

FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student/Family Handbook

2023-24



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Greetings Patriot Families!

Welcome to school year 2023-2024! My hope is that you each will embrace this exciting time of growth and change in our students! We are all in this together. Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns. Communication and collaboration is vital.

Parents/Guardians and students are responsible for reading the 2023-24 Freedom Middle School Student/Parent Handbook. The handbook can be found online at <http://cherokeek12.net/freedomms/>. A hard copy is available upon request. Please contact your student's homeroom teacher should you require a hard copy.

OUR MISSION



FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

1. ALL POLICIES AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE 2023-24 CCSD STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK AND THE 2023-24 CCSD DISCIPLINE CODE WILL BE FOLLOWED. Each student and parent must read both books and complete the signature coupons included in the Gateway Registration, the online registration format adopted by CCSD. POLICIES MAY BE CHANGED AND/OR ADDED BASED ON DECISIONS MADE BY THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.
2. For safety reasons, students must have a hall pass to move around the building during the school day.
3. Students are always expected to be respectful to students, staff, and visitors.
4. Students are expected to walk throughout the building. Running is not allowed at any time.
5. Attendance is an expectation and priority.
6. Each student is expected to be in school on time and prepared to learn.
7. Students may enter the building at 8:15 a.m. Sixth and seventh grade students report to the gymnasium. Eighth grade students report to the cafeteria.
8. For safety reasons, silence must be maintained during fire drills, severe weather drills, and other emergency situations. Cell phones are not allowed during drills.
9. It is the responsibility of students and parents to make sure students have a ride home after any school activity (on campus and off campus). Students who are continually picked up late may forfeit their privilege to participate in future after-school activities.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

School Accident Insurance is offered through the School District to students. Several insurance plans are available to provide protection against medical expenses resulting from accidental injury to your child. Information regarding student accident insurance can be found in the Back-to-School Gateway. TW Lord has elected to discontinue offering voluntary student accident insurance beginning 6/30/2023. The new provider for SY 2023-24 is **Student Assurance Services, Inc.** The new plan will go into effect **7/1/2023.**

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, AND TARDIES

Students may enter the building at 8:15 a.m. and report immediately to the cafeteria or gym. Students cannot be left outside, unattended before the doors open at 8:15 a.m.

MORNING ARRIVAL - As a safety note, the left lane is for exiting campus, not dismissing students from cars. Safety concerns also keep us from allowing students to be dropped off in the parking lots. Students are not allowed to cross from the parking lot. We appreciate you for waiting in the carpool line.

Staff members are assigned car duty to help the flow of traffic each morning and afternoon. Please be mindful that they will be giving directions for you to pull forward to accommodate a maximum number of cars at a time.

Students report to homeroom at 8:50. Any student arriving after 9:00 must check in at the office to receive a tardy slip. Please note the attendance and tardy policies outlined below. Unexcused tardies to school may result in detention, and/or an administrative referral.

Students may not leave campus once they arrive unless checked-out by an adult in the student's contact file.

CHECK OUTS

If a student needs to be checked-out during the school day, a parent or other adult listed as a student contact must come to the front office to sign the student out. Photo identification must be shown to the front office staff through the front office camera. Only persons listed on the student's contact list will be allowed to check students out of school. Responsible party will be asked to remain outside while the student is called for check out. Every effort should be made to minimize student checkouts during the school day as it interrupts the instructional day. **Check outs are not permitted after 3:30 pm.**

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL - Instruction ends at 4:00 each day. Car riders must leave the campus immediately upon dismissal. For safety reasons, students are not allowed to cross to parking lots. Students must go to cars quickly to keep the car rider line operating efficiently. Students who continuously delay may be subject to discipline. We run our car rider line as follows:

- For those of you who will turn LEFT when exiting the school please use the Left Lane during pickup.
- For those of you who will turn RIGHT when exiting the school please use the Right Lane during pickup (lane closest to the school).
- Students are to remain under the awning until a teacher signals all clear by blowing a whistle.
- If a student is not in car rider line when the parent arrives the parent will be asked to circle back around to keep the line flowing.
- Please encourage your student to watch for your car, know which lane you are in, etc. so things will move along as smoothly and quickly as possible.
- Car riders must be picked up by 4:15. If you cannot pick up your student by 4:15, then he/she needs to ride home on the bus.

ATTENDANCE

There is a direct correlation between academic performance and student attendance. Chronic tardiness, early checkouts from school, and truancy are not acceptable behaviors. Upon returning to school after being absent, students must bring a note from home explaining the absence. Please submit excuse notes within 5 days of an absence. Students must attend at least one-half of the academic day to be counted as present. Students checking in before 12:30 will be considered present.

It is vitally important that parents make every effort to have their children attend school and avoid all absences that are not necessary. We appreciate your diligence to ensure your child is in school every day.

FMS Attendance Policy

Absences	Action
5 th unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance letter sent home• Parent meeting
7 th unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctor's note required for additional absences
10 th unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A social work referral initiated

FMS Tardy Policy

Tardies	Action
5 th unexcused tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warning in Canvas Behavior Portal
7 th unexcused tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counselor Contact• Silent Lunch
10 th unexcused tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative contact
12 th + unexcused tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admin/Parent Conference

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

It is our intent that every student is treated with respect and dignity. The faculty and staff at Freedom see discipline as a learning process, not as a punishment. Ultimately, students must be responsible for their behavior, and we are committed to working with families to help shape student behavior that is respectful and safe and promotes positive relationships.

To maintain a safe, orderly, secure environment and to ensure an atmosphere that promotes student learning and academic achievement, FMS incorporates a school-wide discipline plan into the day-to-day operations. The discipline plan system begins anew each nine-week grading period. A Canvas Learning Management System course will be used at each grade level to document behavior infractions.

Teachers will follow the point system in Canvas for minor behavior infractions as a student management tool. Major infractions will require an administrative referral in place of documentation in Canvas.

We believe our partnership as educators and families will allow our students to develop behavior habits that are respectful and safe and promote positive relationships as well as build good habits for a lifetime. If you would like to schedule a conference to discuss your child's behavior, you are welcome to contact the front office to schedule a time to meet.

Students who have been assigned Out of School discipline are not permitted to attend any Cherokee County School District or Freedom Middle School sponsored event during the duration of the out of school suspension.

BOOK BAGS AND SUPPLIES

Students are permitted to bring bags to school. Individual teams will notify students if any special supplies are required.

BRING YOUR LEARNING DEVICE

Appendix L (page 79-80) of the Cherokee County School District 2023-2024 Code of Conduct outlines the Cherokee County School District Bring Your Learning Device (BYLD) Initiative, and Freedom students and families are expected to abide by all information and requirements set forth for technology use.

BUS INFORMATION

The average bus arrival time is 8:30 – 8:45 AM. Should your students bus arrive late to the building your student will not be counted tardy if riding the bus.

Busses dismiss in 2 waves from Freedom in the afternoon. 1st wave typically loads between 4:05-4:10 PM and is followed shortly after by 2nd wave.

CAFETERIA

Every effort is taken to make our cafeteria lunches tasty and nutritious. We encourage all students to eat in the cafeteria daily. Extra items may be purchased separately during the lunch period.

CCSD will continue providing meals at no cost or reduced cost only to families who qualify based on income. Please complete the online free and reduced price meal form at www.lunchapplication.com to allow for a seamless continuation of free meals when classes start; families will need to complete the application again in August to continue eligibility through the entire school year. Please see below the School Lunch Prices for SY24. Meal Prices for students will remain the same, adult meal prices will increase based on USDA pricing guidelines. You can check your school meal account balance [online here](#).

2023-24 Cafeteria Prices

	Elementary	Middle	High
BREAKFAST			
Paid Students	1.60	1.60	1.60
Free Students	0.00	0.00	0.00
Reduced Students	0.30	0.30	0.30
Staff and student second meals	2.35	2.35	2.35
Visitors*	2.50	2.50	2.50

	Elementary	Middle	High
LUNCH			
Paid Students	2.45	2.70	2.70
Free Students	0.00	0.00	0.00
Reduced Students	0.40	0.40	0.40
Staff and student second meals	4.35	4.35	4.35
Visitors*	4.50	4.50	4.50
Visitor (Special Event)	5.00	5.00	5.00

Guidelines for Students Bringing Lunch to School

- Food purchased from outside restaurants and remaining in the original packaging (ie. bags and wrappers) is not permitted in the cafeteria.
- Food brought from home must be prepared at home. Food will not be refrigerated, heated, or prepared by staff.
- Student use of kitchen equipment is not permitted.

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Cherokee County School District and Freedom Middle School invite you to experience Canvas, our Learning Management System. Canvas allows you to view your child's lessons, assignments, resources, web links, grades, and conduct. Following is a step-by-step process to sign up and observe your child's academic progress.

- From a laptop or desktop computer and with Chrome as your browser, go to <https://myccsd.instructure.com/login/canvas>
- Click the link labeled "Parent of a Canvas User? Click Here for an Account"
- On the Parent Signup screen, you will be prompted to enter the following information:
 - Your Name: Enter your full name (first and last name)
 - Your Email: Enter your email address (a personal email address is preferred over a work email address)
 - Password: Create a password of your choice
 - Re-Enter Password: Re-enter the password you just created
 - Student Pairing Code: **This is a random series of numbers and letters generated from your student's account]

**Student pairing codes are generated from the student's dashboard. Students can log into their Canvas Accounts and click "Pair with an Observer". Parents can write down the code and enter it into the login screen. Pairing Codes are valid for seven days or after one use.

- Review and agree to the terms of use and privacy policy
- Click "Start Participating"
- Check your email for an email from Instructure/Canvas

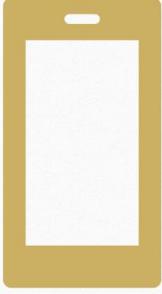
Adding Additional Students

- Login to your Canvas Parent Account
- On the left navigation bar, click "Account"
- Click "Settings"
- Click "Observing"
- You will see a place to add a Student Pairing Code. Enter the additional student pairing code generated from their account.
- Click "+ Student"

CELL PHONES

Cell Phone Usage

- Cell Phones need to be silenced and put into bookbags as students leave morning bus duty
- Cell Phones are not permitted to be out in the hallway or restrooms
- Cell Phones can be used in the classroom for BYLD assignments with teachers' direction
- Teachers will ensure that students will put cell phones away after completing BYLD assignment
- Students will be allowed to check their cell phones 2 times throughout the day: during ELT and the last 3 minutes of the day



Cell Phone Consequences

- **1st offense**- warning documented in portal
- **2nd offense** in 9 weeks 2 points deducted in behavior portal
- **3rd offense** in 9 weeks phone will be locked in the vault and documented in portal (no points taken)
- **4th offense** in 9 weeks phone will be locked in the vault and documented in portal (5 points off)
- **5th offense** in 9 weeks phone will be locked in the vault , office referral (teacher calls parent) and lose BYLD privileges for 4 weeks
- Earbuds usage will be permitted with teacher permission and follow the same consequence sequence (separately) as cellphones above.



CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR APPROVAL ON CLUBS NOT LISTED

Following you will find a list of all clubs and organizations offered at Freedom Middle School. We hope every student will find a club or activity with which to participate. Please visit the FMS website <http://cherokeek12.net/freedomms/> for additional information and descriptions for each club.

Club Name	Sponsor(s)
4-H Club	Julie Roper & Sonya Lombard
Boys Bible Study	Hank Chandler
First Priority	Leigh Lingerfelt
The Good Earth Garden Club	Anna Zincone & Jacki Campbell
Intramurals	Laura Dunlap
Patriot Pet Club	Kristen Honkanen
STEM Club	Edwin Rodriguez, Amanda Struchtemeyer, Todd Mickler, Lindsay Loden, Cassie Fainter, Stan Blalock
Yearbook/Photography Club	Mary Robinson, Cassie Fainter

CONFERENCES

Parent/Guardian-teacher conferences are encouraged as positive communication between home and school. Parents/Guardians may request a conference by calling the front office (770.704.1100) to schedule an appointment with the student's teachers. Teachers can also be reached by email.

DISCIPLINE

Student behavior is managed in Canvas through documentation of both negative and positive actions as well as rewards and consequences. This means that parents and students will receive an automatic notification of the loss or addition of points. There will always be documentation of a student's current point total.

Student Conduct: Each student begins the quarter with 100 points for their conduct. If a student loses points in any class, the teacher will take away the points within this course.

Patriot Praise: Each student begins the quarter with 100 points for their Patriot Praise. Teachers will add points as students are observed doing something great or going above and beyond expectations.

To understand more about our Student Portal system, please review the offense and consequences listed below.

All other disciplinary procedures can be found in the CCSD Code of Conduct.

FMS BEHAVIOR

OFFENSES

1 POINT OFFENSES:

- TARDY
- UNPREPARED
- OFF TASK

3 POINT OFFENSES:

- HORSEPLAY
- DISRESPECT
- OUT OF AREA

2 POINT OFFENSES:

- OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE
- DISRUPTIVE/INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR
- NOT FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
- MISUSE OF BYLD

5 POINT OFFENSES:

- WILLFUL REFUSAL
- MISBEHAVIOR FOR SUB
- 3 OCCURRENCES OF THE SAME OFFENSE W/THE SAME TEACHER

IMMEDIATE REFERRALS:

- FIGHTING
- HARRASSMENT

FMS BEHAVIOR

CONSEQUENCES

Points Taken	Consequence Assigned
95	Silent Lunch
90	Parent Contact
85	Team Conference
80	After School Detention
75	In Team Suspension
70	In person Parent Conference
65	Office Referral
<65	Behavior Contract
*Teacher will continue to take points and document behavior under 65	

DRESS CODE

At Freedom Middle School, we expect our students to wear clothing that does not distract from the learning environment. It is not our goal to make anyone uncomfortable or upset by asking our students to call home or change clothes. We must, however, maintain a school climate that limits distractions. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for school. Besides the restrictions outlined in the [2023-24 Student Discipline Code](#), here are some general guidelines for students:

- Student attire must not distract from the learning environment, display drugs/weapons, or create a safety concern.
- Students' torso must be covered while standing in a relaxed position with arms by the side.
- Students' shorts/skirts must be an appropriate length that provides complete coverage.
- Any item of clothing/head covering that could be considered a costume or part of a costume, may only be worn on designated costume fundraiser dates.

FIELD TRIPS

During the school year, field trips may be scheduled to support the curriculum standards. These trips are a privilege that we provide for students in our school. During such a trip, it is imperative that our students exhibit excellent behavior when representing Freedom Middle School and the Cherokee County School District. If a student's behavior does not reflect acceptable standards in the school environment, the opportunity to attend a field trip may be forfeited. To achieve school wide consistency regarding types of behavior and/or circumstances that could exclude a student from participating in a field trip, the following guidelines have been set by the school.

- Students assigned to ISS two or more times will not be allowed to attend school field trips for the remainder of the year.
- Students assigned OSS will not be allowed to attend school field trips for the remainder of the year.
- After violating any State or Police Reportable infraction (as defined in the CCSD Discipline Code), a student will not be allowed to attend school field trips for the remainder of the year.
- Students with 5 or more unexcused tardies and/or early check-outs will not be allowed to attend school field trips for the remainder of the year.
- Other discipline concerns could also result in denial of field trip participation as determined by the school administration.

Any checks returned to the school for insufficient funds will result in the student and/or adult chaperone forfeiting the opportunity to attend the field trip.

FIRST DAY FORMS

Cherokee County School District has initiated Gateway Registration and Back to School Gateway, an online system, for student registration and information requirements.

GRADING SYSTEM

Academic Grades		Conduct Grades	
A	90-100	S	Satisfactory
B	80-89	N	Needs Improvement
C	71-79	U	Unsatisfactory
D	70		
	Below 70	Failing	

Access to Grades - Student grades are always available in the Canvas Learning Management System. Directions for accessing the Canvas Learning Management System are provided above.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING BEHAVIOR

It is the expectation at Freedom Middle School that all students are treated with respect, kindness, and tolerance. Our goal is for every student to enter the school building each day confident the school will work to fulfill our mission. This is

accomplished in partnership with the school, the student, and the family. Bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment are defined in the 2023-2024 CCSD Code of Conduct Code, pages 72-73 for your reference.

In the event, a student feels harassed or bullied,

- report the situation immediately to a school counselor or administrator.
- an investigation will begin, and in most instances, this will include CCSD documentation.
- during the investigation, the school will work with all parties involved for resolution.
- documentation of the outcome will be forwarded to the CCSD Office of School Operations for review.

In all situations, our goal is to teach students the importance of respect, kindness, and tolerance and that bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment will not be tolerated. We want our students to understand how serious such behavior has become and that consequences will become more significant as they grow. "I was teasing" is no longer a reason for such behavior.

Should you have questions, you are welcome to contact your counselor or grade level administrator.

- 6th and 7th Grades Lawrence Gluckson, lawrence.gluckson@cherokeek12.net
- 8th Grade and Students with Disabilities Lisa Rich, lisa.rich@cherokeek12.net
- 8th Grade Lauren Moss lauren.moss@cherokeek12.net
- 7th Grade Matthew Herndon matthew.herndon@cherokeek12.net
- 6th Grade Sarah Bigelow sarah.bigelow@cherokeek12.net

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an integral part of the learning process. Schools in which homework is routinely assigned and assessed tend to have higher achieving students. It is suggested that students spend at least 30-90 minutes a night studying and completing homework. Students taking courses for high school credit will need to spend additional time doing homework.

Homework activities may be assigned Monday-Thursday. A syllabus for each class will be available on the Canvas Learning Management System. Paper copies are also available. Teachers will require acknowledgment of the course syllabus.

LOCKERS

Lockers are available upon request. This request must be made by the parent to the homeroom teacher during the first 3 days of school.

- The assigned locker remains the property of Freedom Middle School even while being used by students. School administration may inspect lockers at any time.
- School administration reserves the right to remove locker privileges as a disciplinary consequence.

Students will be responsible for taking care of their locker to maintain the privilege of having use of a school locker. The following rules apply to all students:

- **Keep your combination secure.**
- **Keep your locker locked at all times.**
- **Do not tamper with locks or lockers.**
- **Do not overload your locker.**
- **No tape or glue or marking is allowed on the inside or outside of lockers.**
- **LOCKER DIMENSIONS (W) 11.5" (H) 35" (D) 10.5"**

PE lockers require a combination lock which will be rented to students through the PE department. Lockers remain the property of the school and are subject to periodic inspections by school personnel.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found will be kept in Room 112. Students are encouraged to check for lost items periodically. **All unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each grading period.**

MAKE-UP WORK

Students are allowed to make up work missed in accordance with CCSD policy. The responsibility for arranging to complete work missed is to be assumed by the student and parent/guardian in conjunction with the teacher. Parents/Guardians must contact the student's teacher and make arrangements if an illness requires them to be absent for three or more days.

MEDICATION

When at all possible, we encourage you to schedule your child's medication so that it may be given at home under your direct supervision. However, we realize that this is not always possible. Prescription medicine is given at parental request if it is in the original prescription bottle with a prescription label accompanied by a specific timeline for administration. Over-the-counter medication is given at parental request if it is in the original container and accompanied by the name of the medication and a specific timeline for its administration. All medications must be accompanied by the permission to administer medication form. **ANY TYPE OF MEDICATION brought to school must be immediately taken to the front office secretary. Students are NOT to be in possession of any form of medication during the school day.**

MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center is open 8:50 – 4:00 each day and follows a flexible scheduling model which allows students to visit throughout the day with teacher permission. Students may check-out five (5) materials at a time for two weeks. A fee of \$.10 per day is charged for overdue materials. Notices are sent through the student's school email account until fines are resolved. Parents are also provided email notification to the email address provided to the school.

MESSAGES and DELIVERIES

Delivery of flowers, balloons, or gifts is not permitted.

Students should bring everything they need for the day (lunches, money, homework, gym clothes, etc.) with them to school to avoid disruptions during the school day. **In the event something is brought to the school for a student, they will be notified by the office staff and sent down at an appropriate time by their teacher to retrieve the item.**

NURSE

Our nurse is on campus each day from 8:45-4:15. The nurse dispenses student medications, assists with first aid in the event of an injury, and calls parents in the event of illness. Strict county guidelines are enforced regarding the proper handling of medication.

PTSA MEMBERSHIP

We encourage all family members to join our award-winning Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). The PTSA serves as a vital link and support system for the activities of our school. You will have the opportunity to become a member of our PTSA and volunteer your services for our school.

REPORT CARD DATES

These dates are subject to change due to days missed as a result of school closings, furlough days, or schedule changes. Progress reports are available to parents at any time via the Canvas Learning Management System. End-of-Year report cards will be mailed within one week of the last day of school.

End-Of-Term/Report Card Dates

End of Term	Day	Report Card Day	Day	Total Days in Term
October 7, 2022	Friday	*October 14, 2022	Friday	44
December 22, 2022	Thursday	January 10, 2023	Tuesday	48
March 17, 2023	Friday	*March 24, 2023	Friday	44
May 25, 2023	Thursday	See Notes Below	---	44

- These dates are subject to change due to days missed as a result of school closings, furlough days or schedule changes.
- Progress Reports and End-of-Year report cards will be sent home via the District's Learning Management System.
- *ES Only.

SEVERE WEATHER

Should severe weather approach and closing school is necessary, parents may be informed by the following:

- District email/text
- <http://cherokeek12.net/>
- FMS Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook
- Parent Square Email from Principal

When school is dismissed early, FMS will follow directions on the *CCSD Emergency Information for Early Dismissal* form. All parents/guardians are required to complete this form as part of the first day packet information in Back-to-School Gateway. Please make sure accurate information is included. The information can be updated throughout the school year as needed.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Please follow us on social networking!

- Facebook –
 - Send a friend request to FreedomMS Principal
 - Or follow the school page @freedomms1
- Instagram - @freedomms1
- Twitter - @FMSPatriots

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks and instructional materials purchased with district funds are the responsibility of the student. When textbooks, library books, or other instructional materials are not returned to the school in a form suitable for continued use, it shall be the responsibility of the student and his/her parents/guardians to reimburse the Cherokee County School District for the full replacement cost of the textbook, agenda, or other instructional materials.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Freedom buses are at student capacity which prohibits students from riding home with other students. For emergency situations, please contact the Office of Student Transportation, and they will contact the school.

VISITORS

Anyone visiting the school must report to the front office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass. Friends and relatives are not permitted to spend the day at school with students.

Water Bottles

Students are encouraged to remain hydrated throughout the day. Water bottle refill stations are located throughout the school for their convenience. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Only water is allowed in water bottles.
- No glass bottles.
- If any bottles do not meet these guidelines, students will have the opportunity to pick-up the water bottle in the front office at the end of the day.
- Any misuse of water bottles will result in disciplinary consequences.