



Student Handbook 2025 - 2026

Principal
Mr. Stacey McDonald

Welcome to Palmetto Middle School

Our programs are designed to help students make the successful transition from elementary school to the independence of high school. Middle school is a time of change. The workload, levels of responsibility, and social adjustments are greater than at the elementary school. All students are expected to attend regularly, be prepared daily, perform in class, develop effective study habits, and behave appropriately. This handbook has been prepared to acquaint you with Palmetto Middle School, our expectations, guidelines, and activities. Please read all items carefully. ***You are responsible for knowing the contents of this handbook.*** ***Please complete this [Google form](#) by August 6th, 2025.*** Let us all work together for a successful and rewarding school year.

Palmetto Middle School

Mission Statement: The mission of Palmetto Middle School is to establish and maintain a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment so that all students have an equal and equitable opportunity to become socially responsible, emotionally healthy, and academically successful.

Vision: Palmetto Middle School will provide a high-quality educational program that focuses on academic and social-emotional learning that will enable students to model the profile of the South Carolina graduate.

Belief Statements: At Palmetto Middle School, we believe...

Everything that we do must be in the best interests of our students.

All students will have the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop in a safe, secure, and supportive environment.

Our faculty and staff are committed and dedicated to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to be and become their best self.

We must take big risks to get big rewards.

Core Values

P - Preparing minds for Success

A - Adopting Learning Strategies for Personalized Instruction

L - Life-long Learning is our Key to Success

M - Mentoring Students to Become Responsible Citizens

E - Encouraging Students to Become their Best Self

T - Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders is our Passion

T - Taking Risks to Achieve High Rewards

O - Overcoming Obstacles is What We Do Best



BELL SCHEDULE



2025-2026

ARRIVAL	7:15 AM - 8:00AM
1ST PERIOD	8:05 AM - 8:48AM
2ND PERIOD	8:52 AM - 9:35AM
3RD PERIOD	9:40 AM - 10:23AM
4TH PERIOD	10:27 AM - 11:10AM
5TH PERIOD	11:15 AM - 12:38PM
6TH PERIOD	12:42 PM - 1:25PM
7TH PERIOD	1:30 PM - 2:13PM
8TH PERIOD	2:17 PM - 3:00PM
DISMISSAL	3:00 PM - 3:10PM

Note: Lunches are taken during the 5th Period. The lunch schedule is:

A Lunch - 11:15 am - 11:40 am

B Lunch - 11:45 pm - 12:10 pm

C Lunch- 12:15 pm - 12:40 pm

“What To Do If I...”

...am late to school?

All car riders need to be in the building by 8:05 am. Late car riding students must report to the main office to obtain a pass for homeroom admittance. Once Mr. Foxworth has issued you a pass, then you will need to report to your homeroom class.

******(Bus riders ONLY) If your bus is late, then you will report to the cafeteria to eat breakfast and then go to your designated class.

...need my assignments if I am absent?

The first step to obtain assignments is to visit your team/teacher Schoology page; otherwise, requests for assignments should be made by calling the school office. A twenty-four hour turnaround time is needed for assignments requested through the office.

...miss a day of school?

It is important to attend school daily. If you are absent, your parent(s) should provide a written note, or an official doctor's excuse. Policies concerning excused absences are contained in the handbook.

...get sick during the day?

If you become ill at school, you should tell your teacher. Teachers will then determine if you need to see the nurse. The nurse will then determine if parents need to be contacted.

...need to call home during the day?

Only emergency situations will warrant calls home by students. You should first inform your teacher, who will then determine if you need to go to the office. The office staff and/or an administrator will determine if a call is warranted. REMINDER: School Cell Phone Policy

...get hurt at school?

Any injury should be reported to the nearest adult so appropriate attention can be provided. If necessary, the school will call your parents to notify them.

...need to leave school early?

Students cannot leave school grounds without permission from the office. A student requesting early dismissal should:

Bring a note from parent/guardian stating the time and reason for dismissal. The note should be delivered to the Office **prior to the start of school.**

1) A student may be signed out by authorized adults. Only persons listed in our database as authorized adults may sign a student out of school.

...need to ride a different bus?

Students are **not** allowed to change buses without written approval from transportation. Students are not permitted to change buses to ride home with friends.

...am having trouble with a student?

The first step is to keep your cool. Any problems should be taken to your teacher who will determine the next step. The next step will be a visit to your school counselor or school administration.

...want to bring a visitor to school?

Visitors such as friends or family from out of town cannot come to school with you. Liability and instructional issues prevent our ability to accommodate such requests. However, your parents and/or grandparents are always welcome to visit your school. Any visitors should always sign in the office and obtain a visitor's pass.

...am moving or changing phone numbers?

Parents should notify the office of any changes to a student's data. We need the most accurate contact information at all times.

...am withdrawing from school?

If you are moving to another district or another attendance zone in our district during the school year, your parents must come to the school and complete appropriate withdrawal papers. Any debts must be paid prior to records being forwarded.

...need to bring medicine to school?

If you need to bring a non-prescription, over-the-counter medicine, you will need a note from your parents and the medicine must be in an original container. This note should be checked in with the office at the start of the school day.

...need to see a school counselor?

You should report a desire/need to see the school counselor to your teacher. Your teacher will help refer you to the appropriate person.

...want my schedule changed?

Schedule changes will not be made except in extreme circumstances. If you have a question about your schedule, you may see the Guidance Counselor, Ms. Johnnie Holmes; if she is unavailable, you may see our Career Facilitator Counselor, Ms. Sandra Coombs. Any changes to your schedule will be approved by Dr. McCorkle; if he is unavailable, Mas. Kirkland can approve the schedule if she deems it necessary.

General Student Information

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are from 8:05 AM to 3:10 PM. Students can enter the building at 7:15 AM. 6th grade students will report to the cafeteria and 7th and 8th grade students will report to the gym and sit in the designated area by grade level. *Students will be dismissed to breakfast.* The homeroom bell rings at 8:00 AM. All students should be seated in homeroom by the 8:05 AM bell. All car riders must enter the building by 8:05 AM. **If you arrive after 8:05 am you must report to the main office and be signed in by a parent.**

TRANSPORTATION

Students should make arrangements for rides before they come to school. No student will be allowed to ride a different bus or leave a bus at an alternative stop without a parent note and prior approval from the transportation office. Telephones in the office are for emergency use only.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

All car riders should be dropped off and picked up at the back of the school. Car riders ARE NOT to be dropped off or picked up at the front of the school. This interferes with our bus traffic. Also, car riders should not walk across the street to meet their ride. They should report to the car rider line once the announcement to do so has been made.

Bus riders should report immediately to the bus lot when bus riders are called. Avoid socializing so that you do not miss the bus.

Walkers should immediately exit the building and the campus once the announcement to do so has been made.

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

Students must have permission to stay after school for activities. Notes should be turned into the office by 8:30 am. Report to the designated location for the activity only. Anyone staying after school is dismissed with bus riders. Be sure riders are aware of pick-up times. Late pick-up may jeopardize the opportunity for participation.

Students are not allowed to stay after school for athletic events. Students must leave school by the normal mode of transportation, and return back to school at the designated time of the event.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Students should listen carefully to announcements so that they are aware of important information and able to make arrangements necessary for transportation changes.

IDs

Your first student ID is free, and should be on and visible at all times. Replacement IDs are \$5. Temporary IDs are \$2. Failure to wear ID will result in disciplinary action.

LUNCH/REC

Students must know their lunch numbers. Students will have lunch and recess based on the grade level expectations. You may not switch lunch/recess. Reporting to the wrong lunch will result in loss of recess privileges. Students are expected to remain seated in the cafeteria unless authorized to be up out of their seats. Recess is a time to socialize, however, there should not be horse playing.

LEAVING A CLASSROOM/PASSES

Students must have permission to leave a classroom. Whenever a student leaves a classroom they must receive a hall pass from the teacher. You should never leave class without permission, and without a hall pass. Once you have permission and a hall pass, you are to go to your destination (restroom, office, nurse, etc.), and immediately return to your classroom.

CLASSROOM LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Every teacher maintains a website where class assignments and homework may be viewed. Use the teacher website to keep track of assignments you may have missed. You are responsible for any and all assignments that you miss. Remember, you are no longer in elementary school, and you must take responsibility for making sure that you are completing all of your assignments - even when you are absent.

GRADING SCALE

Students are graded as indicated:

A 100-90

B 89-80

C 79-70

D 69-60

F 59-0.

HOMEWORK & LATE WORK POLICY

Homework serves several purposes. It allows students to independently practice content taught in class. It is also an opportunity for students to improve behavior skills such as responsibility, perseverance, and time management. Assignments including tests and projects will be accepted up to 5 days late. After the 5th school day, the student may not receive credit for an assignment.

<h3>Dress Code</h3>

In order to establish and maintain a clean, safe environment that is academically focused, Palmetto Middle School will not permit any student to wear any article of clothing that is distracting, overly suggestive, or so extreme or inappropriate to the school setting that it disrupts the educational process.

Thus, all students are expected to be in uniform every day. There will be times

when students will be allowed to wear regular clothing.

The following dress code is aligned with the expectations of dress at Palmetto Middle School when students are given the privilege of wearing regular clothing:

- The length of shorts, skirts, or dresses must extend past the student's fingertips with arms extended at the side. (Fingertip Rule)
 - Pants should not drag the floor or be adorned with metal accessories.
 - All pants must be worn appropriately with the waistline above the hips. No sagging! No undergarments should be visible.
 - No spaghetti straps or see-through clothing are allowed.
 - No low-cut tops that expose cleavage.
 - Tops are required to extend far enough below the belt-line so that there is no skin exposed at any point of a student's movement or posture. If leggings are worn, then the shirt MUST cover the rear area and front area. The shirt length should reach to the mid thigh section area. NO midriff tops
 - No trench coats.
 - No clothing with holes exposing under garments or skin above specified fingertip length is allowed.
 - Jewelry or belts that could be potentially dangerous to others will not be allowed. No studded or spiked wristbands or collars will be allowed.
 - No wallet chains or chains of any sort are to be worn.
 - No hoods, hats, sweatbands, scarves, bonnets or other head covering can be worn inside the school building.
 - No bandanas are allowed to be worn at any time – in any fashion.
 - No glasses except for medical reasons.
 - Pajamas, lounge pants, or bedroom shoes will not be allowed.
 - No retractable skates.
- **Students may not wear any vulgar, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate symbols, language, or wording on clothing at school or school-sponsored events. This includes clothes that advertise drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or display sexually inappropriate wording or pictures.

The school faculty, staff, and administration reserve the right to determine what is appropriate dress or accessory while students are in school. Students who violate the dress code will be referred to the Reset Room where they may phone home for a parent to deliver replacement clothes or remain in the ReSet Room for the duration of the day. In addition, dress code violations will be entered into the school database as discipline infractions.

Palmetto Middle School Dress Code (Regular Clothing Days Only)

GUIDELINE	Yes	NO
<p>Shirts: Shirts should be long enough to cover the belt line - no exposed stomachs. No midriffs, spaghetti straps, tube tops, or see through shirts. Shirts should not be low cut.</p>		
<p>Skirts/Shorts/Dresses: Skirts, shorts and dresses should be long enough to extend past the fingertip when arms are extended at side.</p>		
<p>Pants: Pants should be worn at the waistline. No sagging. There should be no visible undergarments. Pants should not drag the ground or be adorned with metal. Pants with holes/rips should follow the fingertip rule - any rips/holes that expose skin must be below the fingertip. No pajama pants.</p>		
<p>Accessories: No jewelry or belts that are potentially dangerous hold be worn. No chains. Glasses for medical purposes only. No head coverings of any kind (hoodie, hat, sweatbands, etc). No bandanas.</p>		

Cell Phone Policy

Marion County School District policy allows the possession of cell phones by students on campus during the regular school day.

However, during the school day (defined as being from the time a student arrives on campus each morning until school is dismissed for the day), cell phones may not be used by students and cell phones must be turned off or silenced and not carried in a visible manner.

If a student is carrying a cell phone in a visible manner or is discovered with a cell phone not silenced during the school day, the phone will be confiscated and returned during a parent conference. A second violation during the same school year will result in confiscation of the cell phone, and returned during another parent conference. A third violation during the same school year will result in the confiscation of the cell phone, and the student will not be permitted to bring a cell phone for the remainder of the year. Once a student is no longer permitted to bring a cell phone, violation of this will result in a disciplinary action (refusal to obey/defiant), and consequences will be given based upon the MCSD Code of Conduct.

Not only are cell phones a potential distraction to the classroom learning environment, but the technology available on many cell phones makes it possible for students to photograph and send copies of tests to other students, text message test questions to other students, and otherwise compromise the integrity of our teachers' assessments and grading of student learning.

There is no reason that a student should need to use a cell phone during the regular school day. There would not be an instance requiring an emergency communication with a student in which our school would fail to assist a student, parent, or other responsible adult with that situation by using a school telephone.

Marion County School District Electronic Device Policy

A student who has an electronic device visible without permission as outlined by the Marion County

School District Policy is subject to discipline as provided by board policy.

Unauthorized use of a personal electronic device may include, but is not limited to, taking pictures or recording without permission, cheating, harassment or bullying, use during any emergency drill, use during unauthorized times, or use for unlawful activities.

Students shall be allowed to use personal electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, tablets, iPads, portable gaming units, etc.) on buses if it does not disrupt the safe operation of the bus or the safety of students. If students do use personal electronic devices, on the bus, he/she should use earbuds or headphones.

After the tardy bell rings, cell phones must be placed in a secure area such as: book bag, lockbox, or area assigned by the teacher. Cell phones must remain stored until the time of authorized use. Any faculty and/or staff member who finds a student in possession of an electronic device without permission can confiscate the device immediately. Administrators should be alerted once the electronic device is confiscated. However, the teacher should secure and document the electronic device. The device will be returned to the parent/legal guardian following administrative regulations.

Students are under the direct supervision of all staff members and /or substitutes. Failure to turn over an electronic device immediately when requested will result in disciplinary action in accordance with School District Code of Conduct Policy.

Responsibility/Liability Clause

Any student who chooses to bring to school an electronic device shall do so at his or her own risk and shall be personally responsible for the security of his or her device. Neither the school personnel nor the board will assume any responsibility or liability for loss, theft, damage, or vandalism to a mobile telephone, smart phone, or other such devices as described above brought onto school property or for the unauthorized use of any such

device. The school district is also not responsible for any faculty or staff personal cell phones.

Times of authorized use for elementary school:

- before the beginning of the instructional school day
- after the dismissal bell at the end of the instructional school day
- during classroom instruction when directed by the teacher

Times of authorized use for middle school:

- before the beginning of the instructional school day
- after the dismissal bell at the end of the instructional school day
- during classroom instruction when directed by the teacher

Times of authorized use for high school:

- during lunch while in the cafeteria only

Signature Cell Phone Violation Pick up

Student Name: _____

By signing below, I understand and agree to the above cell phone policy.

1st offense

Date _____

Student Signature _____

Faculty/Staff Signature _____

Parent/guardian contacted prior to return of phone

2nd offense

Contact's Signature

Date

3rd offense

Legal Guardian's Signature

Date

Additional Offenses require a legal guardian to meet with administration for pick up and disciplinary actions. All cell phones that are confiscated (for the first time) on the school campus/bus may be returned to parents.

*With certain exceptions, a student may be allowed their cell phone during lunch time while they are seated at the lunch table only per administration.

***The school is not responsible for lost or misplaced devices. You are responsible for your device.**

Extra-Curricular Activities

Athletics

- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Football
- Softball

Athletic Eligibility Requirements

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY- SCHSL

In order for an athlete to be eligible for participation, he/she must meet the requirements established by the South Carolina High School League (www.schsl.org). Below is a summary of the eligibility rules for athletes:

1. A student must furnish the Athletic Director a certified or original copy of the student's birth certificate issued by the Health Department or municipality. (Immigrant students must furnish a State Department Form 240/250 or an alien registration card).
2. Students must be age 15 and under for middle school. A student who becomes 15 after July 1st is eligible to compete for the remainder of that year.
3. Students must not participate under an assumed name.
4. Students must live with their parent(s) or legally appointed guardian(s) and attend the high school/middle school of their attendance area. (See Athletics Director for exceptions).
5. Transfer students must meet with the Athletic Director before he/she can become eligible to participate.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

1. A student must be taking academic courses, for which no prior experience in the current grade level has been recorded (no grade level repeaters). 2. To be eligible in interscholastic athletic activities, students in grades 7-8 must achieve an overall passing average in all core subjects.

3. To be eligible in the first semester, a student must have been promoted to their current grade level.

A. For athletics that begin in the first semester and continue to the second semester, the student must be passing all core subjects preceding tryout and participation.

B. Credit earned in summer school approved by the State Department of Education may apply for first semester eligibility. A maximum of 2 courses may have been taken and passed.

4. To be eligible in second semester, a student must have passed all core coursework during first semester and currently be passing all core coursework preceding tryout and participation.

5. Students being served in a non-diploma program shall be considered eligible for participation in interscholastic activities if he/she is successfully meeting the requirements of his/her Individual Education Program (IEP). Those being served in a program leading to a state high school diploma must meet all eligibility requirements previously stated for participation in interscholastic activities.

Palmetto Middle School Student Behavior & Expectations

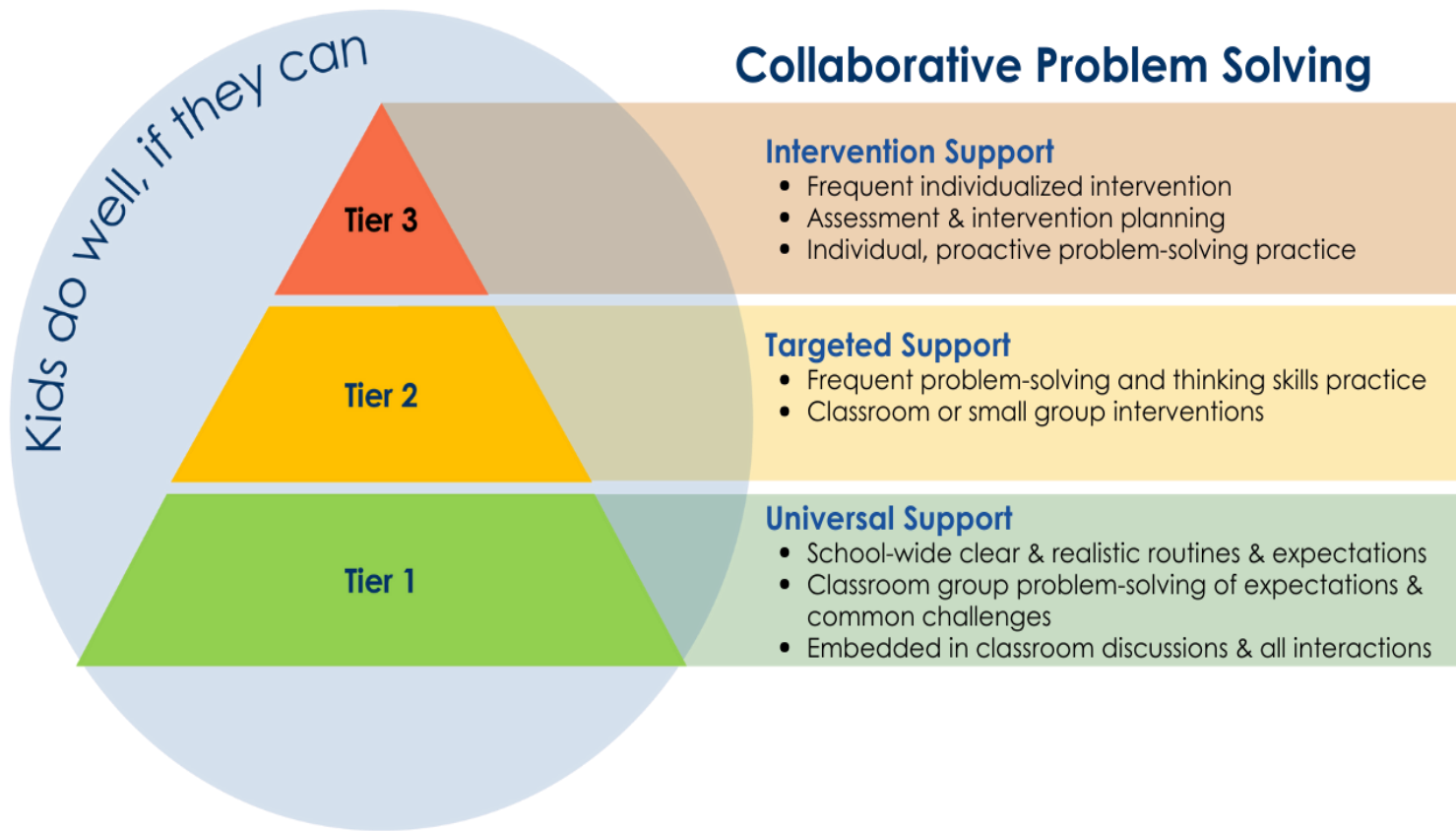
Palmetto Middle School expects all students to observe rules of good behavior. These rules are consistent with school board policies. It is impossible for the school to anticipate every possible situation regarding school discipline. Therefore, the school reserves the right to adopt, adjust or create consequences, within the guidelines of school board policy, as necessary to handle discipline situations. Examples of adjusted consequences may include imposing modified in-school suspension, shortening, lengthening, combining consequences, or imposing work details.

The school reserves the right to add, delete, or modify rules when necessary during the course of a school year. These rules are effective during the following times and in the following places: 1) on the school grounds before, during, and after school hours; 2) on the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a group; 3) off the school grounds at any school activity, function, or event; 4) en route to and from school on a school bus or other school vehicle; and 5) at the school bus stop.

NOTE: Each member of the staff of Palmetto Middle School has the authority and responsibility to correct any student at any time and at all school functions.

Non-Compliance of Consequences

Students are expected to comply with all assigned consequences. In the event a student refuses to comply with consequences issued by the school, the administrators reserve the right to handle non-compliance by assigning alternate consequences of a higher level.



The following 4 Step Process will result when you choose to not comply with the school-wide rules. Action Taken:

Step 1

Warned (verbally)

Step 2

Conference with student; Parent Contact

Step 3

Referral to Character Coach Conference

Behavior Reflection; Parent Contact

Step 4

Referral to Administration

Appropriate Parent Contact

Step 5

Referral to AP; Parent Contact

Character Coaching

What is the Character Coaching? Restorative practices are a new approach to managing problems at school. This differs from more traditional discipline, which often focuses on negative consequences as punishment for misbehavior. In helping students resolve conflicts, restorative practices aim to create positive relationships and a safe environment. By keeping students engaged in school, these practices can also help improve student achievement.

Parents will be notified when a student is placed in the Character Coaching. Only an administrator can place a student in the Character Coaching. Appropriate assignments are sent to the Character Coach by the student's teacher, as soon as time permits; however, the timing of Character Coaching assignment may prevent this from happening. Character Education and behavior modification packets may also be assigned to Character Coaching students, and alternate academic assignments may be given. It is the responsibility of the students to complete all work, as well as make up any class work missed while in Character Coaching. In addition, students are required to bring all school books and their school notebooks to Character Coaching. While assigned to the Character Coaching, students will be expected to follow all rules. Uncooperative attitudes during Character Coaching will not be tolerated. Students who will not cooperate with the Character Coach will be sent home and issued one (1) full day of OSS for that school day. Character Coaching assignments must be made up the following day. A second offense will be issued OSS the following day of being sent home. Students who attend Character Coaching may not participate in any school event until it is completed.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

Students serving OSS are responsible for completing all makeup work from their absences. Students serving OSS may not participate in any school or district event or be on school grounds until their OSS is completed.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the long-term removal of a student from school, usually for the remainder of the school year. Expulsion is a consequence that can only be imposed by the school board. The school and district administration will conduct all appropriate investigations and hearings and make a recommendation to the school board as to whether or not to expel.

Soliciting at School

No student or other individual is allowed to sell any item at school that is not school sponsored or that has not had the approval of the Board of Trustees of the Marion County School District. Additionally, no posting or distribution of any non-school related materials is permissible on school grounds.

Title IX

On May 6, 2020 the United State Department of Education (USDOE) published its Final Rule under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) after an extensive rulemaking process. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance which incorporates all elementary and secondary institutions. The Final Rule is effective August 14, 2020.

Marion County School District in accordance with POLICY GBAB and JAIB and as required by Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972 and its corresponding regulations ("Title IX"), does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities. Title IX prohibits gender-based harassment, which may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex even if those acts do not involve conduct of sexual nature. The District prohibits

discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex or gender in all of its programs and activities by its employees, students, or third parties.

Mandated Reporter Information

Children's Law Center
University of South Carolina School of Law

Mandated Reporter Quick Reference Guide

Who Are Mandated Reporters?

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310 identifies the following professionals as mandated reporters.

- Physicians
- Nurses
- Dentists
- Optometrists
- Coroners
- Medical Examiners
- Employees of Coroners/Medical Examiners
- Any other professional in these fields:
 - Medical
 - Emergency Medical Services
 - Mental Health
 - Allied Health
- School Teachers
- Counselors
- Principals and Assistant Principals
- School Attendance Officers
- Childcare Workers in Childcare Centers or Foster Care Facilities
- Foster Parents
- Police and Law Enforcement Officers
- Juvenile Justice Workers
- Substance Abuse Treatment Staff
- Social Workers
- Public Assistance Workers
- Clergy, including Christian Science Practitioners & Religious Healers (subject to laws governing privileged communication)
- Clerical or Nonclerical Religious Counselors Who Charge for Services
- Undertakers
- Funeral Home Directors
- Employees of Funeral Homes
- Judges
- Volunteer Non-Attorney Guardians ad Litem
- Computer Technicians
- Persons Responsible for Processing Film

However, a person under age 18 is not required to be a mandated reporter (S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310(F)).

June 2018 <http://childlaw.sc.edu>
DSS Brochure 1107 (24) 118

When to Report?

Mandated reporters must make a report when information is received in their professional capacity that gives them reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected.

- Reporting to a supervisor or person in charge of an institution, school, facility, or agency does not relieve a mandated reporter of his individual duty to report.
- The duty to report is not superseded by an internal investigation of an institution, school, facility, or agency.

(S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310(A), (C))

Where to Report?

Reports may be made to the county department of social services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is found.

(S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310(E))

Failure to Report

A person who is required to report child abuse or neglect and who fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

(S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-430)

Additional Information

For a detailed overview of mandated reporter requirements and how to make a report, see the Mandated Reporter Guide found on the Children's Law Center website at <http://childlaw.sc.edu>.

To schedule a free training on Mandated Reporting, contact the Children's Law Center at 803-777-1546.



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