

2025-2026 FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES AT FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Shared Mission

To foster an environment that nurtures students academically, physically, socially and emotionally so that they are equipped to persevere and become productive citizens.

Shared Vision

FMS is committed to high expectations and standards. In order to remain true to this commitment, we believe that every adult must embrace a set of beliefs that include:

- actively providing and creating supports and opportunities that address the academic, social, and emotional well-being of EVERY student.
- staff working interdependently, fostering collegiality and trust, and celebrating the achievements of students and staff.
- Taking an active role in positively helping, challenging, and expecting the best of self, and each other, as we strive for excellence.

Student Expectations

Everyone in the Freedom Middle School community will work together to ensure that all students, in a safe and engaging environment, will have the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate skills needed to become lifelong learners.
- Demonstrate skills needed to produce high quality work.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrate awareness of their roles as informed, responsible citizens in our diverse world.
- Demonstrate skill in using technology for resource gathering and problem solving.

School Hours & Visitor Information

School hours for the 2025-2026 school year are 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Doors will be opened to students at 7:00 a.m. For the safety of our students, all visitors (including parents) must sign in and show a government-issued identification at the front office upon arrival. Parents should not visit any classroom before receiving specific clearance for that classroom from administration. Students arriving prior to 7:20 a.m. will go directly to the gym or the library upon arrival to school and sit in designated areas. The library is an alternative location from the gym for students looking for a quiet space. Students may use their Chromebooks for schoolwork and the online library catalogue to find a book. Students may talk quietly, read, study, play chess, checkers, and other games. All students are expected to be in their 1st period by 7:30 a.m. unless under the direct supervision of a teacher or other staff, students may only be in the building between 7:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. unless supervised.

Buses load and unload in the front of the building. Bus students will enter the building through the main entrance. Cars will load and unload in the rear of the building. All car riders will enter through the concession area (near the gym) until 7:20 a.m., at which time, they will enter through the main entrance. Car riders will exit through the designated back doors. After 2:45 p.m., students must be picked up at the main entrance.

Walkers and bicycle riders may enter and exit the building through the bus or car rider entrances.

All students should be picked up by 2:45 p.m. unless supervised activities necessitate a change in pick up times. If a parent is unable to pick his/her child up by 2:45 p.m. and the child is not under the direct supervision of a teacher, we recommend the FSD MAC program. Inquire at the front office if you need this service. *Supervision is not available after 2:45 p.m. In the interest of your child's safety, please do not leave your child unsupervised.* Unless prior arrangements are made with a school official, students **must** leave campus by 2:45 p.m. Students repeatedly remaining on campus (inside or outside) after 2:45 p.m. may face appropriate consequences.

After School Activities

All students must leave campus at the end of school-sponsored events. Violators may be prohibited from attending future events. **Remember...Be where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there.**



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General Rules

1. Defacing or destroying the school facility or any school property is prohibited. If either of these actions occurs, the student shall pay for the cost of damages. In addition, disciplinary action may be imposed.
2. Any misbehavior that occurs while in route to or from school that threatens the reputation of the school will be dealt with by the school. It should be noted that parents have the right to file civil petitions against students who infringe on the rights of their children in route to and from school (for example: fighting, abuse, etc.).
3. Crossing through private property when walking to or from school is not allowed.
4. After arrival, students may not leave the school campus without going through early dismissal procedures.
5. The use of profane, indecent, insulting, or threatening language on school grounds or while engaged in school-related activities is not tolerated.
6. Students shall not have knives, box cutters, laser pointers, razor blades, water guns, fireworks, guns or other unlawful weapons (or items that could be mistaken for weapons such as toy guns, knives, etc.) in their possession while at school, in route to and from school, or at school functions outside of the regular school day.
7. Gambling and gambling devices are not allowed on school property.
8. Food and drink may be allowed in the classroom at teachers' discretion.
9. The possession of tobacco, electronic smoking devices, lighters and/or matches is prohibited.
10. Students shall display proper conduct at all school-related events and field trips during and after school. Students who do not exhibit proper conduct may not be allowed to attend future events.
11. Students are expected to behave in a courteous way at all assemblies. Students are expected to sit in assigned seats and follow the directions set forth by those staff members supervising them. Those who cause a disruption will receive an appropriate consequence.
12. Students in the halls during class time must have a hall pass signed by a staff member.
13. Students are expected to walk on the right side as they move through the halls without excessively loud talking, running, horseplay or other disruptive behavior.
14. Entering the faculty lounge or teachers' planning rooms without permission is not allowed.
15. Promoting non-school related organizations without administrator approval is prohibited.
16. Students cannot sell items at school. Any unauthorized selling will result in disciplinary action.
17. Backpacks are permitted throughout the school day. Items that will not fit in assigned lockers should be taken to the area designated by their teacher or coach for safe storage during the school day.
18. An Internet agreement must be signed and students must abide by the rules as stated.
19. Students must keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves. This includes public displays of affection.
20. Personal electronic devices must be powered off and out of view from 7:20 a.m. until student dismissal.

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen valuables.



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All students shall adhere to the rules of the school and the directions of all teachers and staff while on school property or at school-related activities. All school rules apply on field trips including dress code. Students not meeting expectations will be subject to consequences. If a student or parent refuses to accept consequences, the offending student is subject to suspension or a juvenile petition.

Bus Regulations

Riding the bus is an extension of school activity. Therefore, bus students must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the established safety standards of the FSD. The rules and regulations established for the bus can be found here: <https://www.fssd.org/departments/finance-administration/transportation>. *RIDING THE BUS IS A PRIVILEGE.*

DISCIPLINE

At FMS we strive to support each student in order to create a safe and effective learning environment while increasing instructional time by reducing discipline issues. We work to understand behaviors and then assist in modifying those behaviors proactively prior to implementing disciplinary intervention. This method helps students not only meet expectations but also holds them fully accountable for their actions. We appreciate your support as we encourage all students to be STARS—Safe, Trustworthy, Accountable, and Respectful!

FMS STAR MATRIX

AREA	S SAFE	T TRUSTWORTHY	A ACCOUNTABLE	R RESPECTFUL
CLASSROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE APPROPRIATE SELF CONTROL USE APPROPRIATE VOLUME LISTEN AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FROM ADULTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARRIVE TO CLASS ON TIME USE TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATELY DO YOUR OWN WORK TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAVE NECESSARY MATERIALS ALWAYS DO YOUR PERSONAL BEST COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE UP MISSING WORK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHOW KINDNESS AND RESPECT TO ALL BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS KNOW AND FOLLOW CLASSROOM PROCEDURES
HALLWAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WALK ON RIGHT SIDE USE APPROPRIATE VOLUME CELLPHONES & HEADPHONES/EARBUDS SHOULD BE PUT AWAY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAVE SCHOOL ISSUED PASS BE WHERE YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS AROUND YOU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WALK WITH A PURPOSE KEEP HALLWAYS CLEAN LISTEN AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FROM ADULTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE /KIND WORDS MINIMIZE TIME OUT OF CLASS KEEP HANDS & OBJECTS TO SELF
BATHROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO TECHNOLOGY IN RR KEEP HANDS & OBJECTS TO SELF REPORT UNSAFE CONDITIONS OR ACTIVITIES TO ADULTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GO DIRECTLY TO NEAREST RR RETURN PROMPTLY TO CLASS BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MINIMIZE TIME OUT OF CLASS USE RR FOR ITS INTENDED PURPOSE FLUSH AFTER USE AND WASH HANDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VALUE EVERYONE'S PRIVACY ADVOCATE FOR CLEANLINESS TREAT FACILITIES RESPECTFULLY
CAFETERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REMAIN SEATED IN ASSIGNED AREA USE APPROPRIATE VOLUME KEEP HANDS AND FOOD TO SELF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAKE SURE TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU ARE GETTING ASK AN ADULT IF YOU NEED TO GET UP FOR ANY REASON LISTEN & FOLLOW ALL DIRECTIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KEEP FOOD IN DESIGNATED EATING AREAS LEAVE AREA BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT LISTEN & FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FROM ADULTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE/KIND WORDS FINISH ALL FOOD & DRINK BEFORE LEAVING TREAT STAFF WITH RESPECT
ARRIVAL DISMISSAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENTER AND EXIT IN A TIMELY MANNER GO DIRECTLY TO THE APPROVED AREA PHONES ALLOWED BEFORE 7:20 & SCHOOL DISMISSAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS BE WHERE YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VALUE EVERYONE'S PRIVACY ADVOCATE FOR CLEANLINESS TREAT FACILITIES RESPECTFULLY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE/ KIND WORDS RESPECT & HONOR DIRECTIONS FROM ADULTS ENTER & EXIT QUIETLY
PEP RALLYS /SPORTING EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENGAGE IN GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP KEEP HANDS & OBJECTS TO SELF TREAT FACILITIES RESPECTFULLY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BE WHERE YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ALLOW FOR PERSONAL SPACE BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEAVE THE AREA BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT BE PICKED UP ON TIME LISTEN & FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FROM ADULTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VALUE EVERYONE'S PRIVACY USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE/ KIND WORDS SHOW POSITIVE SCHOOL SPIRIT



Violation of School Rules

Students not meeting school expectations will receive disciplinary action, which is appropriate for the particular offense. Teachers and administrators will communicate with parents to help prevent further misconduct by students.

Some of the consequences that could result if a student fails to adhere to established rules are:

- Verbal Reprimand
- Student Conference
- Alternative Classroom (AC)
- Special Duties / Activities
- After School Opportunity Room
- Lunch Detention
- In School Detention
- After School Detention
- Extended Alternative Classroom (EAC)
- Loss of Privilege to Participate in School Related Activities
- Placement at the ALC
- Parent Contact
- Suspension/Expulsion
- Teacher Detention
- Juvenile Petition
- Restitution

Definition of Disciplinary Terms

Discipline Referral: A discipline referral will be completed by faculty/staff when a student's behavior is not in compliance with school rules.

Lunch Detention: A detention that requires a student to eat lunch in a different location than peers.

In School Detention: A detention that removes a student from one class period.

After School Detention (ASD): A 60-minute detention (2:30-3:30) held in a designated room after school. After School Detention may not be postponed or rescheduled by a student. A parent must contact the school to reschedule a detention. Failure to attend an assigned ASD may result in a referral to the After School Opportunity Room. Parents are responsible for transportation.

After School Opportunity Room (ASOR): A 3-hour session providing a structured learning environment after school. After School Opportunity Room begins at 2:30 p.m. and concludes at 5:30 p.m. The session will be held in a designated classroom. Parents are responsible for transportation. All students are to be picked up promptly in front of the school building at 5:30 p.m. After School Opportunity Room may not be postponed or rescheduled by a student. Failure to attend may result in placement in AC.

Alternative Classroom (AC): An alternative classroom within the school building in which students are removed from the regular school population for a designated period of time. The students are closely supervised in a structured environment. They are required to complete all core academic work assigned by their academic teachers. Additionally, the students in AC will engage in restorative practices.

Extended Alternative Classroom (EAC): A classroom designed to provide a disciplinary alternative to out-of-school suspension and to placement at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC). This program does not completely eliminate the use of these disciplinary tools, but it does offer another opportunity for behavior modification within a school setting before such measures are taken. The EAC program enables a student to receive all of his/her educational services, but it separates him/her from the general student population. The program is designed to be restorative in nature. Failure to meet expectations in AC or EAC and/or chronic discipline problems will result in placement at the ALC.

*****While students are in AC or EAC, they cannot attend or participate in any school activities until after 2:30 p.m. on the last day of assignment to EAC, including those activities held on weekends.***

Out-of-School Suspension: A suspension from all school classes and activities for a designated period of time as determined by administration.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC): A restrictive school setting located at the Williamson County Sheriff's Office serving students throughout the county who have demonstrated chronic discipline problems and/or zero tolerance offenses. Parents are responsible for transportation.

*****Students who are at the ALC, or suspended from school, may not be on FMS premises at any time and may not attend or participate in after-school or weekend activities at any location.***



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Behavior Documentation

- Teachers will contact parents, and make referrals to counselors as needed, for students not meeting classroom expectations.
- School administrators will contact parents, if necessary, when consequences are given.
- All violations of law will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Disciplinary Consequences

Up to 3 Days AC:

- Profanity
- Selling of any items during school or at school functions.
- Instigation/slander: Students who incite disruption, confusion, and conflict (rumors, gossip, he said/she said)
- Public displays of affection

Up to 5 Days AC:

- Forgery or giving false information
- Continued/serious disruption in the classroom or on school grounds
- Disrespect to others
- Improper use of a product as an inhalant (paint, markers, glue, white out, etc.)
- Inappropriate physical contact, verbal or body language, written language or any other inappropriate item(s)
- Gang Activity or Association: Gangs that initiate, advocate, or promote activities that threaten the safety of well-being of any person(s) or property on school grounds or that disrupt the school environment are harmful to the educational process. The use of hand signals, graffiti, or the presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute that indicates or implies membership or affiliation with such a group, presents a clear and present danger. This is contrary to the school environment and educational objectives and creates an atmosphere where unlawful acts or violations of school regulations may occur. (FSD Board Policy 6.3101)
- Cheating or attempted cheating (includes plagiarism, copying another test, homework, or class work); using cell phones to take pictures of tests and/or answer keys is a form of cheating
- Improper use of any electronic devices or platforms
- Skipping class
- Acts of vandalism or property destruction and/or vandalism to another student's or school's property
- Theft
- Possessing and/or distributing "over the counter" medications including vitamins, cough drops, or medication prescribed for a student that has not been registered with the nurse
- Racial slurs

3-10 Days AC/EAC

- Aggressive behavior
- Possession of a pocket knife
- Bullying, extortion, intimidation, harassment, or threats
- Using any object with the POTENTIAL OR INTENT to harm.
- Possession of an object that could be mistaken for a weapon (toy gun, knife, etc.)

5 Days of AC

- Possession/usage of tobacco, electronic smoking devices, lighters and/or matches
- Gross defiance or insubordination
- Skipping school

Minimum 10 Days EAC

- Verbal abuse of faculty/staff
- Fights
- Sexual harassment



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Out of School Suspension, ALC, and/or the filing of a petition could result from:

- Continued disregard of school rules (unruly)
- Assault
- Threats of mass violence
- Zero tolerance behavior
- Other student offenses as deemed necessary by school administration or SRO

We encourage any student who is aware of a potentially violent or destructive situation at FMS to report it to the nearest available adult. IT IS YOUR DUTY TO ASSIST IN CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ATMOSPHERE AT FMS. The Freedom Middle School administration reserves the right to adjust consequences when deemed necessary or appropriate.

Tennessee State Law

Paraphernalia: A minor shall not, directly or indirectly, purchase or acquire smoking paraphernalia. Any minor purchasing or acquiring smoking paraphernalia is subject to juvenile proceedings (Section 39-15-409, Tennessee Code Annotated).

Zero-Tolerance Behavior: In order to ensure a safe and secure learning environment, any student who engages in the following behaviors will be subject to suspension for a period of not less than 1 calendar year. The Director of Schools shall have the authority to modify this suspension requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Zero-Tolerance acts include:

1. Students who bring or unlawfully possess a drug (including marijuana and alcohol) or a dangerous weapon onto a school bus, onto school property or to any school event or activity.
Any student in possession of a substance, which resembles or is believed to be a drug or dangerous weapon, will be subject to the Zero-Tolerance policy. The school administration shall have the authority to modify the suspension on a case-by-case basis.
2. Any student who, while on a school bus, on school property or while attending any school event or activity:
 - (a) Unlawfully possesses a drug (including marijuana or alcohol, but not limited to) or dangerous weapon;
 - (b) Commits battery on a teacher or other employee of the school.
3. Threat of mass violence on school property or at a school related activity.
A person who recklessly, by any means of communication, threatens to commit any act which a reasonable person would conclude could lead to the serious bodily injury or death of two or more persons.

Student Disciplinary Hearing Authority: The Franklin Special District, in accordance with the state law, has established a Disciplinary Hearing Authority (DHA) to conduct hearings for students who have been suspended for more than 10 school days. Copies of the policy including the appeals process and appropriate forms are available in the principal's office.



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DRESS CODE

For FMS to maintain a safe learning environment that minimizes distraction, the minimum standards for acceptable clothing during the school day are as follows:

- 1) Tops of shoulders must have a minimum of a 3-inch strap unless otherwise covered by an opaque top garment.
- 2) Skin and undergarments must be covered with opaque clothing from the underarm to the thigh even while seated.
- 3) All pants, trousers, slacks, shorts and skirts must be held at the waist.
- 4) Leggings and other compression-style garments may be worn so long as another opaque garment provides appropriate coverage.
- 5) Hats or hoods may not be worn in the building.
- 6) Pajamas are not permitted.
- 7) Costumes or dress-up days are only allowed with prior administration approval.
- 8) Appropriate shoes are required.
- 9) Any type of clothing, apparel, or accessory, including that which denotes membership in or affiliation with any gang associated with criminal activities, is not permitted.
- 10) Any apparel or dress that is potentially disruptive to the learning environment or educational process is not permitted.
- 11) Any apparel or dress that is dangerous to the health or safety of students or the lawful, peaceful operation of the school is not permitted.
- 12) Any apparel or dress that advertises or promotes products or activity prohibited by law is prohibited (e.g., profanity, illustrations, or suggestive language, etc.)
- 13) Student uniforms related to extracurricular activities (band, cheerleading, dance, sports team, etc.) must meet daily dress code expectations during the academic day.

Administrators shall be the final decision-makers as to compliance with the dress code.

The dress code is subject to amendment at any time at the discretion of administration. Consequences below will be given to students who are repeatedly out of dress code. Refusal to comply with the dress code expectations will also result in the assignment of consequences by administration.



PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY

While we realize that electronic devices have become a common means of communication in today's society, our priority is to keep students focused on learning during the school day. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, laptops, tablets, portable audio players, cameras, and wearable technology such as eyeglasses, rings, watches, or earbuds/headphones that have the capability to record, livestream, or interact with wireless technology.

Personal electronic devices not provided by the FSD must be powered off and out of view by 7:20 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The school is not responsible for the security of these devices. Should a student need to contact his/her parent or guardian during the school day, he/she may request permission to use a school phone. Parents/guardians who need to contact students during the school day should call the front office. Should you call or text your student's personal device during the instructional day, please keep in mind that they will not receive those messages until dismissal from school.

Personal devices not powered off and/or in view during the school day will be collected by teachers and secured in the front office until the end of the school day. Consequences for not meeting these expectations will result in the following:

1st Offense - Confiscation of device to be picked up by student or parent/guardian in the front office at the end of the school day.

2nd Offense - Confiscation of device to be picked up by student or parent/guardian in the front office at the end of the day AND lunch detention

3rd Offense - Confiscation of device to be picked up by parent/guardian in the front office at the end of the day AND 1 hour after school detention; parent conference required

4th Offense - Confiscation of device to be picked up by parent/guardian in the front office at the end of the day AND 3 hour after school detention; parent conference required

5th Offense - Confiscation of device to be picked up by parent/guardian in the front office at the end of the day AND assignment to Alternative Classroom; parent conference required

Additional Offenses will result in multiple days in the Alternative Classroom/Extended Alternative Classroom and may result in an unruly petition being filed and/or a referral to the Alternative Learning Center.

These expectations are pursuant to the FSD Board Policy 6.312.

ATTENDANCE

The sole authority for the enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws are placed on the local Board of Education & its designated employees (TCA 49-6-3006).

Excused Absences

FSD Board policy 6.200 on attendance lists excused absences as follows:

- Personal illness/injury
- Illness of immediate family member
- Homebound
- Hospitalization
- Pregnancy
- Death in the family
- Extreme weather conditions
- Religious observances
- Military service of parent or guardian
- Summons, subpoena, or court order
- Circumstances which, in the judgment of the principal, create emergencies over which the student has no control, determined on a case-by-case basis

Absences not due to reasons above will be considered unexcused and the student will be responsible for making up missed work upon his/her return. **When a student is absent, please call the school by 9:00 A.M.** and state the

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reason for the absence. The attendance secretary will call a student's parent/guardian regarding all absences not verified. When your child returns to school, please e-mail simpsonbet@fssd.org or hand deliver official documentation to the attendance secretary explaining the absence(s) within 7 days from the day the child returns to school. Without this information, the absence will be marked as unexcused. If your student brings the note to school, we encourage you to follow up by phone or email with the attendance secretary to ensure that the note has been received and properly documented.

Attendance: Tennessee Code Annotated – TCA

TCA-49-6-3001 School Attendance Law which requires all children ages 6-17, inclusive, to attend school each day. *TCA 49-6-3007* authorizes judges to assess a \$50.00 fine or 5 hours of community service against parents/guardians when a child has more than 5 unexcused absences during any school year.

TCA 49-6-3007 requires the principal to notify a parent/guardian when a child is absent 5 cumulative days.

TCA-49-6-3007 communicates the steps involved in the required Tiered Truancy Intervention Plan.

Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan

Truancy only refers to **UNEXCUSED** absences. All schools must follow state law that requires school personnel to follow a truancy intervention plan for students who are accruing unexcused absences.

- **Tier I** intervention applies to all students within the district and includes schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to, parent engagement by teachers and administrators, school counselor support, and information provided in the student handbook.
- **Tier II** intervention will be implemented when a student has accrued **5 unexcused absences**. Tier II will require a meeting with a school administrator and the completion of an attendance contract.
- **Tier III** intervention will be implemented if the Tier II requirements are not met, and the student accrues 3 more unexcused absences, totaling **8 unexcused absences**. Tier III will require a meeting with the school counselor and may include the following interventions: sessions with the school counselor, school-based mental health referral, community resource agency referral, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), check-in/check-out with a school mentor, and other interventions as deemed necessary by school and district administration. "Once a student accrues 10+ absences, he/she will be required to submit a doctor's note for absences to be excused for the remainder of the school year."
- **A Truancy Petition** may be filed with the Williamson County Juvenile Court by the district attendance coordinator or the safety and attendance supervisor, if additional unexcused absences accrue.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism includes both excused and unexcused absences. Research indicates numerous absences from school negatively impact a student's achievement and success. In FSD, attendance is monitored to determine what barriers, if any, are impacting a child's ability to be in school on time and for the full day. Attendance secretaries, principals and/or the district attendance coordinator or the safety and attendance supervisor may contact parents/guardians if absences appear to be leading toward chronic absenteeism. The Tennessee Department of Education's reporting standards incorporate attendance data as an indicator of school quality and student success.

Notifications of Absences

When a student accumulates five unexcused absences, the attendance secretary will notify the parent/guardian.

When a student accumulates eight unexcused absences, the attendance secretary will notify the parent/guardian.

When a student accumulates 10+ absences (excused, unexcused, or a combination of both), a referral will be made to the district attendance coordinator or the safety and attendance supervisor. Communication will be sent to the parent/guardian regarding the excessive absences. Once a student accrues 10+ absences, he/she will be required to submit a doctor's note for absences to be excused for the remainder of the school year. It should be noted that if a student is not in school for a minimum of three hours and 15 minutes on a given day, the student is considered absent according to state regulations.



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Warranted Absences

A principal may, at their discretion, allow a student to have up to five days of warranted absences, i.e., absence for a family emergency, unusual circumstance, etc. In order for a student to be granted a warranted absence by an administrator, the parent/guardian must submit this request in writing to the administrator. These absences will be **unexcused** and will not count towards truancy. Teachers are not required to give missed work prior to the absences but will provide missed work upon the student's return. The student has a timeframe equal to the length of the absence to turn in the missed work.

Early Dismissal

Leaving school early is strongly discouraged due to the loss of instructional time and disruption to the learning environment. Students leaving early must be signed out in the school office by a parent/guardian or other approved adult who must provide a valid government-issued photo ID. If the student is leaving early because of a medical appointment, the parent/guardian is encouraged to obtain an excuse note prior to leaving the medical facility and provide it to the front office upon the student's return. We appreciate your efforts to make appointments during non-school hours. Please note, an early dismissal is also considered a tardy. Please **refrain from picking your student up after 2:20pm**, unless it is an unavoidable situation.

Tardiness

A student is considered tardy to school if he/she is not in his/her first class of the day at 7:30am or if he/she is checked out from the office before the school day ends. There will be exceptions for students arriving on late buses. Tardiness related to oversleeping, traffic, weather, or not leaving home on time is unexcused. A student who is tardy to school (not in class before 7:30am) must report to the office **with a parent** to sign in and obtain a class admission slip. If a student is late because of a medical appointment, please provide an excuse note from the medical office. When a student arrives at school late, the student's academic learning is delayed and the classroom is disrupted. Ample travel time is provided between classes throughout the school day. Students will be assigned the following consequences if they accumulate four (4) or more tardies to **class**:

4 tardies: Lunch Detention

5+ tardies: Lunch Detention and parent contact

Students who are consistently tardy to school and/or class may be assigned alternate consequences as deemed appropriate by administration.

No Advanced Assignments

Teachers will not send make-up work for the days absent in advance. It will be the parent's and student's responsibility to obtain the work when the student returns.

Withdrawal Process

To initiate the withdrawal process, the parent/guardian must notify the attendance secretary. The attendance secretary will provide the appropriate forms to the student and/or parent/guardian. Debts related to textbooks, library books, cafeteria fees, etc. must be paid and school property (Chromebooks, chargers, Chromebook bags, etc.) must be returned to the front office. The school will provide any additional steps to the parent/guardian regarding the withdrawal process. Once FMS receives a request for records from the new school in which the student is enrolled, the student will be withdrawn.

SCHOOL HEALTH PROTOCOLS

School Health Protocols

First aid and health care provided by the school nurse is primarily for illness and injuries which occur during the school day. The school nurse, according to law, is not allowed to make a diagnosis, prescribe treatment or administer medication without a signed medication form. Please help us to provide a safe and healthy environment by reading and following the policies and procedures below. Please feel free to contact the school nurse to discuss any health concerns you have regarding your child.



School Health Screenings

Free health screenings will be provided throughout the school year in compliance with guidelines of the Tennessee State Department of Education. These may include, but are not limited to, vision, speech, hearing, dental, height, weight and blood pressure. Please contact the school nurse if you wish to decline screening or have questions.

Medications at School

State law prohibits dispensing of medications, both prescription and non-prescription, at school without a completed medication form. This includes medications such as cough drops, Tylenol, Motrin, and ointments such as Neosporin. If your child requires medication during the school day, or if you would like to have medications available at school to be given if needed, please complete a medication request form. These forms are available from the school clinic or can be downloaded from the website at www.fssd.org. All medications administered at school must be FDA approved. For chronic health conditions such as diabetes, food allergies and asthma, an individualized healthcare plan (IHP) should be developed to provide for the health needs of those students (see your school nurse immediately upon school entry). In the event of an emergency at school and medications have not been made available, 911 will be called.

Prescription medications require both a doctor's signature and a parent/guardian signature. The medication must be brought to school in a labeled prescription medication bottle from the pharmacy.

Non-prescription (over the counter) medications require a parent/guardian signature. The medication must be in a new, unopened container with the name of the medication and expiration date clearly visible.

All medications must be brought to school by a parent/guardian. It is a violation of state law for students to possess medications on the school bus or school grounds unless provided for in the IHP.

Before and After School Activities

Upon enrollment in a before or after school program including, but not limited to, MAC, sports teams, clubs, band, choral, theater, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the activity coordinator/staff of any health concerns and the location of any emergency medications, such as epinephrine auto-injectors, albuterol inhalers, Diastat, and Glucagon. The school nurse can be contacted by the parent and/or staff member to share the student's IHP and coordinate access to the student's emergency medications which may be available on school grounds.

Illness at School

Students with symptoms of infectious illness will be assessed by the school nurse and excluded from school based on the FSD Illness Guidelines. Parents should be prepared to pick up their students promptly and will be advised on return to school criteria. Please make sure to notify the school of any changes in your contact information so we are able to contact you in the event of an emergency, illness or injury.

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The school nurse will assess individuals with symptoms of infectious illness and communicable disease, and they may be excluded until written documentation is provided from a healthcare provider that they are safe to return to the school setting.

Symptom/ Illness	Should NOT attend school	May attend school
Fever	Fever of 100 degrees or greater	Fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
Cough	Disruptive, persistent, uncontrolled cough Persistent cough should be evaluated by a healthcare provider	Cough is controlled and non-disruptive to the classroom setting
Sore Throat	Sore throat accompanied by fever Evaluation by a healthcare provider is recommended Positive strep throat culture	Fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and resolving symptoms Positive Strep- 24 hours after starting antibiotics and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
Diarrhea and/or Vomiting	Two or more episodes of diarrhea and/or vomiting occur within 24 hours of school	Free from diarrhea/vomiting for 24 hours, <u>and</u> no fever or additional symptoms have developed
Rash/ Skin Infection	Rash or signs of skin infection not previously diagnosed or seen by a healthcare provider	Rash-free and no other symptoms have developed <u>OR</u> With written documentation from healthcare provider indicating a date for return to school
Conjunctivitis “Pink Eye”	Signs of eye infection such as redness, itching, swelling, discomfort and thick discharge Physician confirmed bacterial conjunctivitis	Free of eye symptoms and no additional symptoms have developed <u>OR</u> With written documentation from healthcare provider indicating a date for return to school If diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis, 24 hours after starting treatment

Revised 6/5/2023

It is very important that we have your home, work and cell phone numbers. Please make sure to notify us of any changes. We must be able to contact you in case of an emergency, illness or injury.

COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS

Information will generally be communicated through Parent Square. To enhance the communication from school to home, parents should ask their children if they have information from school. Parents are encouraged to stay abreast of school happenings so they will be more effective in monitoring their children’s activities and progress.

Other means of communication to parents include:

1. Automated telephone calls
2. Administrative e-mails (weekly, informational, etc.)
3. Skyward
4. FMS website (freedommiddle.fssd.org)
5. Parent Square
6. X formerly known as Twitter (Freedom Middle @fssdFMS)
7. Instagram (Freedom Middle School @ fssdFMS)
8. Facebook (Freedom Middle School @ freedommiddlestars)



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School Closings

If inclement weather or some other school emergency occurs that might cause schools to close, the following outlets will post the information:

- FSD Website (www.fssd.org)
- Local television stations and their websites.
- FSD social media platforms

If you hear Williamson County Schools, this does not mean that we are closed. Although we live in Williamson County, we are a separate school system. Listen for **Franklin Special District**. In addition, FSD will use Parent Square to send a recorded message to the telephone numbers and email addresses on record for each student. If the contact's phone number(s) has/have changed, please make sure the school has the updated phone number(s) on file so important information will not go unheard.

Delivery of Messages

Parents may call and leave important messages for students by **2:00 pm**; the school secretaries will notify students that they may pick up message(s) in the main office at 2:30 p.m. Please make every effort to determine after school car/bus arrangements prior to school.

Student Use of School Telephones

Students who must call their parents during the school day are expected to use a school phone.

Announcements

School announcements will be made each morning and afternoon, if needed.

FSD FOOD AND CULINARY SERVICES PROGRAM

Your school participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program allowing us to provide a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day. The cafeteria serves well-balanced meals every day. Each student is assigned an individual code to track participation and account information. Menus for Breakfast and Lunch are posted on the school website and the MealViewer mobile app.

How to pay and can I pay ahead? You may send cash or checks to your school. Please be sure to label your check with your child's full name. Checks should be made out to your school cafeteria. Cafeteria monies must be paid separately from any other monies. For your convenience, you may use a credit or debit card online through your Skyward Family Access account using RevTrak. The District Food and Culinary Services office, 615-472-3728, can also enter the monies into RevTrak from a credit or debit card for you.

How do I sign up for Free and Reduced Meals? A free and reduced application must be filled out each year. You can find the application online through your Skyward Family Access account. Each family will receive an application with the back to school forms that are sent home. Please call the District Food and Culinary Services Office at 615-794-6624 if you have any questions about Free and Reduced applications and your family's eligibility. You will receive a letter indicating your application has been processed and your eligibility determination.

Can my child buy extras like ice cream? We offer ice cream and other additional items for sale to students who have money in their accounts or cash with them. All extra items (ala carte items) are Smart Snack compliant. If a child has a negative balance, they will not be able to purchase ala carte items. Elementary schools limit ice cream purchases to an assigned day of the week by grade level.

May I come have lunch with my child? Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch. It is not necessary to call ahead for reservations. You must sign in the office with a photo ID to receive a visitor's badge. Please meet your child in the cafeteria. Once you finish lunch, you need to return to the front office to sign out.

May I bring in lunch for my child from their favorite restaurant? The FSD Board policy 3.50 states: "Students will be permitted to bring their lunches from home and to purchase beverages and incidental items. Breakfast and lunch brought from outside food service facilities will not be permitted to be consumed in the cafeteria."



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What happens if my child forgets his lunch or lunch money? What happens if my child's account develops a negative balance? All children in FSD who want breakfast and lunch will be fed. They will be offered the same lunch as every other child. If your child has a negative balance, he or she will not be able to purchase ala carte items. Please see the FSD Negative Balance Policy in this handbook for more details.

My child prefers to bring his or her lunch. Is there anything I cannot send? We do not allow glass containers, energy drinks, coffee drinks or carbonated beverages.

My child has a food allergy. How is this handled? The Food and Culinary staff work closely with your school nurse to make sure all allergies that are listed on their Individualized Health Care Plan are noted on their cafeteria account.

Breakfast Prices:

Reduced Student	\$0.30
Student	\$3.15
Adult	\$3.50

Lunch Price:

Reduced Student	\$0.40
Student	\$4.35
Adult	\$5.25
Child Visitor	\$4.35
Holiday Visitor	\$6.00

How is my child expected to behave in the cafeteria?

All students are expected to behave in the cafeteria in a positive manner and are expected to help make the cafeteria a pleasant place for everyone.

1. Students purchasing only a drink must go through the line with their classes.
2. Students must sit in designated areas.
3. Objects and food items are not to be thrown.
4. All trays and utensils must be returned to the designated areas.
5. Students are to clear all debris and spills from tables and the area where they are seated.
6. Food and drink may not be taken out of the cafeteria.
7. Directions of faculty and staff monitoring the cafeteria are to be followed.
8. Fast food items may not be eaten in the cafeteria.
9. A la carte items must be purchased with cash or a prepaid account. A la carte items cannot be charged.

MISCELLANEOUS

Visitors

In a continuing effort to prioritize the safety and security of our school campuses and the students and employees therein, the Franklin Special District Board of Education amended its Board Policy 1.501 (Visitors to School/District Properties – Security Management.) on Monday, May 8, 2017. From this date forward, “all visitors shall be required to present a valid, government-issued photo ID when they enter any school building or office during normal hours of operation and all visitors may be subject to a background check.”

Those who are simply visiting the office for the purpose of speaking to staff, filling out paperwork, or dropping items off do not need to present identification. However, anyone who wishes to visit an area beyond the office must abide by this revised policy.

Student Lockers

Students will be offered lockers at the start of the school year, but they are not required. Students may use school-issued locks or personal *combination* locks; however, the lock's combination must be verified by the locker class teacher. Students must make sure locks remain locked on lockers and should not give their combination to anyone. Lockers may not be shared and should be kept in good condition.

If a school-issued lock gets misplaced, it is the student's responsibility to pay for the lock so that another one can be issued. The fee for replacing a school-issued lock is \$10.00. The student should give the fee to the front office staff. The lockers are the property of FSD and are made available for student use. Should there be any reason to believe that a locker contains stolen items and/or items that are hazardous to the health and welfare of students, a search may be conducted. If a personal combination lock needs to be permanently removed for any reason, the school will not be responsible for the lock's replacement.



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Valuables

The school will NOT be responsible for lost or stolen items.

Lost and Found

Items found should be turned in to the front office. Items not claimed will be donated to charity at the end of each semester.

Hall Passes

Students shall be in their assigned areas at all times unless otherwise directed by a staff member. Students leaving the classroom must have a hall pass signed by FMS faculty or staff.

Grievances

If a student has a complaint or a suggestion to voice, he/she should contact a school administrator. Petitions shall not be circulated unless school administration approves them.

FSD GRADING POLICY

Academics & Related Arts Grading Scale:

A 93-100

B 86-92

C 76-85

D 70-75

F Below 70

I *Students receiving “Incomplete” (I’s) on report cards must complete the work necessary to be assigned a grade.

Honor Roll

At the end of a nine-week grading period, students who make all A’s or all A’s and B’s in all subjects on their report cards will be placed on the Honor Roll.

REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS

FIRST ASSESSMENT WINDOW (AUGUST 7, 2025 - OCTOBER 3, 2025): 41 DAYS		
Assessments	Grades	Assessment Dates
ELPA21 Screener (incoming potential EL students only)	5-8	August 7 - September 5, 2025 (and throughout the school year as needed)
i-Ready Reading Universal Screener	5-8	August 12 - August 29, 2025
i-Ready Math Universal Screener	5-8	August 12 - August 29, 2025
TCAP-Alt ELA & Math (select Spec. Ed. Students)	5-8	September 8 - December 19, 2025



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SECOND ASSESSMENT WINDOW (OCTOBER 13, 2025 - DECEMBER 19, 2025): 45 DAYS		
i-Ready Reading Universal Screener	5-8	December 1, 2025 - January 16, 2026
i-Ready Math Universal Screener	5-8	December 1, 2025 - January 16, 2026
THIRD ASSESSMENT WINDOW (JANUARY 6, 2026 - MARCH 6, 2026): 42 DAYS		
ELPA21 Summative (EL students only)	5-8	February 2 - March 27, 2026
TCAP-Alt ELA & Math (DLM) (select Spec. Ed. students)	5-8	February 2 - May 15, 2026
Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test (for Algebra I qualification)	6-7 (opt-out)	February 17 - February 20, 2026
FOURTH ASSESSMENT WINDOW (MARCH 16, 2026 - MAY 22, 2026): 49 DAYS		
TCAP-Alt Science/S.S. (select Spec. Ed. Students)	5-8	March 16 - April 24, 2026
Spring TCAP Window (paper-based)	5	April 13 - May 1, 2026
Spring TCAP/EOC Window (computer-based)	6-8	April 13 - May 5, 2026
i-Ready Reading Universal Screener	5-8	April 27 - May 15, 2026
i-Ready Math Universal Screener	5-8	April 27 - May 15, 2026
High School World Language Exam	8	May 14-15, 2026*
Last Day of School	PreK - 8	May 22, 2026

**tentative date(s) (subject to change)*

FMS COURSE OFFERINGS

The seventh and eighth grade curricula are designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the basic core courses and a variety of exploratory experiences. Listed below are the core academic courses, the related arts courses, and the extended services offered at our school. This list may change according to student numbers and other parameters.

Core Academics

English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Algebra I, Geometry, and World Language (French I or Spanish I)

Related Arts

Aerospace, Art, Band, Chorus, Computer Science Foundations, Computer Technology, Directed Studies, Math and Reading Intervention, Music, Orchestra, Physical Education, and STEM

High School Credit Classes

Students who are enrolled in Aerospace, Algebra I, Computer Science Foundations, Geometry, and/or French or Spanish may earn high school credit if certain guidelines are met.

High School Credit Class Grading Scale:

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

Promotion/Retention Policy

- In order to be promoted to the next grade, a student is expected to pass all academic subjects (e.g. English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) as well as a composite of the related arts subjects.
- Any student with a final average below 70 in any core class, below 60 in any high school credit course or



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- related arts composite may be retained.
- A student who fails one or more classes, including the related arts composite, may be eligible for Summer Learning Camp as a basis for promotion.
- The ultimate decision of whether or not a student is promoted or retained shall rest with the building principal.

High School Registration

To determine which high school a student is zoned to attend, the address on record will be used. Any change of address must be reported to the office. If your address changes after high school registration, you will need to contact the Williamson County School District.

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM AND SERVICES

FMS has a Comprehensive School Counseling Program designed to support every student's academic, personal, social, and emotional needs so each can benefit positively and productively from his/her experience at FMS. In addition to having school counselors, the Guidance Center and Mercy Community Healthcare offer services through FMS. All programs are implemented to ensure that students acquire necessary skills to become independent, contributing members of society.

Guidance classes meet regularly to address personal, interpersonal, social, academic, and adolescent development. Post-secondary exploration is also explored through Guidance classes. The FMS Counselors work with students, individually and in large or small groups, with the goal of helping students achieve their maximum potential. Students may see the counselors through teacher, parent or self-referral. If deemed necessary, the counselor can offer suggestions for additional support (ie. outside agencies). Parents are encouraged to call the guidance office for any questions they may have or to schedule an appointment with the counselor.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The following applies to any student participating in extracurricular activities including, but not limited to, sports, drama, and academic clubs:

- Students not in attendance for half the school day may not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities (athletics, clubs, extracurriculars, etc.)
- If a student has a failing grade at either progress report time or report card time, he/she will be placed on probation for one week. The student must show a passing progress report from all subject areas in order to resume participating in the extracurricular activity. All grades must be passing, not just the one he/she originally failed. If there is still a failing grade, the student will remain on probation until all grades are passing. ***The student may neither dress nor participate in any school activity during the probationary period.***

Clubs and Organizations *(Subject to change based on student interest.)*

Academic Competition Team
Art Club
Band/Chorus/Orchestra
Battle of the Books
Best Buddies
Dance Team
Drama
Environmental Club/Green Team
Fellowship of Christian Athletes
National Junior Honor Society
Student Council
WeeMAC Readers

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Athletic Programs

The following athletic activities are available for all sixth, seventh and eighth grade students.

Fall Sports:	Winter Sports:	Fall & Winter Sport:	Spring Sports:
Cross-country	Basketball	Bowling	Baseball
Football	Wrestling	Cheerleading	Boys Soccer
Golf			Softball
Girls Soccer			Track
Tennis			
Volleyball			

All athletic programs will follow the TMSAA guidelines. A current sports physical (dated after April 15th) must be on file at the school before a student may try out or participate in any athletic program. The physical must be signed by a physician and must state the student is cleared to participate in any school athletic program. Students and parents must sign a concussion awareness form and a sudden cardiac arrest form. A student is ineligible to participate in athletic activities if he/she has not been promoted to the next grade. Athletes must display good sportsmanship. Expectations apply to team managers as well as athletes. Complete information on eligibility of athletes may be obtained from the coaches.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The following regulations apply to the library.

- Students may check out two books at a time.
- Students who have not returned a book(s) from last year may check out one book until the overdue one is returned.
- Books are loaned for two weeks.
- Students may renew a book two times as long as the book is not on hold for another student.
- There are no fines for late books. If a book is lost, the student is expected to pay for the book or replace it. If you have any questions, please talk to the library staff.

STATE AND FSD POLICIES

CHILD FIND INITIATIVE

The FSD Child Find program identifies preschool through eighth-grade children with special education needs including mental retardation, development delays, autism, specific learning disabilities, serious emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, intellectually gifted, traumatic brain injury, blindness, and the following impairments: speech/language, hearing, orthopedic, visual, and physical. Screenings and/or evaluations may be provided free of charge by the school district. If deemed necessary, the child may then be referred for special education services. For more information, please contact FSD Central Office @ (615) 794-6624.

Inquiries and complaints may also be directed to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Washington D.C. 20202; telephone: (800) 421-3481 or (877) 521-2172.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION STATEMENT

The district may publicly disclose certain student information, known as directory information, at its discretion without consent. However, if you prefer NOT to have this information released, you must send a written notice annually to the school office before September 1st of the school year. Non-disclosure forms are available in the school office for your convenience. The following information is considered directory information: name, address, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized sports, weight and height of the members of the athletic teams, dates of attendance, photographs, and other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Public release would include, but not limited to, news media (newspaper, radio, etc.), other schools and districts (especially athletics), and the district website.

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS POLICY

Students will not consume, possess, distribute or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages in school buildings or on school grounds, in school vehicles or buses, or at any school-sponsored activity at any time, whether on or off school grounds. (FSD Board Policy 6.307; TCA 39-17-417; TCA 39-17-715)



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EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

It is the policy of the Franklin Special District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status or disability in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (prohibits discrimination on the basis of race), Title IX of the 1972 educational Amendments Act (prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex), and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of the 1973 (prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap). Inquiries about compliances with Title VI & VII, Title IX, or Section 504 and grievance procedures may be directed to the Civil Rights Coordinator at the Franklin Special District Board of Education at 794- 6624.

FRANKLIN SPECIAL BOARD of EDUCATION DISCRIMINATION /HARASSMENT POLICY (Sexual, Racial, Ethnic, Religious)

Students shall be provided a learning environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment. It shall be a violation of this *policy for any employee or any student to discriminate* against or harass a student through disparaging conduct or communication that is sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious in nature. The following guidelines are set forth to protect students from discrimination/harassment. Student discrimination/harassment will not be tolerated. Discrimination/harassment is defined as conduct, advances, gestures or words either written or spoken of a sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious nature that:

- Unreasonably interfere with the student’s work or educational opportunities; or
- Create an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment; or
- Imply that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of receiving grades or credit.

FRANKLIN SPECIAL DISTRICT MEAL CHARGE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Effective Date: January 31, 2019

Families will have access to the meal charge administrative procedure via publication in the student handbook, FSD website, and included with the Free and Reduced applications. Families of transfer students (during the year) will receive a written copy of the district-wide charge administrative procedure in the student handbook and FSD website

Local Charge Administrative Procedure Considerations

General

Students who are unable to pay for their meals at the time of the meal service are allowed to charge breakfast and lunch. Students charging breakfast and/or lunch will receive reimbursable meals. Students with a negative balance will not be able to charge ala carte items. If a parent sends in cash for an ala carte item the student may use the cash for that item.

Household Notification

Negative balance notification:

1. The FCS department will send out a negative balance email to the parent’s email address each Saturday.
2. The FCS manager at the student’s school will send home a notice through the child’s teacher weekly.
3. The FCS department will use Blackboard Connect Ed to call every family with a negative balance of \$20.00 or more on the 15th and 30th of the month.
4. Any student whose account is over \$50.00 will receive a phone call from the school’s FCS manager.
5. Any account over \$75.00 will be referred to the FSSD Social Worker for evaluation on the family’s need for assistance.

Delinquent Debt

Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, with efforts being made to collect them. The debt may remain on the accounting documents until it is collected. The debt will be carried over at the end of the school year.

Repayment plans

Each household may request a repayment plan that will include payment levels and due dates appropriate to a household’s particular circumstances. Please contact Robbin Cross at crossrob@fssd.org or 615-794-6624 for establishing a repayment plan.

Bad Debt

Bad debt is determined to be uncollectible, with further collection efforts for delinquent debt deemed useless or too costly. Delinquent debt will be considered as bad debt 90 days after the child leaves FSSD.



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Additional Resources

Families may find assistance with applying for free or reduced price school meals by contacting any of the following FSD staff members at 615-794-6624:

Robbin Cross, FSD FCS Supervisor, crossrob@fssd.org.
Amanda Fisher, FSD Social Worker, fisherama@fssd.org
Diane Price, FSD Translator, pricedia@fssd.org

HOMELESS EDUCATION

Children may qualify for consideration under the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act** if any of the following apply: you live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, campground, abandoned building or trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or if you live with friends or relatives because of the inability to afford adequate housing. If any of these apply, you may be entitled to all services, rights and protection provided under this law. Children have the right to attend school. They have the right to continue in the school last attended before becoming homeless (if that is your choice and it is feasible) and receive transportation to the school last attended prior to becoming homeless if requested. Children may enroll in a school without a permanent address, school records, or immunization records in hand. The school will provide assistance in obtaining proper documentation and homeless children will receive the same special programs and services provided to all other children.

LOCATIONS AND AUTHORIZED CUSTODIANS

The primary source of access is the school in which a student is enrolled. The principal is the authorized custodian for these records. The Director of Special Education regulates records of students involved in Special Education Programs, including the dates of individual assessments. If a student leaves the FSD, the student record will be sent to the new school upon request from that school.

NON-RELEASE FORMS

Pursuant to the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C.&1232(g), FSSD schools designate the following personally identifiable information contained in a student's educational record as "directory information": name, address, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance and other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Public release can also include, but is not limited to, the district's website. It is not our policy, however, to post student information (including first and last names or addresses) on the web site for public view.

FSD assumes student/parent consent to the public release of directory information unless a non-release form is completed by a parent/guardian. This form excludes a student's photograph and information from being included in school publications such as the yearbook. Forms are available in all school offices and remain active throughout a student's time in the FSD. Only a parent/guardian may void the consent form.

POLICY AMENDMENTS

These policies, guidelines, and procedures are not all inclusive. They may be amended as deemed appropriate by the Franklin Special administration. A complete copy of FSD Board Policy is available at www.fssd.org.

RESPECT FOR STUDENT PRIVACY ONLINE

When attending school events, the Franklin Special District recognizes that attendees often want to videotape and/or photograph the students. However, in an effort to respect the privacy concerns of others, as well as to honor the state and federal privacy laws of individual students whose parents/guardians have specifically requested not to be photographed, the district strongly request that any video footage and/or still images of non-custodial students NOT be posted online to sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Although the FSSD strongly urges attendees to respect the privacy of others, families must also recognize that the district has no means for preventing attendees from taking such actions. A general courtesy is to ask for parental permission before posting video or photographs of students/families online.



RIGHT TO REVIEW TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS – NCLB Title I

Title I of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) provides parents the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teachers and any paraprofessionals providing support to the child. Parents must be provided, upon request, state qualifications and license criteria for teachers and paraprofessionals.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents may access information about child advocacy groups and information on how to contact the state department of education for information on student rights and services from the following agencies:

Tennessee Department of Education Legal Services Division

710 James Robertson Parkway, Andrew Johnson Tower, 5th floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0380, 615-741- 2851, Fax: 615-253-5567 or 615-532-9412.

Child Advocacy Groups Contact Information

In addition to the state and local resources available to parents and children, there are many agencies and organizations that offer support, information, training, and help in advocating for persons with disabilities in Tennessee. A few of these organizations are listed below:

- **The ARC of Williamson County**, 129 W Folkes Street, Suite 151, Franklin, TN 37064, 615-790-5815, Fax: 615-790-5891.
- **Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)**, 712 Professional Plaza, Greenville, TN 37745, 615-463-2310, Web: <http://www.tnstep.org>
- **Tennessee Protection and Advocacy (TP&A)**, 416 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212, 615-298 1080, Toll free: 1-800-287-9636, TTY: 615-298-2471, Fax: 615-298-2046
- **Tennessee Voices for Children**, 1315 8th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203, 615-269-7751, Fax: 615 269-8914, TN Toll Free: 800-670-9882, TVC@tnvoices.org.

These are but a few of the organizations available to help with information, training, and advocacy. For a more extensive list visit the Tennessee Disability Services-Disability Pathfinder Database: <http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/tennesseepathfinder/ServiceFinder/Default.aspx>

The Department of Education and Franklin Special District do not intend this as an endorsement or recommendation for any individual organization or service represented in this list.

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT

The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act is designed to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools; that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; that involve parents and communities; and that are coordinated with related Federal, State, school, and community efforts and resources to foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that supports student academic achievement.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. It states that: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his or her 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”

Section 504 regulations require school districts to provide a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district’s jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. That is, students with disabilities should be provided with educational services designed to meet their individual needs to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 regulations could consist of education in regular classrooms, education in regular classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services.

To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to:

- have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (walking, breathing, learning, seeing, hearing, speaking, performing manual tasks, working, and caring for oneself);
- have a record of such impairment;

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- be regarded as having such impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligations under Section 504 and the ADA, the FSD recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person on the basis of a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the district's programs or practices. The school district has specific responsibilities under both acts, which include the responsibility to evaluate and determine if the child is eligible under Section 504/ADA, and to then afford access to appropriate educational accommodations. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

STUDENT RECORDS

The FSD schools collect and maintain student records to provide a basis for evaluation and delivery of services to students. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sets out requirements designed to protect the privacy of parents and students. Specifically, the statute governs disclosure of records maintained by educational institutions. In brief, the statute provides that such institutions must provide parents of students access to official records directly related to the student, and an opportunity for a hearing to challenge such records on the grounds that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise inappropriate; that institutions must obtain the consent of parents before releasing personally identifiable data about students from records to other than a specified list of exceptions; and that parents and students must be notified of these rights.

The school system maintains various types of records as described below:

- Attendance Records
- Academic Records
- Medical Records
- Discipline Records including individual assessment
- Directory Information
- System-wide group test results
- Special Education data

THREAT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

As part of the Franklin Special District's ongoing commitment to student and staff safety, the district has instituted threat assessment procedures. These procedures are used in every school if or when a student makes an expression of intent to harm someone or something (written, verbal, or other). These threat assessment procedures, which have been thoroughly developed in conjunction with law enforcement and school counseling professionals, enable administrators to quickly and effectively deal with the incident. These procedures provide a process for evaluating the context and credibility of the threat and the evidence and circumstances surrounding it. Additionally, the assessment will assist in determining what resources, if any, need to be applied or provided to the situation. ***It is important to note that any and all threats of harm made by a student of any age or in any grade will be taken seriously and that the threat assessment procedure will be followed accordingly.***

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Title VI is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. It states that: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

ZERO TOLERANCE OFFENSES POLICY

Weapons & Dangerous Instruments: Students shall not possess, handle, transmit, use or attempt to use any dangerous weapon in school buildings or on school grounds at any time, or in school vehicles and/or buses or off the school grounds at a school sponsored activity, function or event. Dangerous weapons for the purposes of this policy shall include, but are not limited to a firearm or anything manifestly designed, made or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious bodily injury or anything that in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. (FSD Board Policy 6.309)

