handbook**

**2022 - 2023**



**Principal**

Mark Mills

**Asst. Principals**

Jim Baker

Sarah Parker

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

White House Middle School serves fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, including special education exceptionalities. We feel identity and self-worth are of utmost importance to the development of the whole child; therefore, a continuum of guidance and independence is essential for students of this age. Experiences must be provided which will allow for growth in all areas because we CARE.

The philosophy of White House Middle School is to provide an environment which is conducive to learning and to provide a smooth transition between elementary and high school. The goal of the parents, teachers, administration, and staff is to help our students grow intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.

So in order to achieve student success through all the experiences that White House Middle School provides, we have built discipline, policies and all things student related on the 4 pillars that we believe will maximize that success.

**Character**  
**Accountability**  
**Relationships**  
**Excellence**

I personally would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to White House Middle School and express our desire to work with the students, parents, and teachers for the continued educational and social advancement of our children.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

*Here, as in every school, it is necessary to have certain regulations. These rules will act as a guide for student conduct. Not all the requirements for proper conduct have been included, as it is not necessary to print regulations that govern the behavior of ladies and gentlemen.*

### **ATTENDANCE SUMNER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board recognizes that good attendance at school is basic to student learning. Attendance is a key factor in student achievement: therefore, students are expected to be present each day that school is in session. Parents have both a legal obligation and a moral responsibility to see that children are present every day that school is in session.

The Compulsory School Attendance Law in Tennessee requires children to attend school each day. A student who has been absent five days (this means a total of five days during the school year and not necessarily five consecutive days) without adequate excuse is considered truant and may be summoned to court. Whenever possible, attendance issues should be resolved at the school level. Prior to referral to a truancy officer, a meeting shall be held at the school to assist the family and improve student attendance via an attendance contract. If unexcused absences continue to accumulate, the Director of Schools or his/her designee will report the parent and student to the Juvenile Court for further action.

The following are official/adequate excuses that should be turned in to the attendance secretary in the school office

- Medical note for the student (doctor, dentist, hospital, etc.)
- Student illness not requiring a doctor visit (**five parent notes per semester**)
- Court notes for the student
- Funeral notice
- Recognized religious holiday
- College Visits
- Military deployment paperwork for parent

## **Appeal Procedure for Unexcused Absences**

The initial appeal shall be to the building principal or designee. If not resolved at the building level, the parent can request in writing an appeal to the Attendance Office at the Sumner County Board of Education. The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee consisting of Director of Schools Designee, an Attendance personnel representative and a principal/assistant principal representative. The burden of proof rests on the student or guardian. The appeal process for determining unexcused absences is ancillary to a truancy decision rendered by a juvenile court judge as described in T.C.A. 49-6-3010.

### **A principal may verify absences for the following:**

- Approved school activity that is school sponsored and school supervised
- Extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis

**Tardies:** Any student not in the classroom when the class begins is tardy. Students who accumulate excessive tardiness (as stated below) may be subject to discipline.

5 tardies – detention

6 tardies – detention

7 tardies – detention and parent letter

8 tardies – principal discretion and meeting with student

9 and above tardies – principal discretion and parent meeting

**Unexcused Early Dismissals:** For any student that is dismissed from school without a doctors note, it is considered an unexcused early dismissal. A parent note may be used for the early dismissal, **but it will follow the same rules as tardies (see above).**

**Make-up work:** Upon the first day of returning to school, it is the student's responsibility in middle and high school and the parent's responsibility in elementary school to contact the teacher(s) regarding make-up work. During the school year, make-up work must be completed within several days equal to the number of consecutive days of the absence. If a missed assignment has not been completed by the stated time frame above, a teacher may permit the assignment to be turned in for partial credit IF it is completed by the end of the 4 ½ weeks' time frame. If the assignment is not completed by the end of the 4 1.2 weeks mark, it will be counted as a 50%.

## **Absences from school**

The student should bring a written note from his/her parent/guardian or the doctor within two days following his/her absence. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence. The following outline must be adhered to in order for the absence to be excused:

**Student's first and last name**

**Grade**

**Dates missed, i.e. 1/3/09 (not Wednesday)**

**Parent's signature and number where he/she can be reached**

After an absence, students should drop the note in the basket in the gym or bring it to the office. It is the school policy to make a reasonable effort to call the parents/guardians of all students who are absent.

**Students need to bring a note if they miss any part of a school day.**

## **Leaving school during the day**

When a student is being checked out of school, the parent must come into the office and sign out the student. The student must bring a note following the absence for classes missed or send a note for early dismissal. **If someone other than a parent or guardian is picking up your child, one of three of the following requirements must be met:**

- 1) Call the school office to give verbal permission.**
- 2) Send a note signed by the parent or guardian giving written permission.**
- 3) The person picking the student up is on file with the office.**

**\*\*\* Photo ID may be required for pick up\*\*\***

*If a student is absent from school during the day, he/she will not be permitted to participate in activities at school that night unless they have attended half the school day or received permission from administration.*

## **State of Tennessee Progressive Truancy Program**

**Tier 1**-School level interventions and reward programs

**Tier 2**-initiated at 3 unexcused absences

- \*requires a conference with administration, parents, and student.
- \*Attendance contract signed at the conference.
- \*Valid for 90 school days (follow-up meeting required)

**Tier 3**-initiated at 5 unexcused absences

- \*school will fill out the Individualized Assessment form
- \*plus, one of the following:
  - Individualized Action Plan or Improvement Plan
  - Referral to school counselor
  - Referral to community-based services
  - Referral to school nurse-Health plan created
  - Referral to Attendance Student Support counselor

**Tier 4**-initiated at 8 unexcused absences

- \*Referral to School Attendance Review Team consisting of administration, counselor, student, parent, teachers, nurse, attendance clerk, psychologist, and /or truancy officer
- \*SART contract filled out

**Tier 5**-initiated when no improvement is shown

- \*Truancy officer initiates contact
- \*Referral to district attendance review team (DART)
- \*Progressive Assurance Statement filled out and sent to DART
- \*Parent summoned to pre-court diversion program

**Tier 6**-Juvenile Petition filed

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Students are under the supervision of the school from the time they arrive at the bus stop in the morning until they return to the bus stop

and the bus has left the sight in the afternoon. Students shall follow the directions of the bus driver. Misbehavior on the bus will result in a penalty at the discretion of the principal/assistant principal depending on the circumstances. The penalty may include removal from the bus for a period of one (1) to ten (10) days per incident.

When it is necessary for a student to ride a bus other than his/her regular bus, WHMS will issue a pass for the student to ride another bus with the following provisions:

1. The student will not create an overcrowding condition on the bus he/she wishes to ride.
2. The student has a note from his/her parent(s) requesting permission for their child to ride a bus other than his/her own.
3. The parent request is given to an administrator before 2:00pm. **No requests will be granted past 2:00pm**

The note must include the following information: **The student's full name, address, regular bus number, bus number he/she wishes to ride, destination, parent's signature, and a phone number where parent may be reached.**

## CAFETERIA

### Behavior

Student behavior in the cafeteria should be based on courtesy and cleanliness. This means leaving the table and surrounding area clean and orderly. Students are not allowed to take food, paper products, or straws out of the cafeteria. Students are expected to remain seated at all times. Chairs are not to be moved from table to table. Students who are scuffling, breaking line, running, or throwing food or drinks will be strictly disciplined, possibly resulting in out-of-school suspension.

### Breakfast

Breakfast will be served between 7:15 and 8:00 each morning. Students who buy breakfast should report directly to the cafeteria upon arrival to school. Breakfast items are all a la carte. Pricing is posted in the cafeteria.

## **Charges**

Lunch charges may be obtained as the student goes through the lunch line. He/she is to pay the lunch charge the next school day. At no time will a student be allowed to carry more than two (2) charges at a time. Checks will not be accepted through the end of both Fall and Spring school terms.

## **Free/Reduced**

Applications for the free and reduced program for breakfast and lunch are available through the office. Students must re-apply each year.

## **Lunch**

*Students will have an assigned lunch period with assigned seats.*

They may purchase lunch or bring one from home. When bringing lunch, remember that glass containers are not allowed. Drinks and food are not allowed outside of the cafeteria.

Breakfast and lunch may be purchased on a daily basis. Since all students are entered in the computer, a student may pay for any number of meals at one time. The money is credited to his/her account and can be used only by that student.

For the safety of our students with allergies, no outside food will be permitted in the cafeteria. If a student or parent brings in outside food for the student to eat, the student and parent may eat that food in the front office within the time frame of the lunch period provided.

## **CELL PHONES/SMART WATCHES**

In compliance with Sumner County School Board Policy, students may have a cell phone at school. Cell phones and smart watches must be turned off upon arrival at school and must stay off until departure from campus. In the case of need the principal or his designee may approve phone use during the school day. It is suggested that all cell phones and smart watches must be secured in the student's locker or

the classroom cell phone cubbies between the hours of 8:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.

All other electronic devices are not allowed on campus during the regular school day unless the student has written permission from the principal.

Penalties for unauthorized or non-appropriate cell use:

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Phone will be collected and returned at the end of the day. Student will sign the warning book.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Phone will be turned in to the office. At the end of the school day, the phone will be returned to the student. The student will receive a detention.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Phone will be turned in to the office. At the end of the day, the phone will be returned to the student. The student will receive ISI. All additional offenses will warrant discipline at the principal's discretion.

\*This policy applies to all cell phones, regardless of whether the owner or another person is using the phone.

\*The school in no way guarantees the safety of any electronic device at school.

### **CHEERLEADING AND ATHLETICS**

**All athletes are to adhere to conduct that represents White House Middle School in the manner that is becoming of what is expected of all students. Any such behavior that is not representative as such is subject to discipline and/or removal from the sport.**

Cheerleaders and athletes must show proof of insurance before they will be allowed to participate. This includes practices.

Because it is illegal for middle school children to obtain tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, and due to the detrimental effects of these products, White House Middle School retains the right to suspend any student from a squad or team for the possession or use (on or off campus) of these above mentioned products.

### **COUNSELORS**

The counselors at White House Middle School are available to assist students in many ways. When a student wishes to see a counselor, he/she should go to the guidance office to arrange an appointment. Sometimes a teacher may suggest that a counselor talk with a student. There may be a time during the school day when a counselor will come to the classroom to get a student. The student should leave the classroom and return as soon as the conference is over.

### **DEBTS**

At the end of the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grade or transfer to another school, WHMS will not release records and/or report cards to the new school until all debts have been paid. Overdue library books are debts and will be treated as outlined above.

### **DELIVERIES**

Due to the difficulty in making sure every child receives an intended delivery on special occasions, along with problems that may arise during transportation of flowers, balloons, glass containers, etc., we ask that parents assist us by keeping all deliveries sent to the school to a minimum.

### **DISCIPLINE**

White House Middle School promotes accountability for student actions. We believe that students need to be willing to make corrections in their behavior when necessary. It means looking at options, choosing solutions and finding ways to become more effective. Characteristics like laying blame, justifying, denying, and quitting as handy alternatives do not promote responsibility. To assist students in being successful, we have implemented our school wide acronym to guide students at WHM.

**Character**

**Accountability**

**Relationships**

**Excellence**

All students must adhere to the following:

1. Leave toys, games, playing/collector cards, fidget spinners, puzzles, rubics cubes, and electronic devices (PSP's, I-POD's MP3 players, Gameboy's, etc.) at home. These will be confiscated and returned only to the parent. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or confiscated items.
2. Follow the directions of teachers and supervisors at all times. Rudeness in any form will not be tolerated.
3. Follow the directions of bus drivers and attendants. The bus driver may refer any student to the principal for discipline.
4. Abide by the hands-off policy for students. This policy will be strictly enforced.
5. The selling, purchasing or trading of items between students is not allowed.
6. Loitering is not allowed anywhere on campus.
7. Profanity (written or verbal) will not be tolerated.
8. Harassment will not be tolerated.
9. Chewing gum or eating candy is not allowed.

## **Detention**

Detention will be held every morning from 7:30-8:10 or may be served during lunch **with admin permission**. A lunch detention means a student will have to sit alone for the duration of lunch for each detention. A detention constitutes 30 minutes of time served. When the student serves his or her detention, he/she must sign in, and have pencil and paper.

When a student is given a detention, the discipline form will be given to a designated grade level teacher who will collect and monitor the number of detentions and to the student to bring home. The level of discipline follows this chart:

- 3 detentions – communication with parents
- 4 detentions – communication with parents
- 5 detentions – major for admin and communication with parents
- 6 detentions – major infraction
- 7 detentions – major infraction and parent meeting with teachers

### **In-School Isolation (ISI)**

If the student's conduct is deemed inappropriate while the student is in ISI, the administration may exercise the right to assign further in-school-isolation or out-of-school suspension for the remainder of the ISI days.

### **Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS)**

When behavior becomes detrimental to the good order of the school, it may become necessary to suspend a student from school and its activities for a period not to exceed ten (10) consecutive days.

Depending upon the circumstances, a parent may be required to confer with the school for the student to be readmitted to classes.

The following violations may result in out-of-school suspension.

1. Fighting among students
2. Theft
3. Tobacco possession
4. Vandalism
5. Violence or threatened violence
6. Willful/persistent misconduct
7. Zero Tolerance Offenses

### **Restriction Time**

To limit the amount of time the student is out of the class, administration and teachers may use restriction time as an option instead of ISS or OSS. This will consist of an allotted amount of time that the student must report to detention, afternoon detention, and/or lunch time. The student will choose what times they report as long as the amount of time is completed within 5 school days. Lunch time restriction consists of the student getting their lunch and reporting to the detention room for the allotted amount of time. If the student does not complete the assigned amount of time, it will constitute and assignment of ISS that parallels the amount of time missed.

Please refer to the county's most current *Important Policies for Parents and Students*, along with the Sumner County Board *Policy Manual* for detailed information regarding code of behavior, discipline, and discipline procedure.

## **DRESS CODE (please read)**

Students shall observe modesty, appropriateness, and neatness in clothing and personal appearance. A student is not appropriately dressed or well-groomed if he or she is a disturbing influence in class or school because of his/her mode of dress and grooming including wearing undergarments. The following is the Standardized Dress Code adopted by the Sumner County Board of Education. Failure to comply with the dress code may result in suspension.

### The following shall not be worn to school:

- Pants – no saggy or sagging pants, no holes in jeans where skin is visible
- Caps, hats, scarves, bandanas, or hand bands with additions
- Form-fitting/body-conforming clothes (yoga/workout pants, bike shorts, spandex, and etc.) must be layered with clothes that are finger-tip length and comply with the WHMS dress code.
- No revealing shirts where a student's midriff, shoulders, necklines and backs show too much. Shirts must not be see through. Shoulders must be covered beyond the shoulder seam
- Shoes must be worn at all times. House shoes, flip flops or wheeled shoes are not allowed
- No pajama pants or costumes unless allowed on a dress up day
- No body piercing jewelry other than nose studs are allowed. No lip rings, hoop nose rings, eyebrow rings, and so on.
- Administrators reserve the right to address any non-covered issues that pose behavior, health, or safety concerns that may arise.

The dress code will be strictly enforced during the school day. Each day, teachers will look over the attire of students to ensure all dress code violations have been addressed. If a dress code issue arises, students have 3 options: 1. Change clothing, 2. Call home for additional clothes or 3. Go to ISS for refusal to rectify the issue. Our goal is to return the student to class as quickly as possible without further issues.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities while attending WHMS. Involvement in extra-curricular activities provides an excellent opportunity for students to explore new interests and develop school spirit.

## **HALL PRIVILEGES**

Any time a student is in the hall, it is his/her responsibility to have signed out of his/her classroom and have the appropriate hall pass.

## **HOMEWORK**

Students will be expected to do homework regularly. It is vitally important that parents provide a quiet place for their children to study. Homework provides an opportunity for students to practice newly acquired skills and reinforce learning.

## **HOUSEKEEPING**

According to school board policy, students are to be encouraged to help maintain a school environment conducive to learning.

## **INTERNET USE**

Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of those privileges.

## **LIBRARY**

Books are checked out for a two-week period and may be renewed once. Students will be charged five cents for every school day a book is overdue until the fine reaches the cost of the book. At this time the student will be charged the cost of replacing the book. Outstanding, overdue library books will result in a student not being allowed to attend dances and other school functions until the book is returned. Extended library hours are available for students needing additional library time.

## **LOCKERS**

All lockers are the property of White House Middle School and are subject to inspection by school administration. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Locks for the lockers are the

responsibility of the students however. They may be combination or key locks. Keep in mind, students are responsible for keeping an extra key or the combination with them or otherwise risk losing the lock to having to be cut from locker.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

All lost and found items (clothing, backpacks, etc.) should be turned in or claimed through the office. Lost textbooks will be returned to the teacher who issued the book. Lost library books will be returned to the library. Periodically, unclaimed lost items will be sent out to one of the charitable organizations in the White House community.

### **BACKPACKS**

Backpacks will only be allowed to carry books and other pertinent school items into the school unless the student is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. 5<sup>th</sup> graders are permitted to carry their backpack. Once school begins at 8:15, backpacks must be put up in the student's lockers and cannot be carried to the student's classrooms for the sake of safety purposes unless permitted by the principal. At 3:15, the student may load up school items such as books and paper to carry home in the student's backpack.

### **MEDICATION**

Any student who needs to take medication during the day shall, upon entering the school building, leave the medication at the office to be administered at the designated time. No medications will be administered without proper documentation or before 12:00am. The school requires a prescription medication form and/or a nonprescription medication form to be on file before any medication can be given to students. All medications must be brought to school in the original container and clearly labeled. All Over the Counter medications must be in the original container and unopened when brought to school. A log will be kept on the dispensing of all medications. We do not dispense antibiotics or prescription pain medication and all medication must be picked up at the end of the school year or it will be disposed of.

## **MESSAGES**

With an enrollment of about (800+) students at WHMS, we urge parents to communicate transportation, appointment times, and so forth, before the student leaves home in the morning.

Announcements are given around 8:15 and 3:10. **Any message not relayed to front office staff by 3:05pm will not be given to the student.**

## **PARENT PORTAL**

All parents are encouraged to set up a Skyward account. All student grades are posted to Skyward in a timely manner. Please contact the office in order to receive login information.

## **REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report cards are issued every nine (9) weeks. There are two (2) grading periods in the fall semester and two (2) grading periods in the spring semester.

Parents will receive a progress report every four and one half (4.5) weeks. This progress report is not a final grade, but an opportunity for both parent and student to receive grade information 4.5 weeks before the final report card grade is recorded.

## **The Grading Scale**

A-----93-100

B-----85-92

C-----75-84

D-----70-74

F-----69 and below

It is the student's responsibility to turn in classwork, homework, and makeup work. If any of these items are not turned in at the appropriate time, they will become 0's. If a student wishes to resolve the 0, it is the student's responsibility to talk to the teacher where the teacher will make every effort to help the student makeup up that work. Not completing work will negatively affect student grades so it is imperative to keep up with student's grades and work completed.

## **SCHOOL VENDING AND REWARDS PROGRAM**

WHM uses a rewards-based program called vending every 2 weeks to reinforce positive behavior. At vending, students, if permitted to attend, may purchase food and drinks, socialize, and play games for 45 minutes during RTI and Related arts classes. Students will not be permitted to attend if:

- \*they do not have an A, B, or C
- \*have been given ISS or OSS
- \*have been given 2 or more detentions
- \*have not turned in attendance notes to the attendance clerk

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

School hours are from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. All walkers and car riders who arrive at the school prior to 8:15 a.m. will enter through the front doors. No student should arrive at school prior to 7:15 a.m. Students arriving before 8:05 must enter through the gym doors if they are a bus rider and front doors if they are a car rider. Students must be seated in their classrooms by 8:13 a.m. All students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. must sign in at the office.

## **TEACHERS' WORK AREAS**

Absolutely no student is allowed in teacher work areas during the school day unless accompanied by a teacher.

## **TELEPHONE**

The school telephone is for business purposes only. Parents who call the school are to leave a message. Students will not be called from classes to receive a telephone call. Only emergency messages will be delivered during class. Students are allowed to use school phones only with permission.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

All textbooks are furnished by the Sumner County Board of Education. Students are expected to take care of their books and return them in good condition at the end of the school year. Students are not to mark or damage books in any way. Students

must pay for any loss or damage to books. If books are not returned or are returned damaged, it may prevent the student from receiving books the next year. In order to obtain a second book, payment must have been received on the first (lost) book unless arrangements have been made with an administrator.

### **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

All visitors must enter through the main office doors and report immediately to the office receptionist. In the office visitors will sign the visitors' log, receive a visitor's pass, and receive authorization to begin the visit. The visitor's pass must be worn during the entire visit and must be returned to the office when signing out at the end of the visit.

### **WATER BOTTLES/WATER CONTAINERS**

***Due to past problems involving spills and vandalism in restrooms, clear water bottles are the only type of drinks permitted in the halls.***

Any medical exceptions need to be cleared first by an administrator.

### **WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Inclement weather sometimes causes delayed school openings, early dismissals, or closings. Parents are advised to monitor radio or television stations or visit the Sumner County website at [www.sumnerschools.org](http://www.sumnerschools.org) for announcements related to school closings during inclement weather. **Please have a plan in place for your child in case of early dismissals and communicate that plan clearly to your child.**

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

Students needing to withdraw from school to attend another school during the year must request a student withdrawal form from the Attendance Clerk. The student must return all textbooks and library books and clear all debts before the withdrawal will be processed. Once the withdrawal is initialized in the office, the student will have to take the withdrawal papers to each teacher to get clearance for debts and to receive final grades.

## **SCHOOL AND HOME COMMUNICATION**

Keeping in mind that the success of WHM students directly depends on the effective communication between WHM and home, we have created various ways to communicate with parents and all stakeholders. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these modes of communication.

- Parent Portal (skyward – parent and student login available)
- Facebook page
- Twitter
- Callout system used when needed
- White House Middle School website
- Email

If anyone has questions or needs help, please do not hesitate to reach out to us via phone or email. It is very important to us to answer your questions in a timely manner.