



WILDCATS

**EASTERN GUILFORD
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

2025 - 2026

Student/Parent Handbook

Eastern Guilford Middle School
435 Peeden Drive
Gibsonville, NC 27249
(336) 449-4255 phone
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Eastern Guilford Middle School



Academic Excellence

Dear Eastern Guilford Families,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year! We are truly excited to embark on this new journey with you and your children. Whether you're returning or joining us for the first time, we are thrilled to have you as part of our Wildcat Family here at Eastern Guilford. This school year is filled with opportunities for growth, learning, and connection, and we can't wait to share it with you.

As we step into this new year, we're embracing fresh ideas and experiences that will enrich our school community. Our dedicated staff—both familiar faces and new additions—are committed to supporting your children every step of the way. Together, we will continue to offer a curriculum that is not only rigorous but also relevant, engaging, and designed to equip students with the skills they need to thrive in the 21st century and beyond.

We encourage you to take some time to review the Eastern Guilford Middle School Student Handbook, available on our school website at www.gcsnc.com. We also ask that you familiarize yourself with the Guilford County Student Code of Conduct Handbook, as both resources help us maintain a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment. Please take a few moments to go over these guidelines with your child, reinforcing what it means to be a responsible member of our school community.

At Eastern Guilford, we believe that education is a shared responsibility between families and the school. Your voice is important to us, and we welcome your suggestions throughout the year. If you ever have ideas, concerns, or ways we can improve, please don't hesitate to reach out—we are always listening. Your partnership helps us grow stronger and better serve our students.

Thank you for being an essential part of our Wildcat community. We look forward to working closely with you to make this school year a memorable and successful one. Let's make 2025–2026 our best year yet—together!

Warm regards,

Eastern Guilford Middle School

Eastern Guilford Middle School

Academic Excellence

School Colors: Blue & Yellow

School Mascot: The Wildcats

Visit EGMS online at <https://easternms.gcsnc.com/>

School Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

General

Eastern Guilford Middle School will be an ever-evolving diverse community that builds the skills to empower students to be life-long learners.

Mission Statement

Eastern Guilford Middle School will prepare all students for their future endeavors as lifelong learners by providing a challenging, data informed, student centered curriculum in a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.

Operations and Information

Telephone

Students are not permitted to make or receive phone calls or text messages on their personal cell phones during the school day. In the event of an emergency, a staff member will contact the student's home. If a student needs to contact a parent for any reason, they must use the phone located in the front office.

Lost & Found Items

If an item is lost, students should notify their teacher immediately and share where they last remember having the item. A central Lost and Found area is located in the front office.

Forgotten Items

Parents are asked to deliver forgotten items (e.g., homework, lunches, lunch money, or clothing) to the front office. Office staff will notify the student at an appropriate time to retrieve their belongings. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us minimize disruptions to instructional time.

Gifts for Students

To minimize classroom disruptions, students are not permitted to receive gifts during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, flowers, balloons, and other gift items. Additionally, balloons are not allowed on school buses at any time.

Visitors

To maintain a safe and secure campus, all visitors must report to the front office upon arrival. Visitors will be issued a visitor's pass and must document the purpose of their visit. Meetings with teachers or counselors must be scheduled in advance. Parents and guardians will be asked to wait in the office until the designated staff member is available to escort them. Student visitors are not allowed during school hours and may not attend classes with enrolled students.

Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather (such as snow or severe storms), school schedules may be adjusted as follows:

- School cancellation, remote learning, delayed openings, or early dismissals will be announced by Guilford County Schools.
- Families will receive an automated phone call with schedule updates once a decision is made.

Please ensure your contact information is up to date to receive timely notifications.

Emergency Information

To ensure prompt communication in an emergency, it is essential that the school has current address and phone number information for each student. Please notify Ms. Hendren, Data Manager, at (336) 449-4255 with any updates.

Student Illness and Injury

If a student becomes ill or is injured during the school day. The student should report to the front office to wait for a parent or guardian. Teachers may call the office for assistance if needed. If an accident occurs, the supervising teacher must complete a Student Accident Report and submit it to Mrs. Wendy Cottingham on the same day.

Alternate Transportation Home (including buses and car riders)

If a student needs to go home with another student (by bus or car):

- A written note from a parent or guardian must be provided, including a phone number for verification.
- The note must be submitted to the front office before school starts.
- The request must receive administrator approval.
- Approved notes can be picked up during lunch.

Please note:

- Parent verification calls may be made.
- Due to limited seating on buses, requests to ride a different bus may not be approved.

EGMS Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is critical to student learning and success. Students who are not present miss valuable instructional time and may struggle to keep up with classroom expectations. The following policies are in place to support student learning, encourage regular attendance, and comply with district and state guidelines:

Absences

- Students with more than 10 absences (excused or unexcused) must provide written documentation for any additional absences to be considered excused.
- Documentation must meet the criteria listed in the “Excused Absences” section of the student handbook.
- A signed written excuse must be submitted within three school days of the student’s return. The excuse must include:
 1. Student’s full name
 2. Date(s) of absence
 3. Reason for absence
 4. Parent/guardian signature
- Failure to submit a written excuse within three days will result in the absence being marked unexcused.

Excused Absences Include:

- Personal illness
- Injury
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family

- Medical or dental appointments
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Religious observances
- Educational opportunities (must be pre-approved by the principal)
- Out-of-school suspension

Note: Travel is *not* considered an excused absence unless directly tied to a pre-approved educational opportunity. See the travel request form at the back of this handbook.

Unexcused Absences

- A letter will be sent home once a student has 3 to 6 unexcused absences.
- Excessive absences may impact academic progress and can be grounds for retention.
- School social workers and the court system will become involved when attendance concerns warrant further intervention.

Tardies

Prompt arrival is essential for a successful start to the school day.

- Students who arrive after 8:20 a.m. are considered tardy.
- Tardy students must report directly to the front office to receive an admission slip from the secretary before going to class.
- Excused tardies include:
 - Late buses
 - Illness
 - Medical appointments (please schedule after school when possible)

Students arriving late due to a bus delay must report to the office and provide their name and the name of their first core teacher. To be counted present for a full school day, students must remain at school until at least 11:45 a.m.

- Students must be present at least half of the school day to be counted present.
 - Arriving after 11:00 a.m. or leaving before 11:45 a.m. will result in the student being marked absent for the day.
- Students may not be dismissed after 2:50 p.m. unless they have a verified appointment. Early pickups should not become routine, as they disrupt learning.
- Students accumulating 3 or more tardies/early dismissals (excused or unexcused) will not qualify for perfect attendance recognition.
- After 10 tardies or early dismissals, parents will be required to provide appropriate documentation for any additional late arrivals or early check-outs to be excused.
- Once a student has accumulated 10 unexcused tardies/early dismissals, the school will strictly follow attendance procedures, and the social worker and courts will be involved if needed.

Early Dismissal

We strongly encourage students to remain at school for the full instructional day. If early dismissal is necessary, the following procedures must be followed:

Illness During the School Day

- If a student becomes ill and needs to leave school:
 - The student must obtain a pass from their teacher to go to the office.
 - The student will call a parent/guardian from the front office.

Other Early Dismissal Reasons

The student must bring a signed note from a parent or guardian to the front office.

- The note must include:
 - Reason for early dismissal

- Time of dismissal
- Phone number for verification
- Name of the person who will be picking up the student
- Parent Pick-Up Requirement
 - The parent/guardian must come into the front office and sign the student out on the early dismissal log.
- Dismissals After 2:50 p.m.
 - If a parent arrives after 2:50 p.m., the student will be dismissed at 3:20 p.m. during regular dismissal.

Make-Up Work Policy

When a student is absent, it is important that they stay caught up on missed instruction and assignments.

- Teachers require a minimum of 24-hour notice to prepare make-up assignments.
- Parents may pick up assignments from the front office, or they may arrange for a sibling or another student to collect the materials.
- Work assigned before the absence is due immediately upon the student's return to school.
- It is the student's responsibility to follow up with teachers to collect any missed assignments.

Prescription & Non-Prescription Medication

If it is necessary for a student to take prescription **or non-prescription** medication (including but not limited to Tylenol, Advil, etc.) at school, the parent or guardian is responsible for supplying the medication to the school and retrieving any unused dosage. The medication must be in its original container, and must be appropriately labeled including the student's name, the name of the medication, the unit dosage to be given, and the time and method of administration. Along with the medication, an "Authorization of Medication for a Student at School" form must be completed and signed by the **health care provider and** the parent/guardian. *No medication of any kind can be given without this completed and signed authorization form per North Carolina law.*

Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to:

- Provide to the school the medication in an appropriately labeled container which includes the student's name, the name of the medication, the unit dosage to be given, and the time and method of administration.
- Provide new containers with appropriate labeling when medication changes are made, and to remove medications from school premises when they are discontinued by the health care clinician. (Note: A health care clinician is defined as a licensed health care provider who can prescribe medication under North Carolina statute.)
- Ensure that the "Authorization of Medication for a Student at School" form is completed, signed by the health care clinician and parent/guardian, and returned to school. (Note: The health care clinician may use another format [letter, computer printout, etc.] to authorize the administration of medication as long as all information requested in the "Authorization of Medication for a Student at School" form is provided.)
- Inform the school in writing if he/she wishes to withdraw authorization for medication to be given at school. The withdrawal of authorization is documented on the "Authorization of Medication for a Student at School" form.
- Remove medication from school premises at the end of the school year.

Eastern Guilford Middle School Discipline Plan

It is imperative that every student at Eastern feels safe and is able to learn to their best ability. To encourage this, the staff have put into place structures and policies to make sure every student is able to succeed academically, emotionally and socially. Eastern Guilford Middle School will follow the policies and procedures outlined in the GCS Student Handbook. A copy of this handbook is available on the GCS website. Please review the specific policies and consequences related to middle school students (GCS Policy, Student Discipline JD, JD-P).

School Expectations

At Eastern Guilford Middle School, we are committed to creating and maintaining a positive school environment where all students feel safe, respected, and prepared to learn. To support this goal, EGMS has established clear school-wide expectations that apply to all students throughout the building and across all settings. These expectations are grounded in the core values of respect, responsibility, safety, and readiness to learn.

Consequences

Our goal is to promote self-discipline and teach students to take responsibility for their own behavior. We believe that discipline is most effective when it is used as a teaching tool, helping students reflect on their choices and make better decisions in the future.

To support this goal, teachers are equipped with a variety of strategies to address minor behavioral concerns and redirect students before an office referral becomes necessary. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, student conferences, parent contact or conferences, and proximity management. Teachers may also implement interventions such as silent lunch, after-school detention, a behavior intervention plan, or a student-teacher contract.

In some cases, additional support may be provided through counseling referrals, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) referrals, or conferences involving the student, teacher, and administrator. In-team or cross-team suspension may be used when more structured intervention is needed, based on the nature or frequency of the behavior.

These proactive and restorative practices are designed to guide students toward making positive behavior choices while maintaining a safe and productive learning environment for all.

Dress Code

At Eastern Guilford Middle School, we believe that how students present themselves can positively impact their confidence, comfort, and ability to focus on learning. In order to maintain a quality educational environment and promote self-respect, good manners, and mutual respect, we expect all students to wear school-appropriate attire during the school day and at all school-sponsored events, including field trips.

“School-appropriate attire” should be worn as soon as students arrive on campus and applies to all layers of clothing. If a student’s outfit does not align with our dress code guidelines, a staff member will offer a discreet and respectful alternative from our school’s clothing closet. While sizes may be limited, we will

work to ensure students feel supported and comfortable. If a student has any concerns about the clothing provided, we are happy to contact a parent or guardian to explore other solutions.

To help students and families better understand our expectations, please review the following clothing guidelines:

- Shirt sleeves must be at least three fingers wide, and shirt hems must fall at least one inch below the belt line. Shirts with cold shoulder sleeves, mesh, or open backs are not allowed unless layered over a dress code-compliant shirt.
- Pants must be worn at the waist, and undergarments must not be visible at any time
- Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must be no shorter than mid-thigh for all students.
- Jeans with holes above mid-thigh are not permitted unless appropriate clothing is worn underneath to cover exposed skin.
- While hoodies are permitted, hoods must remain down while inside the building.
- Students may not wear hats, hoods, beanies, head wraps, nets, bandanas, or sunglasses indoors. Exceptions are made for religious head coverings.
- All footwear must be secured at the ankle. Crocs must be worn with the strap around the ankle. Slides and flip-flops, which do not meet this requirement, are not allowed.
- Pajamas, blankets, loungewear, nightwear, and slippers are not appropriate and may not be worn at school.
- Clothing and accessories with messages or images that reference or promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gang affiliation, violence, sexual content, intolerance, racism, or degrading language are strictly prohibited.

Ultimately, any clothing or accessory that is deemed by administration to be disruptive to the learning environment will be addressed promptly and respectfully. Our goal is to help all students feel confident, focused, and ready to learn each day.

Bus Conduct

Rule II - 3: Bus Misbehavior Any physical or verbal disturbance which occurs on GCS-provided transportation (including public transportation) and which interrupts or interferes with the safe and orderly operation of the vehicle is prohibited. Students must observe the directives of the school bus driver and/or bus/contract vehicle safety monitor. The following conduct is specifically prohibited and may result in revocation of GCS-provided transportation privileges: delaying the bus schedule, fighting, smoking, inappropriate behavior of a lewd or offensive nature, using profanity or refusing to obey the driver's instructions, tampering with or willfully damaging the school vehicle, getting off at an unauthorized stop, departing the bus via the emergency door or windows without being told to do so by the driver, distracting the driver's attention by participating in disruptive behavior while the vehicle is in operation, standing or moving around the bus while the vehicle is in motion, throwing objects from the bus windows or doors, failing to observe and obey safety regulations, failing to sit in an assigned seat if applicable, willfully trespassing on a school-owned or operated vehicle, or violating any other Code rule while on the school bus.

Cell Phone & Electronic Devices

In accordance with GCS Policy JD-P (Student Discipline Rule I-6), personal electronic devices, including cell phones, must be powered off and stored in students' bookbags during the instructional school day, from 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.. These devices should not be visible or used at any time during class periods, transitions, or lunch unless explicitly authorized by a teacher or administrator for educational purposes.

This policy is in place to reduce distractions, protect instructional time, and promote student engagement. Students who violate this policy may have their device collected and held until the end of the day. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action as outlined in the GCS Student Handbook.

We encourage students and families to review the district policy and help reinforce the importance of responsible technology use during the school day.

Rule I - 6: Prohibitions on the Use of Cellular Phones and Other

Students may not use any electronic device or personal entertainment device during instructional time unless authorized by the classroom teacher or other school personnel with supervision responsibilities during instructional time. Further, students are prohibited from using electronic devices in an unauthorized manner, including but not limited to, playing games, sending messages, and browsing websites, unless authorized by the classroom teacher or school personnel with supervision responsibilities during instructional time. In addition to other disciplinary interventions, any device used in violation of this policy may be confiscated and only returned to the students' parents/caregiver.

Food and Drinks

Individual teachers will decide if students may have water, food, candy and/or gum in the classroom. Non-compliance with the teacher's directives may result in consequences, up to and including an office referral for repeated non-compliance. Parents/siblings that bring food for students, will eat their food while in the main office.

Only water is allowed in the classroom (at the teacher's discretion).

REQUEST FOR ABSENCES BASED ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

For an excused absence for educational reasons, the intent of the experience should have been educational from the onset and comparable to that which the student would have experienced in school. Family vacations or business trips accompanied by students will not be approved. All requests for approval are required to be made in advance of the trip. These pre-approval forms are also located at the front office. **Within 5 days of the return from the absence, the student will be required to present evidence of the educational value of the trip such as a written report or presentation (oral, digital, photo, etc.).** Students are also responsible for completing any missing assignments from their classes within the appropriate time period. Absences will be marked unexcused until the required evidence is submitted. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the evidence is submitted during this timeframe. Students will not be granted more than 5 excused absence days in the current school year under Educational Opportunity. Consideration will also be given to the number of days the student has been absent or tardy during the current school year.

References: GCS Board Policy JBD Attendance Policy K-12; JBD-P Attendance Procedure K-12. Signing this form documents that this absence is for valid educational purposes.

As the parent or guardian of _____, Grade: _____
(Student’s Name)

I state that the absence from school for the date (s) _____ is an educational opportunity that is of comparable value to my child’s regular attendance at _____.
School name

Signature of Parent or Guardian Date

Please briefly describe the educational opportunity and its connection to grade level standards: _____

For Office Use Only:-----

of Total Absences to Date ____ # Excused ____ #Unexcused ____ # Tardies

Approved

Not Approved

Principal (or Designee’s) Signature Date

Reason for denial (if applicable): _____

Date Evidence Presented: _____ Teacher Signature _____

Date Entered into PowerSchool _____ Data Manager Signature _____