

Hart County Middle School Student Handbook 2025-2026

"It's a great day to be a Bulldog at Hart County Middle School."



Hart County Middle School
176 Powell Road * Hartwell, GA 30643
Telephone: 706-376-5431
<http://hcms.hart.k12.ga.us/>

Principal

Dr. Jacqueline Brock

Assistant Principals

Mr. Joshua McCurley & Mrs. Tonya Bridges

Athletic Director

Mr. Cory Dickerson

Assistant Athletic Director

Mr. Earl Fouch

Dear Hart County Middle School,

I hope you've all had a great summer and are ready for the new school year ahead. I am so excited to continue serving you as Principal of Hart County Middle School. Working together with our amazing teachers and staff, we're going to make this year a fantastic learning experience.

This new academic year brings with it the promise of new beginnings, experiences, and opportunities for personal growth. Every member of our school community—teachers, administrators, support staff, and families—plays a pivotal role in making this year memorable.

To make a difference in the lives of our students, we must focus on two things. First, our staff must build positive relationships with students. Second, we must set high academic and behavioral expectations for all. All students can learn and deserve an environment that supports learning.

Our staff at Hart County Middle School is dedicated to ensuring that each student has a successful school year. If I can assist you in any way, please contact me at jacqueline.brock@hart.k12.ga.us.

Go Bulldogs!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jacqueline Brock
HCMS Principal

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**Hart County Charter System Calendar
2025-2026**

July 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Date	Event or Holiday
July	
28-Jul	New Teacher Induction
29-Jul	New Teacher Induction
30-Jul	Pre-Planning/Professional Learning
31-Jul	Pre-Planning/Professional Learning
August	
1-Aug	Pre-Planning/Professional Learning
4-Aug	First Day of School for Students
September	
1-Sep	Labor Day (Student/Teacher Holiday)
8-Sep	Progress Reports
29-Sep	Fall Break
30-Sep	Fall Break
October	
1-Oct	Fall Break
2-Oct	Fall Break
3-Oct	Fall Break
13-Oct	End of 1st Nine Weeks (45 Days)
16-Oct	Early Release* Report Cards
November	
17-Nov	Progress Reports
24-Nov	Thanksgiving Holiday
25-Nov	Thanksgiving Holiday
26-Nov	Thanksgiving Holiday
27-Nov	Thanksgiving Holiday
28-Nov	Thanksgiving Holiday
December	
19-Dec	Last Day of School (Students release @ 1PM)
19-Dec	End of 2nd Nine Weeks (44 Days)
22-Dec	Christmas Holidays Begin (12/22/25-1/6/26)
January	
5-Jan	Student Holiday/Teacher Professional Learning
6-Jan	Student Holiday/Teacher Professional Learning
7-Jan	Students Return Report Cards
19-Jan	MLK Day (Student/Teacher Holiday)
February	
11-Feb	Progress Reports
16-Feb	Winter Break
17-Feb	Winter Break
18-Feb	Winter Break
19-Feb	Winter Break
20-Feb	Winter Break
March	
19-Mar	End of 3rd Nine Weeks (46 Days)
24-Mar	Early Release* Report Cards
April	
6-Apr	Spring Break
7-Apr	Spring Break
8-Apr	Spring Break
9-Apr	Spring Break
10-Apr	Spring Break
30-Apr	Progress Reports
May	
25-May	Memorial Day
29-May	Last Day of School (Students release @ 1PM)
June	
1-Jun	Post Planning/Professional Learning
2-Jun	Post Planning/Professional Learning
3-Jun	Post Planning/Professional Learning

January 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

*Teachers work from 7:30AM to 7:30PM in lieu of one professional learning day.

**Faculty & staff members will document 8 hours beyond the hours captured on the calendar above. The hours must be completed between July 1, 2025 and May 29, 2026.

Regular Bell Schedule

7:30 a.m. School Opens

8:00 a.m. School Day Begins

3:00 p.m. Dismissal

HCMS Bell Schedules

6th		
Period	Time	Minutes
Homeroom	7:30-8:00	30
Academic 1	8:00-9:40	100
Connection A	9:40-10:30	50
Academic 2	10:30-11:56	86
Lunch/HART	11:56-12:18	22
Lunch/HART	12:18-12:40	22
Connection B	12:42-1:30	48
Academic 3	1:32-3:00	88

7th		
Period	Time	Minutes
Homeroom	7:30-8:00	30
Connection A	8:00-8:50	50
Academic 1	8:52-10:20	88
Lunch/HART	10:22-10:44	22
Lunch/Hart	10:44-11:06	22
Connection B	11:08-11:58	50
Academic 2	12:00-1:29	89
Academic 3	1:31-3:00	89

8th

Period	Time	Minutes
Homeroom	7:30-8:00	30
Academic 1	8:00-9:10	70
Academic 2	9:12-10:22	70
Academic 3	10:24-11:34	70
Academic 4	11:36-12:46	70
Lunch/HART	12:48-1:10	22
Lunch/HART	1:10-1:32	22
Connection A/B	1:34-3:00	86

Hart County Charter System Mission and Vision

Mission: The mission of the Hart County Charter System is to prepare all individuals to meet tomorrow's challenges by providing quality educational opportunities today.

Vision: Hart County Schools will be recognized for educational excellence.

Guiding Principles/Beliefs:

- Schools provide safe, secure, and nurturing environments for all.
- Stakeholders promote a positive atmosphere that fosters confidence and self-worth for all.
- Each individual is valued and treated with respect.
- Each individual has the right to be educated and the responsibility to learn.
- Quality education requires partnership, which is the responsibility of the school system, the students, the parents, and the community.

Hart County Middle School Technology Acceptance Use Policy

We offer students access to a school-wide computer network, the internet, and various technologies to support learning. Students must obtain parental permission and sign the agreement at the start of the year. Internet filters help block inappropriate content. While the internet offers vast resources, misuse may still occur. We believe the benefits outweigh the risks. Misuse is prohibited.

HCMS Computer Network Rules

Network access is a privilege, not a right. Students must act responsibly and use resources for education and research. They must have teacher permission to use personal storage media and must not 'surf' the internet without purpose. The following actions are not permitted: using a teacher's computer, sending or viewing offensive material, accessing personal emails or social media, using obscene language, harassing others, damaging equipment, bypassing security, violating copyright laws, accessing others' passwords or files, or wasting resources. Students must always follow these rules. If unsure whether something is allowed, ask first. Violations may lead to loss of access and other disciplinary or legal action. If a student owes a fee, they will not be assigned a chromebook until fees are paid. Students should charge computers at home. If students come to school with a computer that goes dead they will not receive a loaner and may face disciplinary action.

Technology Fees

Chromebooks:

Full Replacement - \$150

Screen Replacement -\$30

Keyboard/Trackpad Replacement -\$20

Charger Replacement- \$20

HCMS Media Release Policy

Hart County Middle School may participate in media presentations highlighting school activities. Parents may opt out by completing the Media Release Form at the beginning of the year.

1. Media developed by HCMS staff, students, or district personnel may include videos, photos, and digital presentations. These may identify students and be used for staff development, parent programs, and public relations.

2. Media produced by outside organizations, such as the news media.

Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (“COPPA”)

COPPA imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age, and on operators of other websites or online services that have actual knowledge that they are collecting personal information online from a child under 13 years of age.

<https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule>

This includes, but is not limited to, the use of social media sites (Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, etc...) by individuals under the age of 13.

NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS OF RIGHTS UNDER FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (20 30U.S.C. 12329) (THE “ACT”), YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- (1) Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen (18) or older, or those who are emancipated, your own education records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- (2) Request the amendment of the student’s education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. To request that the school district amend a record, parents or eligible students should write the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the rights to a hearing.
- (3) Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- (4) The Hart County Charter System has designated the following information as directory information:
 - (a) Student’s name, address and telephone number;
 - (b) Student’s date and place of birth;
 - (c) Student’s participation in official school clubs and sports;
 - (d) Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team;
 - (e) Dates of attendance at the Hart County Charter System; and
 - (f) Awards received during the time enrolled in Hart County Charter System.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise the right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 5 days after officially enrolling in school or within 5 days of release of this notice.

(5) File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the Hart County Board of Education to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

(6) You are also notified that from time-to-time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event unless you, as a parent/guardian object in writing to your student being photographed, videotaped, or interviewed to the principal of the school where your student is enrolled. You must notify the principal of your objection by the date specified above.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) gives parents rights regarding surveys, information collection for marketing, and physical exams. Parents will be notified of scheduled activities, and may opt their child out. Written consent is required for certain surveys funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

(A) The administration of any survey containing one or more of the following items:

- (i) Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- (ii) Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- (iii) Sex behavior or attitudes;
- (iv) Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- (v) Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- (vi) Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- (vii) Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
- (viii) Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student.

(B) Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose).

(C) Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

You may, upon request, inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for your student.

The school is required by federal law to give this notice to parents. However, the school does not have scheduled any such activities as are described above. If any such activities are initiated during the school year, parents will be notified accordingly and will be afforded all the rights as described herein;

Section 504/Americans with Disability

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in Section 7(20), shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, including public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools, regardless of whether they receive federal financial assistance.

Any parent, teacher or administrator may request an evaluation of their child to determine eligibility for accommodations under Section 504. Requests are to be made to the school based 504 Coordinator, Mrs. Tonya Bridges or District Coordinator, Mrs. Stacy Martin. Initial evaluations may not be conducted unless the parent has given permission for the evaluation. Evaluations are to be conducted by a team of individuals who know the student and the determination of eligibility is to be a team decision. Parents are to be informed of the decision made by the team.

Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system’s central office. Copies of the *504 Procedural Safeguards* and *Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504* may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

Student Arrival

Hart County Middle School will open at 7:30 a.m. each day. Students will walk through the metal detectors and get their breakfast from the breakfast cart or cafeteria. Students who are not eating breakfast will report to their homeroom class. Teachers will be in their classrooms at 7:30 a.m. Students who are involved in morning clubs will be called over the intercom.

Withdrawal

1. A student who is not in attendance on the first day of school but was expected based on prior year enrollment, shall be withdrawn as a no-show student after 10 days and shall not be included in any enrollment or attendance counts.
2. When a parent or guardian withdraws a student the student’s withdrawal date shall be recorded as the last day of student attendance. If a student is under suspension on the date of withdrawal, the new school of enrollment, if known, shall be notified of the terms of the suspension.
3. If a parent does not follow withdrawal procedures and the student is enrolled elsewhere, the withdrawal date will be the last day of attendance. Without proof of new enrollment, a student will be withdrawn after 10 unexcused absences or confirmed relocation out of the district.
4. With no proof of enrollment in another school or school system, a student shall be withdrawn from a school after 10 consecutive unexcused absences or when the school system obtains documentation that the student no longer resides in the school’s attendance zone. The withdrawal date shall be the last day of attendance or the day the school system obtains documentation validating the student no longer resides in the school’s attendance zone or according to exceptions (HC board policy JBCD).

Visitors

Only visitors with legitimate school business are allowed at the school. All visitors must register and print a badge at the front office upon entering as well as pass through the metal detectors. Students may not interact with visitors in vehicles or the parking lot. Visitors who do not check in (Powell Street) may be subject to arrest.

Fire and Emergency Drills

Fire drills are necessary for the safety of the students and faculty. Everyone should know the specific directions for reaching a point of safety for those areas of the building in which he/she may be. The information for fire drills are posted in each room. Faculty and staff will allow a 90 second check of the exterior of the building before release. “**All clear**” to return will alert school personnel and students to return to the building. Students are expected to walk in a straight orderly line and refrain from talking during fire drills.

School Nurse/Health Clinic

The health clinic is for vision, hearing, and dental screenings, assisting students with chronic medical problems, medical treatments, assistance and monitoring of medications (signed parent request required), illnesses and accidents occurring at school. The clinic is not to be used in place of parent or physician care. Generally, a student should stay home:

- vomiting more than once
- if there is fever over 100 F. (Do not give Tylenol and send to school)
- persistent pain (ear, stomach, injury, etc.)
- productive/persistent cough
- a widespread rash

Most of these issues should be addressed by your child's doctor. Please complete and return the Health Service Consent form and keep emergency contacts up to date. Parents must provide an accurate phone number to school personnel. If a student is seen in the clinic, a record of visit will be documented and the nurse will call the parents.

Medication

Medicine should be brought to school if it must be administered during school hours. This includes over-the-counter medications. All medicine must be delivered to the front office and stored in its original container. Students are only allowed to carry inhalers or EpiPen with written parental consent. A written request from a parent is required for staff to administer any medication. A doctor's signature is required for medications lasting more than two weeks. Parents are responsible for picking up medications when treatment ends or by the last day of school. Any medication not picked up by the last day of school will be destroyed. If you request for your child to have Tylenol or Motrin, or any other over the counter medications, including cough drops, eye drops, etc. you must send medicine to the school clinic, with a signed consent form.

Head Lice

Students who have head lice (pediculosis) will be sent home from school. Before re-entering school, it will be necessary for parents to obtain a statement from a physician, Hart County Health Department, or school nurse stating that the student is free of all infestation and any remnants, including dead nits. When the student's head is still suspect, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter school. However, if your child has not been cleared to re-enter on or before the second school day from the date he/she was sent home, the absences will be marked unexcused. Referrals will be made to the School Social Worker for repeated cases of head lice.

Health Records 7th grade immunizations

- Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school have a Certificate of Immunization on file. Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school. All 6th grade students upon the first day of school, or before, must have immunizations updated.

- Transfer students have 30 days to furnish the appropriate Certificate of Immunization. Vaccinations and vaccination records may be obtained from the Hart County Health Department or from a private physician. Please note that the vaccination records must be on an official form provided by the Georgia Department of Human Resources. Immunizations must be on a 3121 Georgia form. In addition, those students entering a Georgia public school for the first time must provide an eye, ear, and dental certificate.

Personal Electronic Device (PED) policy for Hart County Middle School students

Students are not allowed to use PEDs at HCMS. PEDs need to be stowed in book bags before exiting the vehicle that brings them to school. PED's include: Cell Phones, Smart Watches, Headphones, Tablets, Smart Glasses, and etc. Students should not have their devices out of their book bag until entering the vehicle to go home. Personal Electronic Devices should not be used on campus.

If a PED is seen out of a bookbag, it will be confiscated, tagged and turned into the front office. The parent/guardian must pick up the device in the front office. PEDs will not be released to students. The incident will be recorded as a disciplinary infraction and repeated offenders will be referred to administration. In the event of an emergency, students may use a school phone and parents may contact the main office to get a message to their child. Students are not permitted to use their personal cell phones to call or text. Students who use their cell phones or other personal electronics during school hours will receive a disciplinary referral.

Curriculum

Each student at Hart County Middle School is required to take classes in English Language Arts/Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Connections. Administrators and counselors make every effort to mix each class by gender, race, and ability, thereby providing a wholesome environment for all teachers and students. We do not honor parent requests for specific teachers before, during, or at the end of the school year. Students will receive acceleration and enrichment for academic classes throughout each school day. More information about the Georgia Standards can be found at www.georgiastandards.org

Talented and Gifted Program (TAG)

Students are evaluated using various assessments for the TAG program. Students in TAG are placed in Accelerated Classes based on performance on end of year State Testing as well as academic classes. Students who do not meet requirements for Accelerated Classes will be placed in a gifted classroom if available so that services can be provided. Student progress will be monitored at each grading period and adjustments made as necessary based on student performance as well as work skills. Both academic and behavior will be considered. Students that do not meet expectations could be removed from the program.

Advanced Classes

Eligibility for Advanced Classes is determined by current academic performance. Students may qualify based on Georgia Milestones scores, MAP scores, and teacher recommendations.

- 1) Scores on Georgia Milestones

- 2) Teacher recommendations/previous grades
- 3) MAP Scores

The following is applicable to those enrolled in advanced classes during the school year 2025-2026:

- Instruction for students is quicker paced and at a higher or advanced level.
- Instruction is more project-based with application of knowledge gained.

Note: Gifted students will receive gifted services but not necessarily advanced courses

STEAM

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics instruction will take place in each grade level at Hart County Middle School. Instruction throughout the year at each grade level will be focused on developing problem-based learning that allows for students to make connections to STEAM areas.

Connections Classes

Connections courses are held daily and are an essential part of the academic schedule. Student participation and attendance are required. Offerings include Agriculture, Art, Computer Science, Physical Education, Music Appreciation, Drafting, Band, Engineering/Technology, Chorus, Reading Connections, and Math Connections.

8th Grade Students have the opportunity to take some high school courses for credit.

High School Credit

- **9th Grade Coursework**
 - Instruction is at the high school level and is more rigorous than the 8th grade.
 - Criteria for these courses will be based on qualifications and availability
 - Students must pass the class to receive credit.
- Connections/Electives
 - Students have multiple opportunities to gain experiences in all of our connections courses. However, if they would like high school credit for connections courses the following is required. Pass the course with a 70% or higher.
 - Courses vary in length. They can be semester long or year long.
- 9th Grade CTAE/Academic Courses
 - Courses are year long

Students struggling with 9th grade courses will require a parent meeting. If no improvement is shown by the end of the first nine weeks, the student may be moved to an equivalent 8th grade course.

Students may add or drop Band at the end of each semester - during winter or summer break.

GEORGIA S.H.A.P.E. FITNESSGRAM

Governor Perdue signed HB 229 (Student Health and Physical Education Act) April 28, 2009. Part of this act requires all students enrolled in a physical education course in grades one through 12 to have an annual fitness assessment beginning during the 2011-2012 school year. The Georgia Student Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) Initiative will consist of an annual fitness assessment program for all students in grades 1 - 12

enrolled in Georgia public school physical education classes taught by certified physical education teachers. For more information go to www.fitnessgram.net

Promotion and Retention

The promotion of students in grades 6 and 7 who do not achieve on grade level on the State Assessment (s) shall be determined by a Student Support Team. Promotion of such students shall be based on a review of factors specified in this policy below, including but not limited to, the student's performance on the State Assessment (s) in reading and math.

The promotion of students in grade 8 shall be determined in accordance with State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11 Promotion, Placement, and Retention that requires those students to achieve grade level on the Georgia Milestone Assessment. The school principal or designee shall utilize the results of the State Assessment (s) as specified in this policy in determining: a. the overall academic achievement of students; b. an appropriate plan of accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction for students who do not achieve grade level; and c. placement (with specific recommendations), promotion or retention of a student. The local promotion criteria has been determined by the Hart County Board of Education. Promotion and Retention will be a school decision guided by the MTSS team.

HCMS Athletics

Hart County Middle School shared its athletic program with Hart County High School. All questions regarding middle school sports should be directed to the high school's athletic department.

Coach Cory Dickerson, Athletic Director
cory.dickerson@hart.k12.ga.us

Coach Earl Fouch, Assistant Athletic Director
earl.fouch@hart.k12.ga.us

Middle School Athletic Eligibility

- 6th and 7th Grade and 1st semester 8th Grade
 - During preceding semester, students must be passing or have passed 2.5 classes
 - Semester classes are .5
 - Year long classes are 1
 - All 6th Graders are academically eligible 1st semester.
 - Students should be on track as defined by school grade level expectations
- 8th Grade
 - 1st Semester, follow 6th and 7th grade criteria
 - 2nd Semester, follow the below
 - During preceding semester, students must be passing or have passed 3.5 classes
 - Semester classes are .5
 - Year long classes are 1
 - Students should be on track as defined by school grade level expectations

➤ Attendance Policy: In order to be eligible to participate in any HCMS sports/extracurricular activity after school hours, a student must attend at least one-half day of school on the day of the event excluding weekends. Students must be in attendance until at least 11:30 a.m. to receive credit for a half day of school. Tardy students must be signed in by 11:30 a.m. on the day of the event to be eligible.

➤ Athletic Expectations

Academics

- Students with two failing grades at the end of a semester are ineligible to participate in sports/extracurricular activities during the entirety of the following semester.
- Student athletes who are failing one class during the season may practice, but are ineligible to participate in games, matches or meets until the grade is passing.
- Student athletes who are failing two classes during the season are ineligible to play or practice until the grades are passing. Student athletes can practice when at least one of the grades is passing.

Behavior

- Student athletes who are suspended out of school (OSS) for an offense are immediately ineligible to play or practice for the remainder of that semester.
- Student athletes who receive in-school suspension (ISS) for a total of two days (consecutively or otherwise) are immediately ineligible to play or practice for the remainder of that semester.

HCMS offers the following sports:

- Baseball— 7th and 8th grade boys
- Basketball—6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls
- Competition Cheerleading—6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls
- Sideline Cheer --- 7th and 8th grade boys and girls
- Cross Country—6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls
- Football---6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys (only if not eligible by age at Rec. Dept.)
- Golf—6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls
- Soccer---6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls
- Bass Fishing Team --- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls.
- Softball---6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls
- Tennis---6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls
- Track---6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls
- Volleyball---6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls
- Wrestling---6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls

Honor Roll/Merit Lists

The following system will be used to evaluate students eligible for the Honor Roll/Merit List:

- Honor Roll – Students must receive all A's (90-100) in all courses.
- Merit List – Students must receive 2-A's (90-100) and 3- B's (80-89) in all courses.

HCMS Awards Day

All awards for the year will go through the 3rd 9 weeks.

Academic Award

There will be one medal in each academic course.

Connections Award

Connections teachers give awards in the following areas:

Physical Education, Agriculture, Chorus, Music Appreciation, Drafting, Band, Art and Computer Science

Bulldog Character Award

Each teacher will present one Bulldog Character Award to a student who demonstrates and consistently models HART characteristics (Helpful, Accountable, Respectful, and Teachable).

Honor Roll

In order to be recognized for the honor roll, students must have been on the honor roll all three nine-week periods this year.

3-Year Honor Roll

In order to receive a 3-year honor roll trophy, students must have been on the honor roll all three years at HCMS.

Top Dog Character Award

This award is given to a female and male student in each grade level who exemplifies outstanding character in everything they do.

Principal's Award

The Principal's Award honors one student per grade level who embodies HART: Honorable, Accountable, Respectful, and Teachable.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The HCMS staff encourages parents to schedule conferences by calling the school at (706) 376-543. Teachers are available for conferences during their planning time. Twice a year, early dismissal allows parents to pick up report cards and meet with teachers. Longer conferences can be scheduled upon request.

School Counseling



HCMS follows the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) framework and standards in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. HCMS is recognized as an ASCA Model Program (RAMP) school. ASCA recognizes schools committed to delivering comprehensive, data-informed school counseling programs aligned with the ASCA National Model framework. The RAMP designation demonstrates to administrators, school boards, families and the community at large that the schools are committed to supporting the mission of the school and district. School Counselors help students with a variety of indirect and direct counseling services. All counseling sessions are confidential with the exception of those issues that the law dictates school personnel to report.

Clubs and Organizations

Participation in extracurricular activities provides students with valuable experiences and benefits.

- ART Club- Open by application; the art teacher will distribute requirements.
- BETA Club - Invitation -only academic organization that fosters enthusiasm for scholarships. Eligibility is based on academic performance.
- FCA - Fellowship of Christian Athletes – For athletes and students committed to their faith and sportsmanship.
- FFA- Future Farmers of America. Open to students enrolled in Agriculture Class.
- Student Leadership – Representatives from each grade level will work with the counselor on improving the school

- TSA- Technology Student Association -Offers leadership and innovation opportunities in technology, engineering, and design.

School Food Services

Educational research has shown that students can learn more effectively when they are properly nourished. Nutritious breakfasts and lunches that meet USDA nutritional requirements are served each day at the school. Breakfast and lunch will be available to all students at no charge this upcoming school year.

For your convenience, menus are on the middle school website in addition to www.hart.k12.ga.us/nutrition. Additional meals or a la carte items will be at an additional cost. Parents may go on-line to look at their student's account at www.myschoolbucks.com. This is an on-line system that allows parents/guardians to make deposits into a student's meal account or view meal purchases. A \$2.49 transaction fee covers the cost of processing online transactions. This fee goes directly to the payment processor, not to the school district. According to our District Wellness Policy(EEE), food from outside vendors should not be brought into the cafeteria.

Parents that have children who have a special nutritional or feeding need due to a disability must have their child's physician complete the EATING AND FEEDING EVALUATION CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS form. This must be completed and on file with the School Nutrition Manager of each school before any modifications are made. This is a separate form from what is turned in to the school nurse and must be completed each year. These forms may be picked up from the Nutrition Manager or found online at www.hart.k12.ga.us/nutrition.

2025-2026 Meal Prices

There will be no charge for the cost of student breakfast and lunch for the 2025-2026 school year.

Student Attendance

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to feel connected to the school and thus are more likely to perform better in the classroom, have a positive attitude and are more likely to graduate from school. Hart County Board of Education recognizes the significance of good attendance contributes to school performance and thus supports having a consistent approach to ensure students attend school. The Attendance Protocol has been developed to provide parents, students, teachers, and school staff the information by which to address attendance issues.

The Georgia Compulsory School Attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) requires children to attend school from age 6 to age 16. It also places children who start school before the age of 6 to be subject to the law if they are enrolled in school for at least 20 days.

Hart County Risk Reduction Panel

By order of the Juvenile Court, the Hart County Risk Reduction Panel has been established. Students with excessive absences and/or tardies may be called to appear before this panel, which consists of members of various community agencies gathered to provide support to parents and children for the purpose of improving attendance. It is incumbent upon the parent(s)/guardian(s) to work with the panel to develop a plan of action. Failure to comply with the plan may result in a referral to the Department of Family and Children Services and / or Juvenile Court.

Absences

A student is considered absent any time he or she is missing from any assigned class or school activity, with or without parental permission. Students are not permitted to use their phones at school to call or text their parents to pick them up. Students must be seen by the school nurse in order for the absence to be excused.

Excused Absences

An excused absence is an absence that is a result of one of the following reasons:

1. Any state approved reason (as listed below)
 - Personal illness, requiring attention from a health care professional (Medical, counseling, dental, and other agency appointments that cannot be scheduled before/after school hours)
 - Serious illness or death in a student's immediate family
 - A court order or an order by a governmental agency mandating absence
 - Religious holiday
 - Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health and safety
 - Visitation with a parent or legal guardian in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat zone posting
 - Athletes who are competing in a school sponsored sport or school sponsored field trip.
2. All students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly
3. All students in foster care who attend court proceedings relating to the student's foster care
4. All students traveling on a school-sponsored trip
5. All out of school suspensions shall be temporarily excused. A student under suspension will be allowed to make up work according to Hart County Board Policy JBD.

Parent Excused Absences

Each student is allowed **(4)** parent excused absences per semester. These absences are to be supported by a note from the parent/guardian, and must be received within **(2) school days following the student's absence** in order to be accepted. The parent note should include the reason for the absence and be signed by the student's parent/guardian with the phone number where the parent/guardian may be reached during the day. Parents may send a parent note for absences via hand delivery, School Status or email. If an absence is reported through School Status, the teacher is responsible for notifying the attendance / data clerk.

Submitting Excuses

Once a student returns to school, written documentation of absences must be received within **TWO (2) school days following the student's absence** in order to be accepted. If the written documentation is not received within **TWO (2) SCHOOL DAYS** the absence will remain as an unexcused absence.

Unexcused Absences

A written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failure to comply with Georgia Compulsory School Attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) will be provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) by September 1 of each school year or within thirty (30) days after a student has enrolled in the school district. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will sign a statement indicating receipt of such a written statement of possible consequences and penalties. Students who are ten (10) years or older by September 1 will sign a statement indicating receipt of a written statement of possible consequences for noncompliance with the school district's attendance policy.

1. THREE (3) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

a. 3 Day Attendance Letter

The school will send an attendance letter and a copy of the notification of compulsory attendance form to the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian and students (over the age of ten (10) by September 1st) will be asked to sign and return the form to school. After two attempts to obtain the parent/guardian signature, the school will send the attendance letter and the notification of compulsory attendance form through School Status and attempt to make parent contact.

2. FIVE (5) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

a. 5 day Attendance Letter

The school will send a 5 day notice of unexcused absence letter and a copy of the notification of compulsory attendance form to the parent/guardian.

The parent/guardian and students (over the age of ten (10) by September 1st) will be asked to sign and return the form to school.

After two attempts to obtain the parent/guardian signature, the school will send the attendance letter and the notification of compulsory attendance form through School Status and attempt to make parent contact.

b. Attendance Support Team Meeting

The school will contact student parent(s) and conduct an Attendance Support Team meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student when the student has 7 absences. The purpose of this meeting is to develop an intervention plan to improve student attendance.

c. Referral School Social Worker

The Hart County Charter System Social Worker will be notified for further unexcused absences following the attendance contract or if a parent/guardian fails 2 times to respond to attempts to schedule or to attend the attendance meeting.

d. School Principal Verification of Absence

After five (5) excused absences per semester, the principal of the student's school may require medical or appropriate documentation in support of each and every further absence which the student claims is excused. All excuses will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

3. TEN (10) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

a. Juvenile Court Referral

The Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law considers students truant at ten (10) unexcused absences.

If a student accumulates ten (10) or more unexcused absences a referral will be made to the Hart County Northern Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court Risk Reduction Task Force.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified by the Hart County Charter System Social Worker via Certified/First Class mail of referral.

4. REVOCATION OF INTRADISTRICT or OUT OF DISTRICT PRIVILEGE

a. Intradistrict Students

If a student was granted an intradistrict transfer to another school, he/she may be placed back at his/her school of origin as recommended by the Principal.

b. Out of district Students

If a student received BOE approval for out of district attendance in Hart County Schools, out of district approval may be revoked and required to enroll in school district in the family/student county of residence as recommended by school/ district administration.

Parental Responsibility for Attendance

When students live with both parents the law considers them to be equally responsible for their children's attendance at school. Children should have received sufficient sleep the night before, be awakened, and readied to attend school each morning. Excuses are to be submitted within two (2) days following the student's absence from school. The note should include the reason for the absence and be signed by the parent with the phone number where the parent may be reached during the day. Please submit hand written notes to the front office or medical excuses can be faxed to the Registrar at (706)377-2714. Medical documentation to support the reason for the absence may be requested at any time by the Principal or designee.

A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.

Parents are encouraged to check on their child's attendance and grades through Infinite Campus. Access to review student attendance records and grades are through the CAMPUS PARENT webpage or Mobile Phone APP of the student data system. To set up an account or to get help with access, please contact Tina Miller at your child's school. The internet link to campus parent can be found on the district's website, www.hart.k12.ga.us

Student Responsibility for Attendance

Students are permitted to make up work when absences are excused, provided they contact the teacher(s) within

two (2) days of returning to school to make arrangements for making up missed work. The student must make up the work according to the schedule set by the teacher; otherwise, make-up credit may be withheld at the discretion of the teacher. All out of school suspensions shall be temporarily excused. A student under suspension will be allowed to make up work according to Board of Education policy.

Hospital/ Homebound Instruction

Hospital/Homebound Services (HHB) are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions interfere with regular school attendance (e.g. students receiving dialysis, or radiation/chemotherapy, or students with other serious health conditions).

HHB Services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are by design temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented.

Student Eligibility

Eligibility for HHB service is based on the following criteria:

1. The student must be enrolled in the public school system in which he/she requests this service. Private or home school students are NOT eligible for HHB services.
2. The student must have a medical and/or psychiatric condition that is documented by a licensed physician. Only a psychiatrist can submit a medical request form for an emotional or psychiatric disorder. The psychiatric condition presented must be listed in the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). The referring licensed physician and/or licensed psychiatrist must be the treating physician or psychiatrist for the medical and/or psychiatric condition for which the student is requesting HHB services. Examples include the following:
 - a. A student with leukemia may not request HHB services with a medical statement from a pediatrician. A statement from the oncologist currently treating the student is required.
 - b. A student with paranoid delusions may not request HHB services with a medical statement from a psychologist or pediatrician. The medical request must be from the licensed psychiatrist currently treating the student.
3. The student must be anticipated to be absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive school days or for intermittent periods of time anticipated to exceed ten school days during the school year.
4. Students who have any form of influenza or other airborne contagious diseases will not be

provided services until the licensed physician certifies that the student is no longer contagious.

5. Students approved for intermittent HHB services must be absent for three consecutive school days on each occurrence before HHB services will be provided.

Each school has an administrator assigned to coordinate HHB services.
For more information regarding Hospital/Homebound Services, please contact
Hart County Schools District coordinator

Missy Vaughn, LCSW
(706)371-5106
missy.vaughn@hart.k12.ga.us

Tardy to School

Late arrival to school and early checkout from school will both be considered tardy. Parents are required to sign in their child either in Checkmate or log in sheet and state the reason for the tardiness.

Prior to the end of the school day students shall only be released to a parent (or other authorized pick-up person) when the parent has telephoned their permission to appropriate school personnel. The parent (or other authorized pick-up) shall be required to come inside the school to the designated area to sign the student out.

Tardiness

Tardiness is considered a classroom disturbance. Car problems, oversleeping, and unexcused personal problems will be unacceptable. Students who enter their classrooms after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. Parents are required to sign in their child and not drop them off when they are tardy.

HCMS Tardy Policy

Tardiness per semester	Consequences
After 3	Students will be required to serve after school detention on the next tardy.
4+	One day of detention per tardy
7+	Attendance / Tardy Meeting with Parent/Guardian and student
10+	Student will be referred to District Social Worker and phone call will be made to parent/guardian

Tardy protocol starts at zero at the beginning of each semester. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work for students who are tardy.

Sign-Out Procedures

- We encourage students to remain at school for the entire school day because leaving early causes loss of instructional time. Students who sign out of school early are missing valuable class time. It is understood that appointments and various other times have to be arranged according to professional schedules;

however, these should be limited to a minimal number. Students who leave school early must be signed out of the office by their parent (s) or guardian(s). It is necessary for the parent to sign their name and the reason for the student leaving in Checkmate, in the main office.

- Students wishing to go home with a friend or someone other than a parent or guardian must bring a note written by a parent /guardian to the front office immediately upon their arrival to school. The note should include the reason for signing out early, time, date, and telephone number where the parent can be reached during the day. Students who come on campus may not leave school without following the sign out procedures.
- Students are not allowed to stay after school for a school event unsupervised. This includes leaving school without parent supervision and returning to school for the event.
- Students who play JV sports must follow HCMS sign-out procedures if they plan on leaving with the high school team.
- If a student skips campus without permission, school officials will notify police for safety and liability purposes.
- Students are not allowed to sign out after 2:30 p.m.

Change of Transportation

Should it be necessary for you to change your child's normal mode of transportation, please send a note with your child. If an emergency arises, a student's parent or legal guardian should call the school office. All phone requests should be made to the office prior to 2:00 p.m. in order for us to get the information to your child and the teacher. Changes will not be accepted after 2:00 p.m. All students riding or walking to the high school for extracurricular activities must provide a parent note. Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus.

Bus/Bus Behavior

All buses will pick up and deliver students at regular designated stops on the route. Drivers will make every effort to run on time; however, this will require students to be at the designated stop when the bus arrives. Missing the bus is not an excuse for absence/tardiness to school. School bus drivers represent school authority and are responsible for each passenger on the bus. All students who ride a bus are subject to rules and regulations. Any misbehavior that distracts the driver is a very serious violation and jeopardizes the safety of individuals on the bus. Misconduct on the bus or at the bus stop will result in disciplinary action.

Media Center

The Hart County Middle School Media Center hours of operation are from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each school day. The maximum number of items a student patron may check out is two (2) unless otherwise authorized by administration. The maximum number of school days in a checkout period for an item is ten (10). Most of the materials in the library circulate for a specific period of time. It is essential that all materials be returned on time for the benefit of everyone who uses the library.

Students must immediately notify the Media Specialist of any items lost or presumed lost. All lost or damaged materials must be replaced at the expense of the borrower. See the Media Specialist for the replacement cost of lost materials. Students will receive an email each day listing materials that are checked out by them. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Media Specialist of any discrepancies on his/her record.

The Media Center should maintain a respectful working environment. Students should refrain from loud talking, horseplay, and general disruption. Library privileges may be revoked due to misbehavior. Computer Lab areas are accessible to teachers for classroom use and small groups. Students must have supervision by an adult to be in the lab areas.

Discipline

It is the desire of the Hart County Board of Education that all students have every possible opportunity to take advantage of instructional programs that will allow them access to the best possible education. Any distractions from a favorable teaching and learning environment lessen this opportunity. Students are expected to adhere to standards of behavior that will facilitate a positive learning environment for themselves and other students. Respect for each other, system employees, and school property is a requirement for all students. They are also expected to comply with student behavior policies adopted by the Board of Education, and to obey student behavior rules established by individual schools.

Parent involvement is the most desirable avenue for correcting behavioral problems and will be used when possible. Parent conferences may be used in conjunction with other forms of discipline.

School systems are required to have progressive punishment policies. Students accused of violating this Code should be advised of the violation and given a reasonable opportunity to present their position. Any student in excess of ten (10) cumulative days of suspension per semester for disciplinary reasons may be recommended to the tribunal panel for possible change of placement.

This Code of Student Conduct shall be available to each student and parent in the district, including newly enrolled students. Parents shall sign an acknowledgement of the receipt of the Code. This Code shall be available online and a printed copy will be provided upon request. Federal and state laws and regulations that are in conflict with this Code or its application shall take precedence.

Student Behavioral Expectations through PBIS

Hart County Charter System implements Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to support student growth. PBIS is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. More than 1,400 Georgia schools and 27,000 nationwide have been trained in PBIS. Implementation of PBIS is saving countless instructional hours otherwise lost to discipline. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety and learning. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students. Please be on the lookout for additional information about PBIS throughout the school year.

The Middle School expectations are Honorable, Accountable, Respectful, and Teachable (HART). Student behavior should coincide with HART expectations. Even with clear expectations and positive reinforcement, negative behaviors can occur. Teachers will follow the school discipline policy when applicable.

School Specific Expectations

Participate fully in the learning process. Students need to report to school and class on time, attend all regularly scheduled classes, remain in class until excused or dismissed, pay attention to instruction, complete assignments to the best of their ability, and ask for help when needed.

Avoid behavior that impairs their own or other students' educational achievement. Students should know and avoid the behaviors prohibited by this code, take care of books and other instructional materials, and cooperate with others.

Show respect for the knowledge and authority of teachers, administrators, and other school employees.

Students must obey reasonable directions, use acceptable and courteous language, avoid being rude, and follow school rules and procedures.

Recognize and respect the rights of other students and adults. All students should show concern for and encouragement of the educational achievements and activity participation of others. Disciplinary action for violations of expected behaviors will include appropriate hearings and reviews. In all cases, the rights of individuals will be ensured and protected. The Hart County Charter System will make every reasonable effort to administer the discipline code consistently in all schools. When applicable, individualized plans (i.e. IEP, 504, etc.) will be reviewed for appropriate consequences. The school's primary goal is to educate, not punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by the rules set forth in this Code of Conduct.

Hartbreak

Hartbreak is a designated intervention time at Hart County Middle School that allows students to focus on their academic and/or behavior goals. While this period provides an opportunity for outdoor time as a reward, its primary purpose is to support student growth. Student safety remains our top priority. Therefore, administration reserves the right to restrict or cancel Hartbreak for individual students or the entire grade level if academic or behavior expectations are not met.

Field Trips

Students who are assigned ISS or OSS are not permitted to go on field trips during the semester they received the referral. Students should not be failing any classes. Students will not be given a refund. Students who are over the maximum school wide attendance will not be allowed to attend. In addition, students should not be failing classes.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school activity, function or even while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles for student transportation by the school system;
- On school buses and at school bus stops;
- Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus, which could result in a student being criminally charged with a felony, and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Anti-Bullying Rules:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

For complete policy, reference JCDAG. Pattern of behavior, which may include written, verbal, or physical acts, that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm (Policy JCDAG)

Unsafe School: Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of the State Board Rule 160-4-8-.16, UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

Seclusion or Restraint of Students

The use of physical restraint in Georgia public schools and educational programs is governed by *Rule 160-5-1-.35 Seclusion and Restraint for All Students, Code JGF(2), O.C.G.A 20-2-2-240*. The rule can be found on the Georgia Department of Education website at www.doe.k12.ga.us.

Student Support Processes

The Hart County Board of Education provides a variety of resources that are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. These resources include Student Support Teams, school counselors, chronic disciplinary student plans, mentoring programs, peer mentors, and student leadership class support.

Authority of the Principal and Authority of the Teacher

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures. The Superintendent fully supports the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to provisions of state law.

Each teacher shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737 which requires the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct. Such a report shall be filed with the principal or designee on the school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior.

The principal or designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or designee.

The principal or designee shall notify in writing the teacher and the student's parents or guardian of the discipline or student support services which have occurred as a result of the teacher's report within one school day from the imposition of discipline or the utilization of the support services. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that the student's parents or guardian has received the written notification, including information as to how the parents or guardian may contact the principal or designee.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communication through personal contacts are extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as on-going opportunities for school

personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

Georgia law mandates that any time a teacher or principal identifies (Infinite Campus Referral) a student as a chronic disciplinary problem, the principal shall notify by phone call and by mail the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem. The principal may request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

Georgia law also states that before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return to school from a suspension or expulsion, the school shall request by telephone call and by mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

The law allows a local board of education to petition the juvenile court to require a parent to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend the conference requested by the principal pursuant to the laws cited above, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent to guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress for school success. Clothing, piercings, and hair color must not interfere with the educational process or the rights to education of others, undermine the authority of teachers, or jeopardize the safety of others. Exceptions may be made for Spirit Weeks, field day, and other student events and will be communicated by administration. Administration, school leadership team, students, and school governance members contributed to the 2025-2026 school dress code.

The following guidelines must be followed at Hart County Middle School:

- No blouses, dresses, or shirts which expose any areas of the stomach, chest, side, or back
- No bare midriffs or crop tops
- No pajamas
- Sweatpants/ athletic pants must be fitted at the waist (no sagging)
- Leggings must be worn with a shirt that comes down to midthigh (bottom must be covered)
- HEAD-Hats, doo-rags, hoods, bonnets, bandanas, fish hooks, along with earphones/buds and sunglasses are not permitted. Hats worn inside will be taken up by administration for the 9 weeks.
- No tank tops, spaghetti straps, or sleeveless garments
- No studded bracelets, studded necklaces, studded belts, handcuffs, fish hooks, heavy chains or items that could be considered to be used as a weapon.
- No visible undergarments
- No sheer, mesh, or see-through clothing
- No clothing or accessory that displays inappropriate language or images or causes a school disruption (profanity or insinuation of profanity, sexual suggestion, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, ethnic slurs, gang-related imagery, etc.)
- No blankets, flags, stuffed animals (toys) or capes. Items will be taken up and placed in the front office. Parents will be notified and students may pick up items at the end of the day.
- No bedroom shoes or slippers

- An open back of any type of shirt is not allowed
- Shorts, skirts, skorts and dresses must be worn at the student's natural waistline and must be no shorter than three inches above the top of the knee in front and back.
- Pants should have no unpatched holes or slits.
- Bike shorts shall not be worn.
- Pants and shorts should be fitted at the waist and cover the entire buttocks area without drooping.
- Gang attire, colors or symbols are not permitted in clothing or accessories.
- Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times on school grounds and at all school functions. Shoes with laces must be tied.
- Facial, tongue or body piercing jewelry is not acceptable. This includes lip rings, etc.
- Nose jewelry is not permitted with the exception of a small nose stud (20 gauge or smaller)
- Students may not draw or carve inappropriate or unacceptable graphics on their bodies, their clothing, backpacks, their books, paper and folders.
- Students may not have face painting, stickers, etc. on their face (clear acne stickers are the only exception).

Administration has the discretion to deem other clothing articles as inappropriate.

Students will be asked to change clothing that disrupts the learning environment. Potential consequences for dress code violation may include the following:

- Parent(s) contacted to bring appropriate clothes
- Detention
- ISS
- OSS

Food and Drink Policy

Water is the only drink allowed in the classrooms during school hours. Food/candy is not allowed in the classroom. Coffee and energy drinks are not permitted at school.

Valuables

Students are advised not to bring large sums of money or other valuable items to school because of the danger of loss and theft. The school does not provide insurance coverage for loss, theft, or giving away of personal items and is not responsible for items left in the building or on school grounds. Students are urged to take musical instruments and any other expensive personal possessions home every day. Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their personal electronic device (PED). The school assumes **no responsibility** for theft, loss, damages, or vandalism to PED's brought on school grounds, or the unauthorized use of such devices.

ASD (After School Detention)

- After School Detention will be used to address absences, tardies, and discipline issues.
- Failure to participate in assigned detention will result in ISS assignment to fulfill requirements.

ISS (In School Suspension)

- Tardies and absences will be reported to the attendance office. All absences excused or unexcused must be made up. If you check out early the time must be made up.

- You should always remain seated unless otherwise directed. If you need help or information, please raise your hand, the instructor will try to assist you.
- Talking is not allowed at any time.
- No sleeping or putting your head on the desk.
- No disruptive actions in the classroom.
- Any referral to an administrator while in ISS may result in OSS for the remainder of the assignment ISS time.

OSS(Out of School Suspension)

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION: The student is suspended out of school up to ten (10) days by the local school administrator. The student may be suspended for an accumulation of offenses, as well as a major offense.

Suspended students may make up those tests and assignments that the teacher determines will have an impact on the student's final grade and mastery of course content. Assignments that the teacher does not require to be made up will not count towards a student's final grade. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to make up work within five (5) school days upon return to school. During the term of suspension the student is not allowed on the school campus or at any school activity or school-sponsored event.