

**BE SAFE**

**BE RESPECTFUL**

**BE RESPONSIBLE**

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**White House Middle School**

**Student Handbook**

**2016-2017**



Principal  
Mark Mills

Asst. Principals  
Jim Baker  
Ken Genung

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

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.

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.

The school realizes each child needs the opportunity to reach his or her full potential; therefore, a variety of teaching methods, approaches, and techniques should be used to meet the needs of each student. For effective learning to occur, the middle school child must develop responsibility and self-reliance skills. This process may be enhanced through effective lines of communication between teacher and student, teacher and teacher, and, just as importantly, between teacher and parent.

In order to prepare young people to succeed in today's complex society; we must provide ample experiences that will foster growth in leadership, decision-making, and citizenship.

With these things in mind, let me 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.

At White House Middle School, we believe in and will follow the **8 Keys of Excellence**. When one follows the 8 Keys, he/she will have success in life.

Live with **INTEGRITY**



Align your actions with your values. A person of integrity consistently follows a strict code of personal values in a way that demonstrates moral excellence.

Acknowledge **FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS**



See failures as feedback. You can learn from mistakes and make the changes needed to be more successful in the future.

**SPEAK WITH GOOD PURPOSE**



Be positive with your language. Avoid insults, gossip, and inappropriate language.

Live in the Now - **THIS IS IT!**



Focus our attention on the present moment. Make whatever we are doing at any given time the most important.

Affirm your **COMMITMENT**



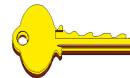
Do what we set out to do. When we live a life of commitment, we have the discipline to follow through with our commitments to others and to ourselves, even when it is challenging.

Take **OWNERSHIP**



Take responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. Ownership is knowing that we can't always control what happens but we can control how we respond.

Stay **FLEXIBLE**



To change our actions to get the desired outcome. Flexibility allows us multiple ways to get the result.

Keep your **BALANCE**



To make the choices in our life that provide lasting fulfillment. Inner happiness comes from making choices that fill up our body, mind, and spirit.

## **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**

#### **Purpose**

Recognizing that absenteeism is a hindrance to education and that the progress of a student at school depends on the regularity of attendance, the Board has adopted the following Rules and Regulations, based on the State Compulsory Attendance Law. It is the purpose of this policy to promote good school attendance in grades kindergarten through twelve.

#### **Absences defined**

PRESENT means a student is in attendance at the school or class to which he/she is assigned. For truancy purposes, present shall mean attending for a full school day.

ABSENT means a student is not in attendance at the school or in the class to which he/she is assigned. Missing more than one-half of a day or a class counts as an absence. Following are two categories of absences:

Excused absences: absences accepted by the school system under the law. The cause and benefits of the absence, as verified by proof, outweigh the benefits that would have been achieved by attending school. For absences of a full or partial day to be considered excused, a written note from the parent, guardian, or doctor must be provided. After an accumulation of five days of excused absences, the parent/guardian must file more formal documentation with the principal to assure classification as an excused absence.

Adequate reasons for absences include the following:

1. Student's personal illness, medical appointment, or hospitalization verified by a licensed physician, dentist or health agency. If the illness or hospitalization is to exceed ten (10) consecutive days, the parent or guardian should apply for

- homebound instruction after the first five (5) days of consecutive absences.
2. Death of a family member. Death of a non-family person if approved by the principal.
3. Special recognized religious holidays regularly observed by a particular faith. A parent note must be submitted to the school principal prior to the student being absent for a religious holiday.
4. Required court appearances. Verification of court appearance times from appropriate authorities must be provided.
5. Approved school related activities. Prior approval is required.
6. Vacations/Trips with prior approval by the principal. A note from the parent/guardian shall be submitted prior to any vacation or trip. Principal approval is required. Vacations/trips taken without prior approval will be considered unexcused.
7. Other extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student. For such absences to be excused, the building principal or his/her designee must approve them.

All notes, letters, and other pertinent information related to absences shall be maintained for one (1) year in a file at the school.

Students shall make up work missed during excused absences. See section on Makeup Work.

Unexcused absences: absences which are not verified or which do not meet valid reasons for absences. All out of school suspensions are unexcused.

Appeals: Elementary (K-5) and Middle School (6-8) – Parents or guardians may request an attendance review of their child's record with the principal regarding a retention decision.

#### **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 give a note to their first period teacher. 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**

If the student leaves or returns during the school day, the parent must sign the student out or in through the front office. Upon returning to school, the student should ask his/her teacher for any missed assignments and should turn in any work required for the classes during the absence. Parents should try to make doctor and dental appointments after school. If the student becomes ill during the day or must go home for some emergency, the student must go to the office, where the office personnel will call home for the student. Anyone who has a fever, determined by the school nurse, or is too ill for class must go home.

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 complete the form that will be available at the receiving desk when the child signs out. **If someone other than a parent or guardian is picking up your child, one of two 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.**

**\*\*\* 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 it is cleared by the administration.

#### **Tardy to school**

On the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) tardy to school in a semester, a student may be given one (1) detention. Each tardy thereafter during the semester may result in

detention. Excessive tardiness may also result in a referral to the attendance department.

#### **Truancy**

Students who are absent from school without their parents' knowledge are truant. The punishment for truancy is automatic two (2) day in-school isolation for each day missed. Continued truancy offenders will be reported to a Sumner County Truancy Officer.

#### **AUTOMOBILES AND MOTORCYCLES**

Students are not permitted to drive cars or motorcycles to school.

#### **BACKPACKS**

Larger backpacks will be kept in student lockers at all times. Smaller drawstring backpacks are allowed in class. Roller backpacks (with wheels) are not permitted unless approved by the administration.

#### **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 the school day begins.

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. No charges will be allowed during the last thirty (30) days of school. 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. 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.

## CELL PHONES

In compliance with Sumner County School Board Policy, students may have a cell phone at school. Cell phones 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. All cell phones must be secured in the student's locker 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 failure to comply:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Phone will be collected and returned at the end of the day at the administration discretion. Student will sign the warning book.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Phone will be turned in to the office and after 24 hours returned to the parent at 3:15 the next day or any time after. The student will receive a detention.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Phone will be turned in to the office and after 24 hours returned to the parent at 3:15 the next day or any time after. The student will receive ISI. All additional offenses may result in OSS or to a disciplinary hearing.

\*This policy applies to all cell phones, regardless of whether or not 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 must adhere to the WHMS Athletic Academic Policy.

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**

If a student owes money to the school, he/she will not be allowed to attend dances or other selected school activities. 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.

As a result, students will have greater control of their life because they will stop blaming things outside of their control for the current situation. This is the first step toward taking ownership. Taking ownership also means not blaming others for what happens to you.

To assist students in being successful we have implemented 3 simple rules for our school. **Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible.** Any infraction or issue will fall under one of these rules. The essential question you must ask yourself is, is my behavior safe, respectful and responsible. If the answer to either question is “NO” you may be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Be Safe – (*free from danger or the risk of harm*)**

Example: Running in the hallway is not being safe because, you could fall and hurt yourself, run into a door, run into another person and could break an arm or leg, etc. Throwing objects can also be a violation of our safety policy. You could cause someone to lose an eye or start a fight with you resulting in possible injury.

#### **Be Respectful**

Examples: Writing on the bathroom walls is not being respectful. Doing so shows you have no respect for property that does not belong to you. You are being disrespectful to the janitorial staff who must clean the writing off of the walls. You have no respect for the person you have written about, nor do you have respect for yourself.

#### **Be Responsible**

Examples: Not being prepared for class shows a lack of responsibility. If you come to class without your homework completed, or if you do not have the proper supplies for class, you are not being responsible for your success. If you blame someone else (parents, teachers, bus drivers, or other students) for your poor choices, you are not taking responsibility for your actions. Below is a list of other behaviors that do not adhere to the Be Safe, Be Respectful, or Be Responsible policy. There are other violations that may not be listed.

All students must adhere to the following:

1. Leave toys, games, playing/collector cards 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. (Be Respectful)
2. Follow the directions of teachers and supervisors at all times. Rudeness in any form will not be tolerated. (Be Respectful)
3. Follow the directions of bus drivers and attendants. The bus driver may refer any student to the principal for discipline. (Be Safe, Be Respectful)
4. Abide by the hands-off policy for students. This policy will be strictly enforced. (Be Safe)
5. The selling, purchasing or trading of items between students is not allowed. (Be Responsible, Be Respectful)
6. Loitering is not allowed anywhere on campus. (Be Respectful, Be Safe)
7. Profanity (written or verbal) will not be tolerated. (Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe)
8. Harassment will not be tolerated. (Be Respectful)
9. Chewing gum or eating candy is not allowed. (Be Responsible)

### **Detention**

Detention will be held every morning from 7:30-8:15. When the student enters detention, he/she must be on time, sign in, and have pencil and paper.

When a student is given a detention, the student is to sign the detention form. The student's signature on the form is not an admission of guilt but an acknowledgment that the detention has been assigned.

When a student receives a detention, a copy of the notice will be given to the student for him/her to deliver to the parent. All detentions will be served the next school day, unless otherwise noted. If a student fails to serve detention or accumulates excessive detentions, the student will be subject to additional discipline at the discretion of the administrators (ISI). Students receiving their 6<sup>th</sup> detention in a nine-week period may possibly be placed on a PBS Point Sheet and may be assigned In-School Isolation. If a 9<sup>th</sup> detention is received in a nine-week period the student may be suspended OSS.

### **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

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**

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. 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:

- Saggy/sagging (baggy) pants (belts are to be worn about the waist at all times)
- Holes in clothing will be allowed as long as no skin or underclothing is showing.

- Suggestive slogans, vulgar captions, violence, pictures or advertisements for drugs, tobacco, or alcoholic products on clothes or jewelry
- Caps, hats, scarves, bandanas, or bands
- Gloves
- Form-fitting/body-conforming clothes (yoga/workout pants) may be layered with clothes that are finger-tip length and comply with the WHMS dress code.
- Bare midriffs (students should be able to raise their hand and have no midriff showing) halters, fishnet or tank tops
- Revealing necklines
- Cleated shoes
- Shoes with roller wheels
- Extreme hair color (any color that is not natural)
- Shower shoes, soccer slides, or flip flops are not to be worn at school.
- Clothing or articles related to gangs are not to be worn at school.
- All students must wear shoes.
- Pants length must not drag the floor. All pants must be hemmed (no frayed edges).
- Shoulders must be covered, no spaghetti straps or strapless tops (A shirt must have sleeves consisting of some fabric beyond the shoulder seam).
- A see-through or transparent top over spaghetti straps is not allowed.
- Skirts and dresses, with or without slits, must be no higher than 3 inches from the back of the knee. Measurement begins at the top of the slit.
- Shorts must be long enough to reach the student's fingertips when arms are held at the side. (No cut offs).
- No tinted glasses/sunglasses unless doctor prescribed are to be worn at school.
- No body piercing jewelry except for earrings may be worn during the school day. (including tongue piercing)
- Jewelry must not be distracting/disruptive or unsafe.
- Heavy chains, pet collars, and spiked jewelry are a few examples of jewelry that is prohibited at school or school functions.
- Valuable clothes and jewelry are discouraged.
- No black make-up, or make-up deemed un-natural will be worn during the school day.

- No un-natural corrective eye lenses will be worn during the school day.
- Shirts longer than finger-tip length must be tucked in.
- No temporary or permanent tattoos will be allowed and must not be displayed. Drawing with ink on your skin will be treated as a tattoo.

The dress code will be strictly enforced during the school day. The school day begins upon arrival to school (or embarking the school bus) and ends upon departure, including all sporting events, field trips, dances, and other school sponsored events.

Penalties for dress code violations include but are not limited to changing clothes, ISI, or going home. **Be Responsible! Be Respectful! Be Safe!**

### **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**

Lockers will be issued to students. 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.

### **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.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Middle (5th-8th) – All missed work is required to be made up. The teacher may alter the assignment. The student has 3 days to make up missed work. The due date for this work shall be at the discretion of the principal. If a suspension occurs during the last ten (10) days of any semester, the student may be permitted to take final examinations or submit work as is necessary to complete the course of instruction for that semester.

### **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. 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 medications.

### **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 before school and at dismissal. WHMS will make every effort to reach the student but cannot guarantee that he/she will receive any telephone message left in the office after 2:45 p.m.

### **PARENT PORTAL**

All parents are encouraged to set up a Parent Portal account. All student grades are posted to Portal 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

### **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 gym doors. No student should arrive at school prior to 7:15 a.m. Students arriving

before 8:05 must enter through the gym doors. 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. The textbook coordinator issues textbooks. Students are not to mark or damage books in any way. Students must pay for any loss or damage to books. 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, water bottles and water containers are prohibited outside the cafeteria.*

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.