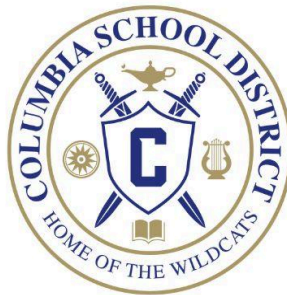


2025-2026



JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK



**JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
ALONG WITH PARENTS AND THE
COMMUNITY, WILL SUPPORT AND
ENCOURAGE HIGH LEVELS OF
LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS
THROUGH POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS AND RIGOROUS
INSTRUCTION.**

**JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
611 OWEN ST
COLUMBIA, MISSISSIPPI 39429**

601-736-2786

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Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year at Jefferson Middle School. As we embark on this exciting new academic journey, we are thrilled to welcome all our students and their families. Whether you are returning to our school community or joining us for the first time, we are delighted to have you with us.

This letter introduces you to the **Student Handbook**, a vital resource designed to help students and parents navigate the school year successfully. The handbook contains important information about our school's policies, procedures, and expectations. It serves as a guide to ensure that everyone in our school community understands and adheres to the standards that promote a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment.

Key Highlights of the Student Handbook:

1. **School Policies and Procedures:** Detailed information on attendance, dress code, and behavior expectations.
2. **Academic Guidelines:** Insights into grading policies, homework expectations, and academic integrity.
3. **Extracurricular Activities:** An overview of clubs, sports, and other opportunities for student involvement.
4. **Support Services:** Information on counseling, health services, and academic support available to students.
5. **Communication Channels:** How to stay informed and connected with teachers, staff, and school events.

We encourage all students and parents to read the handbook thoroughly and keep it handy for reference throughout the year. Understanding and following the guidelines outlined in the handbook will help ensure a smooth and successful school experience for everyone.

As we begin this new school year, we want to emphasize our commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive school culture. Our dedicated staff is here to support each student's academic and personal growth. We believe that by working together, we can create an environment where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered to achieve their best.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Let's make this school year a memorable and successful one!

Warm regards,
James "Jamie" Powell
JMS Principal



Ashley Grantham
Assistant Principal

The History of Jefferson Middle School

John J. Jefferson was born in 1877, the son of Jim and Mariah Jefferson of Hub, Mississippi. He grew up and attended elementary school in his home community under the leadership of professor Irvin Foster. His high school work was done at the Haven Academy of Meridian, Mississippi, and his college work at the famed Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

His first work as a teacher was at a school in his home community. This school later became known as Globe Academy. There he worked with and married Mrs. Carrie Nelson Jefferson. After serving in his home community for several years, the Jeffersons moved to Purvis. There they built the first Rosenhall School in the south section of Mississippi.

While living in Purvis, six children were born to the Jefferson couple. This increase in responsibility and his broad vision for the children in his community led to a strong desire to supply a need that existed. There were not enough adequate buildings where black children could be taught and trained. Perhaps this was what inspired Mr. Jefferson to return to his native county and begin a building program.

He came to Columbia in 1919 and began teaching. Within four years, he was instrumental in getting a Rosenhall school with six classrooms and an auditorium. It was in this school that the first Home Economics department for African Americans in Marion County was approved.

Following this great accomplishment, he moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he continued to work in the field of education until his death in 1932.

As an inspiration to us today, he left these words:

“Education is needed in the land. I’ll build schools wherever I can; I’ll lay the foundation for you to stand, that you may build better schools in the land.”



Jul-25						
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Aug-25						
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School Board Approved:

2025-2026 Academic Calendar

Jul. 4	Independence Day
Jul. 17	New Teacher Orientation
Jul. 18-Jul. 22	Staff Development
Jul. 23	Students Return
Aug. 18	Mid-Quarter Break
Aug. 25	Progress Reports
Sept. 1	Labor Day Holiday
Sept. 25	End of First 9 weeks
Sept. 29-30	Fall Break
Oct. 1-3	Fall Intersession
Oct. 15	Report Cards Available
Oct. 31	Staff Development
Nov. 5	Progress Reports
Nov. 24-28	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 16	End of Second 9 Weeks
Dec. 17	63% Day/Student's Last Day
Dec. 18	Staff Development
Dec. 19-Jan. 2	Christmas Break
Jan. 5	Staff Development
Jan. 6	Students Return
Jan. 14	Report Cards Available
Jan. 19	MLK Holiday
Feb. 6	Progress Reports
Feb. 16	President's Day
Mar. 23	End of Third 9 Weeks
Mar. 9-13	Spring Break
Mar. 16-18	Spring Intersession
April 1	Report Cards Available
Apr. 3	Easter Holiday
Apr. 24	Progress Reports
May 15	Graduation - 7:00 PM
May 21	63% Day/Last Day for Students
May 22	Staff Development
May 25	Memorial Day
June 3	Report Cards Available

	New Teacher Orientation
	Teacher/Staff Development
	Students Return
	63% day - Last day for students/teachers
	Intersession Days
	Holidays (all schools/offices closed)
	End of the Nine Weeks
	Report Cards Available
	Graduation Day
	Progress Reports
Months	J/A S O N D J F M A M
Student Days	27 19 19 15 13 18 19 14 21 15
Teacher Days	30 19 20 15 14 19 19 14 21 16

Jan-26						
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May-26						
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Jun-26						
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28	29	30				

JMS SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Jefferson Middle School

611 Owens Street

Columbia, MS 39429

Phone: 601-736-2786

Fax: 601-674-5164

James “Jamie” Powell, Principal	601-736-2786 ext. 4002
Ashley Grantham, Assistant Principal	601-736-2786 ext. 4007
Eric Booth, Dean of Students	601-736-2786 ext. 4006
Danita Stevenson, Counselor	601-736-2786 ext. 4004
Megan White, Bookkeeper	601-736-2786 ext. 4003
Cassy Sistrunk, MSIS Clerk	601-736-2786 ext. 4005
Lawanda Spriggs, JMS Cafeteria	601-736-2786 ext. 4009

CSD VISION

The **vision** of the Columbia School District is to provide an educational system which enables all students to become productive citizens who contribute to the betterment of society.

CSD MISSION STATEMENT

The **mission** of the Columbia School District, an educational organization with active community involvement, is to ensure that all students reach their potential and become responsible, productive citizens through quality education that provides challenging academic and extracurricular activities.

Core Values

Believe, Achieve, Succeed

JMS VISION

The vision of Jefferson Middle School is to be a student-centered institution that fosters growth and excellence.

JMS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Jefferson Middle School, along with parents and the community, is to support and encourage high levels of learning for all students through positive relationships and rigorous instruction.

NONDISCRIMINATION

The District does not discriminate in hiring or educational services on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, disability, age, veteran status, marital status, or any other category protected by law, and adheres to all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IDEA 2004, Section 504, and Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

DISTRICT PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Parental and family involvement/engagement is very important for effective implementation of all Federal Programs in the Columbia School District. Click below to view our Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Please contact the Federal Programs Director at 601.736.2366 if you have any suggested edits. (Refer to [CSD Policy LAA](#))

JMS PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

[JMS Parent & Family Engagement Plan](#)

DISTRICT COMPACT

[CSD Compact](#)

JMS SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

The School-Parent Compact is an agreement that outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve Mississippi's high standards. (Refer to [JMS School-Parent Compact](#))

PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW

[CSD Parent's Right to Know](#)

DISTRICT FERPA NOTICE

[CSD FERPA Notice](#)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. A student or his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may view his/her personal school record upon request in writing to the appropriate school principal. Transcripts or student records will be released to other agencies if students or parents sign a written request for such release to be made and/or according to state law and/or federal regulations. In the event of student transfer, a student's transcripts or records will be forwarded to the receiving school upon receipt of a proper request from the receiving school. (Refer to [Policy JR](#))

A student and his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have the right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Office of the Chief Privacy Officer
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920



JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

BELL SCHEDULE 2025-2026

FIRST BELL- 7:45 a.m.

TARDY BELL-7:50 a.m.

Breakfast 7:30 - 7:45 (1st Block)	
1st Period	7:50-8:48
2nd Period	8:52-9:50
3rd Period	9:54-10:52
Blue & Gold 4th Period	10:56-11:27
5th Period	11:31-1:06
6th Period	1:10-2:08
7th Period	2:12-3:10

(58 minute class period)

Students may enter the building starting at 7:30. They will report directly to BREAKFAST and then directly to their 1st period class.



ARTICLES PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL

Problems arise each year because students bring articles, which are hazardous to the safety of others or interfere in some way with school procedures. Items such as TVs, cameras, video games, toy guns, water pistols, slingshots, ball bats, skateboards, stick pins, fireworks, incense, trading cards, toy vehicles, electronic devices, etc. are considered undesirable and if brought to school, will be confiscated. In addition to this, disciplinary measures will be taken.

ASSEMBLY PROGRAMS

Assembly programs are provided to enrich the experience of students at Jefferson Middle School. Students are reminded that their pride in our school and themselves should be reflected in their best behavior at these programs. No one should leave during an assembly program. No one should boo, whistle, or stamp their feet, regardless of their opinion of the program.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is necessary for academic success. Repeated absences frequently cause students to become discouraged and often fail. Therefore, it is important that parents/guardians have their children in school on time each day, and only in unavoidable cases should a student be kept home or be taken out of school before the close of the school day. A written note is required after an absence (partial or full day), even if the parent called the school. All parental notes must be returned to the school within two (2) school days after the absence. If an absence is not acknowledged by a parent or guardian, the student will be considered unexcused. Mississippi compulsory school law requires that a student be present in school except when ill, injured or there is a death in the immediate family. When a child has accumulated five unexcused absences, the School Attendance Officer must be notified. Students whose unexcused absences exceed this number of days will not receive credit for promotion to the next grade. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Days missed due to doctor appointments or due to illness, as verified by a written doctor's statement, will count as a medical absence provided the student submits the statement within two days upon returning to school. Doctor's excuses will not be accepted at the end of the semester or the school year. In order for a student to be considered present for average daily attendance purposes, he/she must be in attendance at school or at an authorized school activity for at least sixty-three percent (63%) of his/her instructional day. Based on our bell schedule 63% is 12:30 pm. A student who is absent more than thirty-seven percent (37%) of his/her instructional day will be considered absent the entire school day. The instructional day for each school and/or student is fixed by the Board.

AWARDS DAY

JMS will sponsor one awards day program to recognize students with outstanding academic achievement and good citizenship in each grade. Faculty committees select the award recipients.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

Students may not be dropped off at school before 7:30 a.m. Students will be allowed to enter the building at 7:30 a.m. No student should be in the building after 3:25 p.m. unless requested by a teacher, staying for detention, or participating in a supervised activity.

Students who do not ride the bus should exit the building and be picked up or walk home promptly after dismissal. Walkers and car riders should exit the building by 3:05 pm. Students who are car riders must be picked up by 3:10 pm. On 60% days, JMS will dismiss at 12:05 p.m.

Groups using the building after school must have the approval of the principal. They must use only the area reserved for them, and leave all the rooms and equipment in proper condition to resume school the next day. Groups must be supervised at all times by faculty personnel.

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

All students are expected to carry Chromebooks, paper, and a pencil or pen to class. Neglecting to carry these things may result in disciplinary action following the school's discipline ladder. Students are responsible for lost or damaged Chromebooks.

BUS PASSES

A parent or guardian must send a written request to the office granting permission for the student to ride a different bus home or to another campus. Students must ride their assigned bus unless they have a bus pass to ride another bus. Students will not be allowed to exit the bus at another school campus and board another bus without a written bus pass.

BUS EXPECTATIONS

- Use appropriate language.
- Go directly to the assigned row and seat.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Report any incident to the bus driver.
- Keep the bus clean.
- Follow adult requests the first time.
- Use a quiet voice.

BUS BEHAVIOR/CONDUCT

The rules for student conduct on school buses are the same as for classroom/campus conduct. However, principals will follow the disciplinary procedures contained in CSD Policy [JCDAD](#) for bus conduct. Bus drivers are charged with the responsibility of reporting to building principals violations of rules when they are serious or when a student does not respond to their verbal request for minor violations. However, a principal also has the authority and responsibility to respond to any rule violation when reported by persons other than the driver. Bus drivers must assign seats for the safety of students.

The bus driver will report at the earliest possible time all disciplinary offenses to an administrator where students attend school. Principals have the responsibility to administer disciplinary action for the purpose of assuring proper behavior on the bus.

CAFETERIA

The school breakfast and lunch program is an important part of a child's school day. All students who plan to eat breakfast must arrive at school in time to eat and be in their classrooms before the tardy bell rings. Students are not allowed to take food or drink from the cafeteria. **Please see the list below for pricing information:**

Cost of Breakfast is:

Full Price	\$2.50
Reduced Price	\$0.30
Adults	\$3.00

Cost of Lunch is:

Full Price	\$4.00
Reduced Price	\$0.40
Adults	\$5.00

Breakfast and lunch may be paid for daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly. Paying in advance is strongly recommended. Students are not allowed to charge for breakfast or lunch.

Breakfast/Lunch can be brought from home but cannot be delivered to students and must have generic packaging (non-business labeling). Students are not allowed to receive or consume "commercial business food," nor are students to sign out for lunch. Students who bring their lunch to school must eat in the cafeteria. Food and drinks (except bottled water) are not allowed outside the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch. Beverages other than milk, juice, or water must be in an unidentifiable container. If the student has dietary restrictions, a physician's statement must be submitted to both the school office and the cafeteria annually.

Free and reduced-price forms are available through the school office. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch will also qualify for free or reduced breakfast.

Children who are new to the District and do not have siblings currently enrolled, **MUST** pay full price for breakfast and lunch until the application is processed.

CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS

- Stay at your assigned table.
- Eat your own food.
- Clean up your eating area.
- Use a level one voice.
- Refrain from using cell phones.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Any student who moves during the school year should record the updated address with the counselor's secretary in the counselor's office. A telephone number change should be corrected in the same manner.

CHEATING

Whether a student gives or receives information during an exam or on a specific assignment, the offense is considered cheating. Refer to Policy [JCA](#)

CHECKING OUT

Parents should make every attempt to schedule dental, doctor, or other appointments during vacation or after school hours to avoid students having to miss class. Checking out early affects your attendance and counts toward truancy. Students are expected to attend all of their classes daily. There are times, however, when it will be necessary for a student to leave school during the school day. In such cases, parents are asked to come to the school office to check out the student. If the student is to walk or is to be picked up by somebody other than his/her parents, the parent should call the main office (601-736-2786) or send a note for the approval of the dismissal. If somebody other than a parent is authorized to pick up a student, the parent must list the authorized person's name on the student data sheet. No one will be allowed to check out a student if his/her name is not on the student data sheet. If the check-out is due to a doctor's appointment, the student should bring a medical excuse from the doctor.

No checkouts after 2:30 pm.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Art

All JMS students are eligible to participate in Art. There is a \$10 art fee to help with supplies used throughout the school year.

BAND

All JMS students are eligible to participate in the band. Students are expected to provide materials/fees necessary for band.

BETA CLUB

Jefferson Middle School Junior Beta Club is a Chapter of the National Beta Club. The membership of this organization shall consist of students who meet the academic requirements and demonstrate worthy character, good mentality, credible achievement, and a commendable attitude. These students must be approved for membership by the executive leadership of Jefferson Middle School.

CHEERLEADING

Cheerleading is a sport activity during football and basketball seasons. It is intended to promote school spirit, develop a sense of good sportsmanship, promote unification of the crowd's involvement during athletic events and build a better relationship between schools. Refer to the [JMS Cheerleading Constitution](#) for eligibility requirements and team information.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Student Council is designed to develop leadership qualities in middle school students. These members plan projects and organize activities to advance the social and civic development of the student body. They promote school spirit and an attitude of cooperation between the faculty, administration, and the school body. Students who have attended Jefferson Middle School for at least one year, maintained a "C" average, and received a positive rating from respective grade-level teachers, are eligible to be voted on for a Student Council position.

DISCIPLINE

The Columbia School District adheres to a philosophy of utilizing positive behavior support as the first response to behavior. School environments that are positive, preventive, predictable, and effective are safer, healthier, and more caring; have enhanced learning and teaching outcomes; can provide a continuum of behavior support for all students; and are achievable and sustainable. It involves a school-wide common purpose and approach to discipline, procedures for teaching and encouraging expected behaviors, and procedures for ongoing progress monitoring.

WILDCAT ESSENTIALS

Steps to Being the BEST Wildcat You Can Be!

1. Attend school daily and actively participate in the learning process.
2. Follow all school and class rules.
3. Respect yourself and all others.
4. Demonstrate pride in yourself and your school.
5. Speak in a conversational tone, and respond appropriately by avoiding profane and vulgar speech and gestures.
6. Plan and expect to succeed; failure is not an option.
7. Be kind to others, and encourage and celebrate your peers.
8. Accept and embrace the diversity of your peers.
9. Be part of the solution, not the problem by striving to make our school better.
10. Have a positive attitude, be honest, no matter what the consequences and accept responsibility for your actions.

JMS CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are expected to enter the classroom in an orderly fashion and remain seated in their assigned seat, unless authorization has been given by the teacher.
2. Students are expected to comply with all reasonable adult requests without exhibiting defiance.
3. Students are expected to use their chromebooks for appropriate and assigned tasks only.
4. Students are expected to be fully prepared with all instructional materials. (Including paper materials & charged chromebooks)
5. Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions, activities, and all assignments.
6. Students are expected to make-up all assignments in a timely manner when an absence has occurred. Teachers will give a due date for all make-up assignments.
7. Students are expected to contribute to a positive learning environment.
8. Students are expected to refrain from the following to maintain a culture of respect: arguing, using profanity, raising voices, etc.

DETENTION

PRINCIPAL'S DETENTION

The principal, assistant principal, or dean of students may assign a principal's detention on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons. Principal's detention will be held from 3:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Students must be picked up promptly at 4:30 p.m.

IN-SCHOOL DETENTION

ISD (In-School Detention) may be assigned by the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students. ISD is an attempt to deal with certain violations while keeping students in attendance in a more isolated setting. It involves a loss of privileges for the day(s) in ISD. Loss of privileges means that a student cannot participate in or attend any after-school activities, including athletic practices/games, musical practices/events, organization events, field trips, pep rallies, etc. for the specified time period. Participation in extracurricular activities (anything apart from the classroom setting) is a privilege which can be withdrawn at any time. Loss of privileges may be implemented when deemed by the administration to be in the best interest of the student and the school environment. Students must comply with the staff member's instructions.

BREAK DETENTION & LUNCH DETENTION

Break or lunch detention may be assigned by the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students. It is an attempt to deal with students who violate school or classroom rules. Students who are assigned to break or lunch detention will report to the ISD room during the appropriate times. Failure to report to assigned break or lunch detention by a student will result in further disciplinary action from the administration.

TEACHER'S DETENTION

Students may be assigned after-school detention by teachers. A detention form will be given to take home prior to the assigned detention. Teacher assigned detention will be on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday afternoons from 3:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. The student must be picked up promptly at 4:00 p.m. Teachers may also assign break detention.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT: Refer to Policy [JCA](#)

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices brought to school are the sole responsibility of the students and come with an understood risk; therefore, students must keep up with any personal items brought to school at all times. The school staff will not devote time to locating any misplaced and/or stolen items that students may leave unattended. CSD is not liable for any items broken or lost.

Cell phones, electronic devices, and accessories are to be kept in appropriate locations throughout the day. The only appropriate locations are in the student's backpack or surrendered to a teacher. The use of these devices is strictly prohibited. Students may not use cell phones or electronic devices in the classroom, hallway, library, restroom, office, cafeteria, break area, gym, field trips, or any other location on campus. If a student has an urgent need to communicate with their parents they may be allowed to do so from the office with administrator permission. As there is no educational need to use cell phones in the classroom, due to each student on our campus having a Chromebook, phones should not be visible throughout the school day.

Any violation of use or disruptions of any type involving an electronic device or accessory will result in disciplinary actions. Failure to comply with a staff member's directives is considered willful disobedience. For example, if a teacher requires students to place cell phones in a particular location during class time, the student is expected to comply.

Students' headphones and earbuds may be used in class with teacher permission, with their Chromebooks, for educational purposes.

Students who use electronic devices or cell phones to violate school guidelines, state, and/or federal law or regulations (such as "sexting," bullying, sending or receiving inappropriate photographs, dishonest academic practices, or any other illegal uses) may be subject to OSS, confiscation, and possible referral to law enforcement. Devices that are confiscated more than once will be secured by the administration until released to the student's parent/guardian by a school administrator. Refer to the following guidelines concerning disciplinary actions for electronic device violations.

First Offense – Verbal warning. The electronic device will be confiscated, and the student may pick it up at the end of the school day.

Second Offense -1 Day of ISD: Parents will be required to come and pick up the device.

Third Offense - 3 Days of ISD; Parents will be required to come and pick up the device. The student loses the privilege of bringing the device to school. If found with the device after the Third offense, 1 day of OSS will be assigned.

To ensure students' privacy, students who take photos or videos at school without school permission or share or post photos or videos taken at school will receive a minimum of 3 days OSS. Any official photos or videos taken for school purposes, such as yearbooks or social media, must be approved by an administrator and supervised by district personnel.

DRESS CODE POLICY

The uniform dress code is mandatory for all students in the Columbia School District. Specific guidelines will be reviewed yearly by the administrative staff and approved by the Board. Refer to Policy [JCDB](#)

Students are not allowed to wear hoods or hats in the school building. Any hats or hoods worn in the school building will be confiscated and sent to the office. The first offense will result in the item being returned to the student at the end of the school day. Students will be disciplined according to the campus discipline ladder for each subsequent offense, and parents may retrieve the confiscated items.

DRUG POLICY

The Columbia School District is dedicated to providing a drug-free learning environment. In an effort to protect the health and safety of students from illegal and/or performance-enhancing drug use, the Board has adopted a policy for random drug testing of all students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) who participate in extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, or who seek a privilege for which a school permit is required. Refer to Policy [JCDABA](#)

VAPING

Smoking and vaping are prohibited in all public schools and will result in referral to law enforcement. Please refer to the following guidelines concerning disciplinary actions related to vaping.

First Offense: 5 Days ISD and successfully completing a school-based Vaping Prevention Program. The student may remain in ISD for more than 5 days if the Vaping Prevention Program is not completed!

Second Offense: Minimum 3 Days OSS

Third Offense: Minimum 5 Days OSS

EMERGENCY DRILL PROCEDURES

JMS follows the emergency drill procedures as outlined below. There should be no talking during emergency drills.

CODE GREEN----This code will be used any time we need to vacate the building (bomb threat fire drill, and other reasons). Teachers will discuss the procedures to be used, and practice drills will be conducted.

CODE RED-----This code will be used when we need to "lockdown" or secure students in a safe place inside the building (intruders, other reasons). Teachers will discuss the procedures to be used and practices will be conducted.

TORNADO DRILLS---- The signal for a tornado drill is one long sound of the bell or bullhorn. When you hear the signal, do not panic. Persons nearest the window are to open them and follow their classmates into the hallway. Students are to sit with their backs against the wall, knees drawn up, and their heads between their knees.

EXTRA HELP

Teachers are willing to provide extra help when it is necessary for a student to "catch up" or make up missed work. It is the student's responsibility to contact his or her teacher and make arrangements for extra help or to make up work missed during absences. If students are to remain after school for extra help, parents will be notified.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Certain activities take place in the afternoon or evening after the normal school day has ended. All after-school activities will be supervised. Our activity sponsors and coaches will provide students with time schedules for activities. Parents can then arrange for transportation to ensure that the student is picked up promptly at the conclusion of the after-school activity. Students and parents are asked to cooperate in seeing that appropriate transportation arrangements are made.

FEES

The Board authorizes each school to charge reasonable fees, but not more than the actual cost, for the following:

- A. Supplemental instructional materials and supplies, excluding textbooks.
- B. Other fees designated by the Board as related to a valid curriculum educational objective, including transportation.
- C. Extracurricular activities and any other educational activities of the District, which are not designated by the Board as a valid curriculum educational objectives, such as band trips and athletic events.

All fees except those in item "C" above shall be charged only in accordance with the following District financial hardship waiver policy:

- A. Financial waiver shall be kept in the strictest of confidence with all files and personal disclosures restricted from the review of the general public.

- B. A pupil eligible to have such fees waived as a result of an inability to pay for said fees shall not be discriminated against, nor shall there be any overt identification of a pupil who has received a financial hardship waiver.
- C. The inability to pay the fees shall not result in a pupil being denied or deprived of any academic awards or standards, any class selection, grade diploma, transcript, or right to participate in any activity related to educational enhancement.

In order to request a student fee waiver, a student or parent must complete a waiver of student fee form and submit it to the principal. The principal may form a special committee to consider this petition. This committee will be made up of teachers and administrators. A student's eligibility for a waiver fee will be dependent upon the student's family income, financial condition, extenuating circumstances, etc. Refer to Policy [JS](#)

FINES AND DEBTS

Students with a fine or debt can take exams but will not receive a report card until the obligation is cleared. Students who owe a fine or debt will not receive a schedule and textbooks until the obligation is cleared.

GIFTED EDUCATION

The gifted education program (CHALLENGE) of the Columbia School District is a multi-disciplinary enrichment program provided in a resource room setting. It is offered on an elective basis for students, grades two through six, who have been ruled eligible for gifted educational services. Each student, based on interests, needs, and abilities, is exposed to challenging investigations incorporated in academic disciplines. Integrated process skills are utilized to encourage higher cognitive thought development, affective development, and academic skill development through meaningful and practical application. Evaluation of student progress, teacher effectiveness, and program components are reviewed annually with formative and summative evaluation procedures ensuring accountability to the public and educational community. (Refer to [Policy IDE](#))

GIFTS

Personal gifts for students will not be accepted by school personnel. Deliveries to individuals or groups of students are not allowed during the school day.

GRADING

The school year will be divided into four (4) grading periods. Semester grades will be the average of the two (2) grading period grades earned by the student in each semester. The yearly grade will be the average of the two (2) semester grades.

- A. All grades awarded to regular education students in grades K-12 will be assigned in compliance with the District's promotion and retention policy.

Grades will be determined by multiple factors to include, but not limited to, assessments, classwork, homework, class participation, and special projects.

Grades awarded to students who have been ruled eligible for special education services and who are actively participating in the District's special education program(s) will be based on the degree of attainment of goals and objectives set forth in the student's individual education plans (IEPs). Inclusion students who participate in regular education courses will be required to meet the same standards with accommodations and modifications as stated in the student's IEP. (Refer to [Policy IDDF](#))

B. A minimum of eight (8) grades in K-12 will be recorded in each academic course during each grading period. In grades 6-12, one of these grades can be a cumulative assessment.

REPORT CARDS

- A. Report cards will be issued at the end of each nine-week grading period.
- B. Parents may access their child's report card in Active Parent or pick up a copy at the school.
- C. Grades:
 - 1. In kindergarten, students will be awarded an S (satisfactory), an N (needs improvement), or a U (unsatisfactory) to report student achievement.
 - 2. In grades 1-12, numerical averages will be used to report student achievement. Numerical averages that do not compute to a whole number will be rounded to the nearest whole number. A chart providing information for converting numerical grades to letter grades will be provided on the report card.

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	65 – 69
F	64 and below*
I	Incomplete

A student who receives a failing (F) grade in a course and is approved for Credit Recovery must pass the required course objectives and will receive a final grade no higher than 65.

* In the event a student's numerical grading period average is less than 50, the average will be recorded as 50 for each grading period only in the first half of the course. The student's actual average will be recorded each grading period for the second half of the course.

- C. Copies of students' grade reports will be kept on file. All student cumulative records will be completed and kept on file in compliance with Mississippi State Department of Education regulations, state law, and School Board policy.
- D. Progress reports will be provided to parents no later than the fifth week of each grading period.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

In order to be promoted in grades 4-8, students must obtain a passing grade in math, language arts/English (ELA), and pass either science or social studies. Students who are retained more than twice will be referred to the District Support Team for placement decisions. Grade level placement in high school (grades 9-12) will be determined on the basis of Carnegie units earned. (Refer to [Policy IHF](#))

Students with disabilities will be promoted based upon attainment of IEP objectives in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. (Refer to [Policy IDDF](#))

Parents will be notified no later than the end of the third reporting period when it is determined a student is likely to be retained.

HONOR ROLL

An Honor Roll roster is published at the end of each grade reporting period and includes those students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. The honor roll will list Superintendent's Scholars (those students who make all "A's") and Principal's Scholars (those students who make all "A's" and "B's") . The A Team will be determined by the 1st and 2nd semester averages.

HALL PASS

Students are not to be in the hall at any time during class periods without a hall pass from a teacher or administrator. The program SMARTPASS will be utilized during the school day to monitor a student's travel time to and from restrooms, offices, and other classrooms during instructional time. Students are allowed 2 restroom breaks during instructional time throughout the school day. No student will be allowed out of class 10 minutes before or after the bell rings for each class period. Students must report directly to class during class change and create a SmartPass for restroom breaks and other out-of-area requests.

HALLWAY EXPECTATIONS

- Walk in a single file line on the right side of the hallway.
- Carry a valid hall pass.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Go straight to your destination.
- Follow adult requests the first time.

RESTROOM EXPECTATIONS

- Keep the facilities clean.
- Wash hands with one pump of soap.
- Keep eyes, hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Report problems, vandalism, etc. to an adult.
- One person per stall.

HARASSMENT, BULLYING, OR HAZING PROHIBITION

Student behavior that harasses, threatens, or harms other students or school personnel will not be tolerated. The Columbia School District will act to investigate all complaints of bullying/harassing/hazing behavior and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other District employee, contractor or volunteer who is found to have violated Board Policy [JB/JDDA/Jddb](#).

HEALTH SERVICES AND FIRST AID

First aid will be administered to students who become ill or injured at school. If the illness or injury is of a serious nature, parents will be contacted. In the event of a serious injury and a parent cannot be contacted, the school will call 911. Jefferson Middle School will not supply any medication internally to any student without parental consent. If a student uses medication, the student can keep a small amount in the main office. A medication permission form must be on file that has been signed by the parent/guardian. Prescription medicine cannot be given without doctor's orders.

Students identified with asthma will be required to have a current asthma action plan (AAP) on file to include the child's asthma severity classification, current asthma medication and emergency contact information. The AAP shall be updated annually. (Refer to CSD [Policy JGCD-Student Health Service-Medicines](#))

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR PARENTS

Parents may monitor their child's class assignments/homework on Canvas and track their grades through Active Parent. The parent must create an account for both programs. Directions can be found on the district's website, www.columbiaschools.org, under the Parent tab. Please follow JMS on social media by liking the Jefferson Middle School Facebook page where weekly announcements and upcoming events will be posted.

INSURANCE

Students may participate in the school insurance program providing the policy premium is paid when it is offered through the school.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The school library has an excellent collection of books, magazines, and audio-visual materials for student use. In addition to providing reading and research material for students, the library provides instruction in library skills and study skills. Students must pay all library fines before taking semester exams.

LOST AND FOUND

Everyone is encouraged to keep up with his/her own belongings. However, if an item is lost, students should check with their teachers or see if it has been turned in at the main office. Any student finding an item should turn it in at the main office. Jefferson Middle School is not responsible for any articles left at school

MAKE-UP WORK DURING AND AFTER ABSENCES

Upon returning to school, teachers will provide the student with an opportunity to make-up any assignments that were missed because of an absence. The teacher will set a deadline for all make-up work. However, it should be realized that the responsibility for asking for and making up the work rests primarily with the student.

NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS

No student living outside of the Columbia School District is permitted to enroll at Jefferson Middle School unless approved by the Board. Refer to Policy [JBCB](#).

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INCENTIVE SYSTEM

All JMS teachers will support the positive behavior support system for students. School wide emphasis on classroom, cafeteria, break, and hallway expectations will apply. A school wide effort will be made to reduce discipline referrals. A grade level competition among students will be developed and utilized by staff members to encourage students to make the right decisions. TEAMWORK will be our goal for the school year.

POSTERS

No poster will be placed in the Jefferson Middle School buildings without first getting permission from the principal.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

A medical form must be signed in order for any medicine to be given at school. Prescription drugs must be kept in the main office and taken under the supervision of front office staff. We must have doctor's orders to administer prescription drugs. If a student takes Tylenol, etc., the student must bring his/her own medicine and leave the labeled bottle in the main office. JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL WILL NOT PROVIDE MEDICATION FOR STUDENTS. (Refer to [Policy JGCD](#))

REGISTRATION

When registering, each student must have a birth certificate, social security number, and a certificate of compliance (blue health form). Also, students must have a verification of residency showing proof of living within the District (two documents per school board [policy JBC](#)). Transfer students must have a withdrawal form with grades from the previous school.

SCHEDULES

Students will be given their schedule of classes on the first day of school. Changes will not be made for reasons such as dislike of the teacher, dislike of the subject, or dislike of classmates.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Any administrator may search the person of a student when there is reasonable suspicion that a student might have in his/her possession on public school property a dangerous weapon, alcohol or illegal drugs, or any other material or object in violation of school regulations. Public school buildings, ground areas, desks, lockers, and other equipment at a school belong to the District, and although assigned to particular students to use, may be entered and searched by any teacher, principal, assistant principal, or administrator at any time even though locked. This search can take place provided it is conducted with reasonable belief that such building area, desk, locker, or equipment contain any dangerous weapon, alcohol or illegal drugs, or any other material or object in violation of school regulations. The police may also be notified. Refer to Policy [JCAB](#).

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Columbia School District offers special educational services to those students who have identified needs beyond the regular education classroom setting. These services include gifted education class as regulated by the Mississippi Gifted Education Act, special education and related services as regulated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004 (IDEA 2004), and additional services regulated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972.

Each of these service options involves a referral process and determination of eligibility as specified by state/federal regulations.

For information or assistance, contact:

Dr. Sara Bardwell
1101 Broad Street
Columbia, MS 39429
601-736-5336

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUSPENSION

Special education students are responsible for adhering to the same rules of conduct as all other students. However, when a special education student commits a violation of the rules of conduct which may result in the removal from the classroom by suspension or expulsion, the student's IEP will be reviewed or reconvened. If suspension(s) accumulate to ten (10) days or more, a Functional Behavior Assessment and a Manifestation Determination will be conducted.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Students are not permitted to possess or use tobacco at school or while participating in school-sponsored activities.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT/TITLE IX

Any type of sexual harassment, physical, verbal, and/or nonverbal is strictly forbidden. Students shall not engage in sexual harassment toward another student or District employee. District employees are prohibited from sexually harassing or abusing a student. Romantic relationships between students and employees are prohibited. All reports of sexual harassment will be investigated. The District shall not retaliate against a student who, in good faith, reports perceived sexual harassment or sexual abuse. For the full Board policy on sexual harassment, please refer to [Policy JB](#).

For information or assistance, contact the Title IX Coordinator:

Dr. Sara Bardwell
1101 Broad Street
Columbia, MS 39429
601-736-5336

OTHER TYPES OF HARASSMENT

The District encourages all students and staff to foster a climate of mutual respect for others. Each student is expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and staff. Students shall not engage in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, or disability. A substantiated charge of harassment against a student shall result in disciplinary action. The term "harassment" includes repeated, unwelcome, and offensive slurs, jokes, or other oral, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, or disability that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Students who believe they have been harassed by fellow students or District employees are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the principal. If the principal is the subject of a complaint, the student shall report the complaint directly to the superintendent or designated administrator.

Any allegations of harassment of students shall be investigated and addressed promptly. Verbal complaints shall be put in writing to assist in the District's investigation. To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. However, limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. A parent or student may appeal the decision of the principal regarding the outcome of the investigation into the allegations. Allegations and investigation of claims of sexual harassment are addressed above in the section entitled "Sexual Harassment".

STUDENT VALUABLES

Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or other valuables to school and, if they wear glasses or watches, they should keep track of them at all times. Students, not the school, are responsible for their personal property. If it is necessary to bring more money than is needed to pay for lunch, leave it at the office for safekeeping. DO NOT leave any money in your locker or in the classroom. JMS is not responsible for valuables lost at school.

TARDINESS

Promptness is a virtue that becomes a habit worth practice. It is the policy of this school to encourage the development of this habit. Students are expected to be in class on time for each period during the school day or face detention. Chronic tardiness or truancy will require a parent conference and may involve suspensions. Refer to [JMS Classroom Tardy Policy](#)

SCHOOL TARDIES

A maximum of five parent notes per semester will be allowed as excused tardies. More than five per semester will be unexcused. Teachers should record absences and tardies in their grade books. Tardy records will also be kept at the office.

***NOTE:** When a student comes in late, his or her parents must check them in. If a student has a TRUE emergency, an excused tardy will be given. Otherwise, an unexcused tardy will be issued. After the fourth unexcused tardy, students will be subject to the campus discipline ladder.

STATE ASSESSMENT

All students must participate in the Mississippi Department of Education assessment program. Please try not to schedule any appointments on state testing days. All students need to be present.

Federal law requires that all students participate in the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) state testing program each year. The Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) is designed to measure student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and US History. Students are assessed in grades 3 through 8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, grades 5 and 8 Science, Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and US History. The results of all MAAP assessments provide information to be used for the improvement of student achievement.

CAMPUS/BUILDING TRASH

Students who willingly throw trash on the campus or in the building will be required to clean the area where the trash was thrown. PLEASE HELP US KEEP THE CAMPUS LITTER FREE! Students may lose snacks and/or break privileges if they leave trash on the campus at break.

TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

Textbooks and library books are school property and are on loan to the students. Mississippi law requires teachers to collect for damages to books or loss of books. Columbia School District provides textbooks free of charge to students. It is the duty of each student to care for the textbooks to the best of his/her ability. Students who lose or damage textbooks are required to pay for them. Students should take pride in the upkeep of their textbooks. Teachers are instructed to assess fines for amounts up to the current value of a book when it is obvious that the student has damaged or defaced the book. (Refer to [Policy JS](#))

Damage/Fine:

Writing/drawing/scribbling in book - \$1.00 per page
Excess wear/damage but still usable – 10% of the cost of the book
Cover of the book damaged – 25 % of the cost of the book
Spine damage – 25% of the cost of the book
Water damage but still usable – 25% of the cost of the book
Water damage, not usable – Cost of the book
Pages missing, not usable – Cost of the book
Obscene writing or drawing on or in the book – Cost of the book
Non-returned book – Cost of the book

USE OF TELEPHONES

Students are to use the telephone in the main office only in an emergency and with permission from the main office staff. Students will not be called out of class for phone calls. Students are not allowed to use personal phones during the school's instructional day.

VISITORS

Parents and adult members of the community are encouraged to visit the school. All visitors must report to the main office upon arriving on the school campus to sign in and receive a visitor's pass.

Parents and/or grandparents who wish to include a meal in the cafeteria in their visit should make prior arrangements so that cafeteria personnel can plan for extra meals. Student visitors (including visiting relatives of students) may not attend classes during the school day.

Prospective students are welcome to visit the school. When possible, a guided tour of the school facilities will be offered to prospective students. Such tours can be conveniently carried out if prior arrangements have been made. (Refer to [Policy KM](#))

WELLNESS POLICY

Good health and wellness are vital components to the success of our students. Understanding the importance of overall wellness, the Columbia School District has adopted a Wellness Policy (Refer to [Policy EEA](#)). This policy may be viewed at the school office or on the District website.

Nutrition & Physical Activity Grant Policy Statement: "Food shall not be used as a reward unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition environment."

WITHDRAWALS

A student withdrawing from Jefferson Middle School will need a parent or guardian to withdraw the student from school. The student must be cleared from each teacher and department before the principal signs the release form.

NOTIFICATION OF ASBESTOS RE-INSPECTION

In Compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), inspections of each of our school buildings for asbestos-containing building materials have been performed. Documentation and Management Plans are on file in the office of the principal of each school and in the office of the superintendent located at 613 Wildcat Way, Columbia, MS. The EPA requires a re-inspection of the asbestos materials every three years and surveillance every six months. The last re-inspection was completed in 2019.

