



# Ridgedale School

## Student Handbook

4600 Ridgedale Road  
Knoxville, TN 37921  
865-909-9099 (phone)  
865-909-9098 (fax)

**Administrative Team:**  
Donna Brunson - Principal  
David McGinnis - Dean of Students  
Danny Higgins - Campus Manager

Check us out online

<https://www.knoxschools.org/ridgedal>

## **Ridgedale School Vision:**

Ridgedale School is committed to helping students and families discover what school can be through educational programming that prepares them to re-enter the traditional school setting.

## **Priorities Belief Statement:**

Ridgedale believes in excellence in foundational skills, employs great educators that hold students to high standards, focuses on career empowerment and preparation, and provides opportunities for success for ALL students.

## **At Ridgedale School, we believe:**

1. All students can succeed.
2. All students have a right to a safe educational environment in which they can experience success.
3. All students will have access to highly effective educators.
4. Positive, proactive behavioral interventions include teaching students social competency skills.
5. Differences are appreciated and valued.
6. All decisions are based on what is in the student's best interest.
7. A collaborative effort by all stakeholders is critical in meeting the academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs of each individual student.

## **MS ALT (In-Field) Mission Statement :**

Ridgedale will meet the needs of our students through the development of individualized transition plans implementing High Quality Instruction, Restorative Practices, Community Involvement, and a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program.

Ridgedale follows Knox County Schools Board of Education Policy J-180, **Rights and Responsibilities of Students**. The Board expects all school staff, students and parents to assume the responsibility for appropriate behaviors in the school.

## **Each student has the right to:**

1. A free and appropriate public education.
2. Be secure in his/her person and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.
3. Learn in a safe environment free of any type of discrimination.
4. Be fully informed of school rules and regulations.

## **Each student has the responsibility to:**

1. Know and adhere to the rules and policies established by the Knox County School Board.
2. Respect the human worth of every individual.
3. Refrain from disparaging remarks and obscenity in verbal or written expression.
4. Maintain the best possible level of academic achievement.
5. Maintain good attendance.
6. Dress and groom in a manner that meets the standards of health, cleanliness, and safety.
7. Maintain and/or improve the school environment, preserve school and private property, and exercise care while using school facilities.
8. Refrain from behaviors that hinder teaching and learning.
9. Respect the authority of school administrators, teachers, and other authorized personnel in maintaining discipline in the school and school-sponsored activities.
10. Obey the law and school rules as to the possession and/or use of alcohol, illegal drugs and/or other unauthorized substances.
11. Refrain from bringing any items included on the prohibited list of materials.

## **Ridgedale Program Descriptions**

Ridgedale Middle School Alternative is a program for students in grades 6-8 that have received a long term suspension from their zoned middle school. While serving that suspension, students may attend Ridgedale to receive academic instruction and behavioral support with the goal of a successful return to their zoned school at the end of the suspension.

Ridgedale's Special Day School is a program for students with disabilities, ages 5-22, who have a history of significant behaviors that impede their learning. Students are placed at Ridgedale by the IEP team for an undetermined amount of time where they receive academic and behavioral instruction that will allow them to return successfully to their zoned school. Both programs benefit from a staff that is highly trained in de-escalation techniques that reinforce positive behavior. Our low staff to student ratio allows us to plan for student's individual needs.

## **Attendance**

The School Board recognizes that attendance is imperative to student learning and achievement; therefore, students are expected to be present when school is in session. This responsibility ultimately falls on the parents. Students must be in school a minimum of three and a half hours to be considered a full day. For absence classification see Knox County Schools attendance policy at [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org)

## **Guidelines for Telephone Use, Messages, and Deliveries:**

To avoid excessive interruptions to the instructional day, only emergency messages from parents or guardians will be accepted for distribution to students during school hours. Students will be called to the office between classes only. Deliveries such as flowers, balloons, etc will not be accepted. Since all students eat free, food deliveries will not be permitted. Students should arrange transportation details with their parents / guardians before leaving home. Students are not permitted to use the phones. In the event of sickness or other emergency, a staff member will call the parent or guardian.

## **Guidelines for Medication:**

**See attached copy of school board policy J-352 on Medication**

## **Ridgedale Student Dress Code**

Ridgedale Alternative students will follow both Knox County Board of Education Policy J-260, along with additional school requirements with regard to dress code. These expectations have been established to promote a safe and optimum learning environment. **In order to be considered "In Dress Code" students MUST exit their bus or shuttle in compliance, no exceptions.** In matters of opinion, the judgment of the principal and/or their designee shall prevail. Additional dress code expectations are:

### **Clothing:**

- Pants **MUST** be worn, no exceptions. They **MUST** be worn at the waist, no sagging. Leggings, sweat pants, shorts, skirts, pajamas, or pants that have bands, gatherings, or elastic at the ankles are not permitted. Pants must be free of see-through rips, tears, or holes above the knee. Pants must be solid color with no print or designs. No cargo pants or pants with extra pockets.
- Shorts may **NOT** be worn under pants. Shirts, long or short sleeved, must be black solid color with **NO** writing, stripes, polka-dots, symbols, pockets, or hoods.
- **No** low cut shirts that reveal undergarments or cleavage.
- Shirts **MUST** completely cover the stomach, back, and shoulders, All tops must have sleeves.
- Solid color (black) long sleeved shirts, sweatshirts, and pullovers are permitted as long as they **DO NOT** have hoods or pockets.
- Students **MUST** wear tennis shoes, high or low top. **No** boots, lace up UGGs, shower shoes, crocs, foam shoes, or flip-flops are permitted.

Any student in violation of the dress code shall be subject to corrective action, **including parents being called to bring clothes to the school.** If a student repeatedly abuses the dress code policy, progressive discipline will be followed. This includes, but is not limited to ATS, Parent Conference, OSS, or loss of privileges.

### **Jewelry and or piercings:**

Facial or ear piercings will be limited to small studs. **NO** other types of jewelry including watches, bracelets, or rings are permitted and will be confiscated at check-in and parents will have to pick up confiscated items. Lost or misplaced items are **NOT** the responsibility of the school or staff.

### **Additional Dress Code Requirements:**

- **NO** Sweatbands / Headbands
- Hair elastics, rubber bands, or hair bands must be worn in the hair and must remain there at all times. Placing these items in pockets or on wrists is against policy.

Administration may allow exceptions such as holidays or special occasions. These exceptions will be communicated through ParentSquare.

### **Prohibited Items at Ridgedale**

This is not an exhaustive list, but contains the most common items students bring to school. Essentially, students should only bring their house key and home note with them to school, unless they bring their lunch. At **NO** time will bus drivers, staff, or teachers hold prohibited items for students during the school day. Items left on buses are not the responsibility of Knox County Schools or their contracted Bus Drivers. ***Prohibited items will be confiscated at check-in and parents will have to pick them up. Lost or misplaced items are NOT the responsibility of the school or staff.*** If a student repeatedly abuses the prohibited items policy, progressive discipline will be followed. This includes, but is not limited to ATS, Parent Conference, OSS, or loss of privileges.

- Cell phones / Electronic Devices not issued by the school
- Money
- Backpacks, book bags, duffel bags, or purses (Middle School Alternative)
- Gum
- Hats, bandanas, or any other headwear
- Hair picks, combs, and brushes
- Cologne, perfume, aftershave, or mouthwash
- Makeup of any kind, lip gloss including Chapstick
- Markers, sharpies, paint pens, crayons, colored pencils
- Any other item banned by Knox County Board of Education policy

Administration may allow exceptions such as holidays or special occasions. These exceptions will be communicated through ParentSquare.

**\*Feminine hygiene products will be collected at check-in and be available to students upon request\***

### **Lunch:**

- Students are expected to quietly go through the serving line, get all items in one trip and then walk in line back to their classroom. Conversation during lunch should be quiet and appropriate. If expectations are not followed, students may lose their privilege to talk during lunch. Students should clean up their area after eating. Students must remain seated in their area during the entire lunch period. All food items must be kept in the classroom.
- Students may bring their lunch but it must be eaten during the student's designated lunch time and **ONLY** by the student, there is to be **NO** sharing of food items brought to school for lunch purposes. Lunch food items are not restricted but drinks **MUST** be limited to non-caffeinated liquids in nonbreakable resealable plastic containers, **NO EXCEPTIONS (This includes any metal cups or containers)**. Any caffeinated drinks, canned drinks, or drinks in breakable containers will be confiscated at check in and returned at the end of the day.

### **Bus/Shuttle**

Most Ridgedale students use Knox County Bus or Shuttle Transportation to and from school. Students are expected to follow the Knox County Board of Education Policy J-250, Bus Conduct (See Attached Copy). Appropriate behavior on our buses is imperative to ensure the safety of all students. Students should be

courteous to the bus driver, staff, and fellow students. Riding the school bus is a **PRIVILEGE** and improper conduct will **NOT** be tolerated.

Continued bus disruptions will result in progressive discipline being followed. This includes, but is not limited to ATS, Parent Conference, OSS, loss of privileges, and/or suspension from the bus. If a student is suspended from the bus, the responsibility falls on the parent to get their student to and from school.

### **Ridgedale Middle School Alternative Program Procedures:**

#### **Arrival**

Students enter the building every day and go through the check-in process. Students and their belongings are subject to search upon arrival. Middle School Alternative students are to be in dress code upon arrival to school as they exit their bus, shuttle, or private vehicle. Any outerwear will be checked in at arrival and returned to the student at the end of the day.

Students who opt not to get breakfast upon arrival will **NOT** be allowed to return to the cafeteria at a later time to get food. Students arriving late will check in through the office and wait for an officer to complete a safety search before joining a classroom.

#### **Hallway Transitions**

At the end of every class, students are required to state a hallway expectation, line up, and wait to be released into the hallway. Students are expected to follow **ALL** hallway expectations. Students will keep their hands and feet to themselves, refrain from touching or speaking to other students. Students will wait outside their next class until their teacher invites them to enter.

#### **Dismissal**

Students will remain quiet and seated until their bus is called. Teachers will display the bus dismissal sheet on their Promethean boards for the students viewing. Students are expected to walk to the bus, adhering to **ALL** hallway expectations. Confiscated items will be returned to students during this time.

#### **Restroom**

Students at Ridgedale are **NOT** allowed to go or be in the restroom with other students. Students are escorted by staff, who check before and after a student enters the bathroom to verify no damage and/or vandalism has occurred. Students who reach the highest level of trust are given certain extra privileges, one of which is being able to go to the bathroom without an escort. In this case, the student **MUST** state, "Bathroom Check", before entering to make sure there is no one already in the bathroom. In addition, these students are responsible for reporting damages observed immediately upon returning to class.

### **Ridgedale Middle School Alternative Behavior Program**

One of our main goals is to encourage and reward positive behavior. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) is a way for school staff to focus on teaching and promoting positive behaviors.

We hope this strategy will influence students to make good decisions; however, there are consequences if students' decisions go against school policies.

#### **Restorative Practices**

Ridgedale utilizes Restorative Practices for building community within the school setting and for responding to challenging behaviors. We believe that decisions are best made, and conflicts resolved, by those most directly involved in them. The staff seeks to develop relationships with students so when issues arise everyone can work together to return to safe and appropriate behavior. Ridgedale employs a full time Restorative Interventionist, Behavior Interventionist, Behavior Liaison, and Restorative Liaison. The Behavior Team staff works with students directly and with their base schools to keep communication and collaboration open. Additionally, the behavior team provides collaborative transition services to assist students as they are returning to their base schools and continues to monitor student progress and provide support when needed.

## **Ridgedale School Academic Program**

Ridgedale Alternative School follows Tennessee Curriculum Standards. Students will have classes in core subjects, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. In addition to instruction of core subject areas, Ridgedale offers academic support classes in the daily schedule and weekly related arts classes with a focus on career empowerment and preparation, social/emotional learning, and behavioral support. Students will be required to attend tutoring sessions in the morning if they fail to complete assignments in classes the previous day.

## **Service Learning**

Students may request to participate in service-learning activities in the classrooms in the Special Day Program several times a week. Students will learn and provide support to students who live with different disabilities and differences. Parents and students must sign permission for the students to participate.

## **Grade Reporting and Grading Scale**

All class grades are cumulative, representing class work from the beginning of the course to the date of the report. Progress reports and report cards will be distributed within 5 days of the end of each grading period.

### ***Grading scale:***

A 90-100	B 80-89
C 70-79	D 60-69
F 0-59	

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment results will compose a portion of the students final average in math, language arts, science, and social studies for students in grades 3-8.

## **Appropriate Use of Technology**

Students should never bring electronic devices to school; however, they will have access to technology when needed throughout the day. Students are expected to use any school device for instructional purposes only. Students should never access any website or app that is not required by their teachers. Failure to comply with school device policy may result in loss of technology privileges. In addition, students are prohibited from taking unauthorized photographs or recordings of teachers or peers at school, on the bus, or at school sponsored events.

## **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying or Cyberbullying**

**Ridgedale implements bullying prevention programs to promote awareness of the harmful effects of bullying and provides education on bullying prevention policies and strategies. Information relative to these strategies is available to all students and parents on the Ridgedale School website.**

Knox County Schools **prohibit** acts of **harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or cyberbullying**. These acts disrupt both a student's ability to learn and the school's ability to educate students in a safe and orderly environment. Knox County staff members understand the importance of identifying and reporting these types of situations to their immediate supervisors.

**"Cyberbullying"** means harassment or intimidation done through the use of any electronic device. This type of harassment is becoming more prevalent in today's society. Students and or parents often feel this is not as serious; however, the effect and results on young people today carry the same weight.

1. If any of the above acts takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop, the results include:
  - a. Knowingly placing a student or students in reasonable fear or physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property
  - b. Causing emotional distress to a student or students
  - c. Physically harming a child or damaging a someone's property
  - d. Creating a hostile educational environment
2. The results are the same if incidents take place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity.

Students who feel they have been harassed, bullied or intimidated may report their concerns to any teacher or school administrator. Accusations will be investigated and if needed consequences and/or remedial actions assigned to the offender. Assigned actions will be consistent with established KCS Board of Education Policy, and Federal and State statutes. **See attached school board policy (J-211) on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying or Cyber-Bullying.**

### **Equal Opportunity Notice**

The Knox County School System affirms that it will comply with Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title VI, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Age Discrimination Act in Employment Act of 1967. No person shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or veteran status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in employment opportunities or benefits. Anyone who believes that Knox County Schools has discriminated against them or another individual, may file a complaint. Knox County Schools has designated the following people to handle such grievances to comply with the law. Student complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability should be directed to: Section 504 Compliance Coordinator, Room 909 of the Andrew Johnson Building at (865) 594-1540

Complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or veteran status should be directed to Title VI, Title IX and ADA Coordinator, Room 1517 of the Andrew Johnson Building at (865) 594-1918 and / or the following: Title VI Coordinator Tennessee Department of Education and / or The Office of Civil Rights US Department of Education P.O. Box 2048, 04-3010 Atlanta, GA 30301-2048

### **Unsafe School Choice Notice**

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education Unsafe School Choice Policy, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under TCA 40-38-11(g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under TCA 39-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information regarding this option may be obtained by contacting Brian Hartsell at 865-594-1502.

### **Knox Schools Statement of Compliance**

Knox County Schools is an equal opportunity provider of services and employment. KCS respects, celebrates, and encourages diversity that positively contributes to the community. KCS believes diversity encompasses but is not limited to: ethnicity, race, gender, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities, education level, philosophy and geographic location. KCS will not discriminate or limit access to any educator, principal, student or community member on the basis of gender, race, national origin, religion, color, disability, or age. The participants of this proposal are reflective of the above commitment to compliance. The resources of the Knox County Schools and their grant partners are broad in their support of the various needs of the students and families and ensure equitable access. At a minimum, reasonable accommodations are offered as defined by federal law. KCS will also meet the needs of participants if/ when unique situations and circumstances occur. Support services include but are not limited to hearing, speech, vision services, physical access managements, health related support for various limitations, curricular differentiation and advisement for multiple skill levels and learning sites, academic mentorship, and broadly focused guidance for students. The Knox County Schools continue to be committed in its support of all equity statutes as required by Federal law and actively pursues compliance on an ongoing basis. A formal grievance process that is open and accessible has been established for monitoring compliance and addressing concerns. Inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies should be made to the Knox County Schools, director of Human Resources, 912 S. Gay Street, Knoxville, TN 37902.

### **Knox County Board of Education Civility Code**

It is the intent of the Board to promote mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among district employees, parents and the general public. The policy provides rules of conduct that both permit and encourage participation in school activities and communication between parents, community members and school district personnel. This policy also identifies those behaviors that are considered inappropriate and disruptive

to the operation of a school or other school district facilities. It is not the intent of the Board to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. **See attached copy of school board policy B-230 (Civility Code)**

### **Expectations**

Students, faculty, staff, parents, guardians, and all other members of the community shall:

1. Treat one another with courtesy and respect at all times.
2. Take responsibility for one's actions.
3. Be cooperative, to the greatest extent possible, toward one another and in solving problems based on what is in the best interest of students.
4. Refrain from behavior that threatens or attempts to disrupt school or school district operations; physically harms someone; intentionally causes damage; employs loud or offensive language, gestures, or profanity; or inappropriately shows a display of temper.

### **Response to Uncivil Behavior**

The Board does not condone a lack of civility by anyone, and recognizes the following appropriate administrative avenues for aggrieved parties to seek action or redress. 1. A student who believes that he or she has not been treated in a manner reflective of the Code of Civility should report such behavior to the appropriate building level administrator. 2. A parent, guardian, community member who believes that he or she has not been treated in a manner reflective of the Code of Civility should report such behavior to the staff member's immediate supervisor or the student's appropriate building level administrator. 3. An employee who believes that he or she has not been treated in a manner reflective of the Code of Civility should address the concern through the appropriate supervisory chain. If personal harm is threatened, the employee shall notify their supervisor and may also contact law enforcement. If a communication such as voice mail or e-mail or any type of written communication is demeaning, abusive, threatening, or obscene the employee is not obligated to respond. 4. Any visitor on school district property who has breached the Civility Code may be directed to leave the premises by an administrator or security officer. If such a person does not immediately and willingly leave, law enforcement may be called.

All Knox County School Board of Education policies can be read in their entirety at [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org).

Ridgedale School follows the Knox County Schools calendar. **See Attached Calendar** or view on-line at

<https://www.knoxschools.org/domain/2295>

### **Accountability Program:**

Ridgedale uses a multi-Stage behavior modification program. This plan is to aid students in becoming more successful in the educational setting. The PBIS Program is called S.C.O.R.E. It focuses on students meeting expectations and rewarding those who meet or exceed them. See attached program description.

- Be **S**afe
- Use positive **C**ommunication
- Practice **O**wnership: Follow staff's directions
- Show **R**espect: Treat others with dignity and respect
- Demonstrate **E**xcellence: Remain on task

There are 4 levels in the program: new students start as **Rookies** and progress to **Minors**, **Majors**, and **All-Stars** as they earn. Each level comes with additional privileges and expectations for earning. Students must maintain their status by meeting expectations or risk losing the additional privileges.

Statistics will be kept on the student's **Score Card** each day. See attached copy with expectations. Students can score up to 46 runs each day and must earn 4 out of 5 days two weeks in a row to progress to the next level. The following number of runs are required for each level:

- **Rookies:** 39
- **Minors:** 41
- **Majors:** 43
- **All-Stars:** 45

**Parent Square:**

Ridgedale encourages all parents to utilize ParentSquare. It will be the main source for school communications with parents/guardians. The App can be downloaded onto any device. For more information on Ridgedale's ParentSquare communication, please contact Jennifer Ewing (Ext. 52631) or visit the Knox County website.

Ridgedale will communicate special events or dates for students and families throughout the year using Parent Square, Email, or phone calls. A weekly Parent Square message will be sent out on Fridays.