THOMAS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027

One Team. One Family. One Thomas County.

HOME OF THE
YELLOW JACKETS















Parent-Student Handbook
2026-2027
Thomas County Middle School

Where Hustle and Harmony Abound and Student Learning is #1

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Letter from Principal



Dear Students and Families,

Our mission at TCMS is to create positive conditions that support success for everyone – students, teachers, staff, and families. Our goal is to ensure that every student is provided the highest quality of education in a safe and supportive learning environment. I'm a firm believer that collaboration amongst teachers and staff, and with families, is essential to helping each student achieve his/her very best - every student is valued and worthy of our best effort to make this happen.

We encourage our Thomas County Middle School Jackets to make a choice every day to "Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Ready" with learning academics, attending school daily on time, getting involved in activities, and choosing friends. If students make the right choices and have positive mindsets, they will surely have great successes in school.

This handbook is a valuable resource for you and your student. We firmly believe that a strong home and school partnership will help our children be successful at TCMS. We encourage you to work with us. Our website and Facebook page will help you stay informed. Support our academics. Attend our events. Become part of our family, and with us, commit to our students and to the middle school philosophy of Hustle and Harmony.

Deann Garcia

Mission Statement

The faculty and staff of Thomas County Middle School endeavor to provide a learning environment especially designed for middle school students. This environment contains unique components which provide a bridge between elementary and high school. It is the mission of the school to provide:

- A safe and nurturing environment;
- The opportunity for academic excellence within different learning styles;
- A student-centered, as well as, subject centered approach, and the opportunity to achieve mastery of social and physical skills to the fullest degree;
- The opportunity to develop moral values that are fundamental to the continuing life of our society and community, including civic responsibility, self-respect, and multicultural understanding;
- Parents and community members ways to remain involved as integral components of our school program.

The motto of Thomas County Middle School " Hustle and Harmony, " embodies the heart of the school's philosophy. Students should hustle in every activity in order to develop their minds, bodies, and spirits and to help themselves and all other students at TCMS grow into productive citizens. Students should show harmony to enable them to live together in peace and understanding thereby, giving each student and faculty member an equal opportunity for success.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

POLICIES

Every student has the right to an education, and our policies are enforced to protect this right. School regulations are developed keeping in mind the requirements set by Georgia State law, the Georgia State School Board, and the Thomas County Board of Education. In areas where these organizations do not give specific direction, regulations are developed by the administration and faculty. Student and parent committees may be used in an advisory capacity. All policies and regulations are subject to review and help us work together by treating fellow students and teachers with courtesy and respect. We request your cooperation in abiding by these policies.

PARENTS' RIGHTS TO KNOW

Teacher & Paraprofessional Qualifications

Teacher & Paraprofessional Qualifications In accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, the Thomas County School District will provide, upon request, certain information on the professional qualifications of classroom teachers and paraprofessionals (ESSA Section 1112(e)(1)(A)). Parents may request the following information:

1. Whether the student's teacher—
   - has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
   - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and,
   - is teaching in the field or discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications. If you desire information concerning the qualifications of your child's teacher(s), please contact the principal at your child's school.

Non- Professionally Qualified Teachers

Each Thomas County School will provide to student's parent or guardian a timely notice that his or her student has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who has NOT met subject or grade level requirements for professional qualifications (ESSA Section 1112(e)(1)(A)).

Student Achievement

Each Thomas County School will provide parents information on the level of achievement of the parent's child on each of the state academic assessments (ESSA Section 1111(2)(B)(x)).

Parent Resources Title I

The following schools are classified as Title I Schools: Hand-in-Hand Primary, Garrison-Pilcher Elementary, Cross Creek Elementary, Thomas County Middle, The Renaissance Center for Academic and Career Development, and Thomas County Academy. Each of the previously listed schools qualify as Title I schools based on the number of students meeting federal poverty guidelines. Title I schools are required to use research-based teaching strategies and programs to improve student achievement. Staff must be professionally qualified and must be involved in ongoing staff development. School staff studies data gathered from student assessments, parent surveys, and staff surveys to guide the school's Improvement Plan. Title I Family Engagement Plans are distributed electronically to every parent at the beginning of the school year. The plan will also be attached to the school's web page. A parent advisory panel meets twice a year to discuss school accomplishments and areas for improvement. Each Title I school has a parent resource room that houses information pertaining to child health, discipline, development, and other topics relevant to the ages of the students at that school. Additionally, a variety of parent books are available for check-out in the media

center. If you need information that we do not have, please ask the media specialist. In most situations, we are able to secure resources for you to check-out. Copies of our Title I Plan are available for parent review in the school office or online via school websites. Please contact your school's Parent Involvement Coordinator if you need assistance.

Parent Volunteering

Parent participation is encouraged at each of our schools (ESSA Section 1116(d)(2)(C)). We encourage parents to participate in their student's school life. An orientation for volunteers is held in the fall of each school year. If you are interested in volunteering in your child's school, please contact the Parent Involvement Coordinator at that school. He or she will be more than happy to schedule times that are convenient for you that will not disrupt class schedules.

Parent and Family Engagement

Each of our Title I schools will have an annual parent workshop to build parent capacity to support their children. Topics may include academic advice, homework help, obtaining school information, behavior management, digital citizenship, standardized test data, or college and career planning. We welcome your input for planning and evaluation of these events. We will survey participants at the conclusion of each workshop to evaluate workshop quality, obtain feedback, and gather suggestions.

Comments and Concerns

Thomas County Schools has a complaint procedure that is described in detail on our website: www.tcjackets.net. To access this description, hover over the "Departments" icon, and select the "Federal Programs" link. The complaint procedure is also outlined in our Parent/Student/Teacher Handbooks. In the event that you have a complaint, we wish you to contact the school your child attends and seek assistance from the teacher or administration as an initial point of contact. If you are unable to resolve your concern, you are invited to contact the Superintendent at Thomas County School Board of Education. If you are still unsatisfied, you may contact the Georgia Department of Education via: http://programcomplaint.doe.k12.ga.us/everestwebportal/webform.asp.

Title I School and District Contact Information

Hand In Hand Primary
Principal, Dee Gaines
(229)225-3908

Garrison Pilcher Elementary
Principal, Robin Webb
(229) 225-4387

Cross Creek Elementary
Principal, Ashley Lane
(229) 225-3900

Thomas County Middle School
Principal, Deann Garcia
(229) 225-4394

Thomas County Academy
Director, Dr. Jim Rehberg
(229) 225-3197

The Renaissance Center for Academic and Career Development
Director, Dr. Jim Rehberg
Dean of Students, Todd Creech
(229) 227-3222

Questions: For additional information, you may contact Dr. Bob Dechman, Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs, by calling (229) 225-4390, or via email at bdechman@tcjackets.net

Federal/State/BOE Policies

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The ultimate responsibility for a student's behavior rests with the student and his/her parents. Students are to respect constituted authority, which includes obedience to school rules, regulations, and procedures. The school anticipates that parents will be cooperative in dealing with any behavioral problems which may arise and expects that this cooperation will be made apparent to the child.

One of the most significant objectives of discipline must be to develop within the individual student the desire to exercise his/her rights judicially. To realize this objective, the school reserves the right to hold parental conferences, guidance conferences, or conferences with the court and the right to request schedule changes or psychological examinations.

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-766) provides that school administrators who identify a student as a chronic disciplinary problem may require the parent to attend a conference to participate in the development of a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Parents who do not attend such conferences may be referred to the courts where they may be fined up to $500. The need for a parental conference is indicated whenever a student is suspended at home or when a teacher or administrator informs the parent that a conference is needed.

Thomas County Schools has implemented a new supervision policy for all high and middle school football, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, swimming, tennis and basketball home games. Pre-K through 8th grade students must be supervised by a parent or adult when entering and attending such athletic events. Any students Pre-K through 8th grade without parent or adult supervision will not be permitted into these events.

Georgia Code Title (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1182) any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above-designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not the exceed $500.

THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOL TRAINING AND MONITORING PROCEDURES & ASSESSMENTS

All faculty members involved with the administration or supervision of testing will participate in training sessions to orient them to their duties and responsibilities concerning testing. The system test coordinator provides orientation and training to each school test coordinator in August. Following this training, each school coordinator conducts the initial training session for the school faculty. Test examiners and test proctors receive copies of their roles which delineate the "must do" activities and the "must do not do" activities. Signed copies of this information are collected and sent in after school officials train all staff.

The system test coordinator provides a detailed orientation and training session prior to each standardized test administration. School test coordinators are prompted to review state training webinar sessions as appropriate. Sign in sheets and agendas serve as documentation of system training sessions for each testing program. Sessions specify district requirements for security and timelines for return of materials.

School test coordinators are responsible for conducting training sessions with their staff members prior to the administration of any standardized test. Content of this training will specify state regulations for test administration as well as school procedures and daily schedules for the duration of the testing window. School test coordinators will document staff participation in school based training sessions prior to the test

administration period. School test coordinators stay in contact with the system test coordinator on an as needed basis throughout the test administration period. School test coordinators are responsible for reporting irregularities promptly.

The system test coordinator will make periodic site visits to observe testing conditions, routines and processes. The system test coordinator will report any observations to the principal and or the superintendent in order to ensure corrective actions are implemented.

THOMAS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

FRAUD AND ETHICS POLICY

To ensure the reporting of fraudulent activity, the Thomas County School Superintendent and Board of Education ensure employees, clients and providers confidential channels to report suspicious activities.

Fraud: A false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds from federal grants or other sources.

The Thomas County School District thoroughly and expeditiously investigates any reported cases of suspected fraud to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery and/or criminal action should be taken.

All reports of suspected fraud must be handled under strict confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be given information. Informants may remain anonymous but should be encouraged to cooperate with the investigators and should provide as much detail and evidence of the alleged fraudulent act as possible.

Procedures and Responsibilities:

1. Anyone suspecting fraud concerning federal or other programs should report their concerns to the superintendent at 229-225-4380. In the event the allegation of fraud involves the superintendent, an employee may report his or her suspicions directly to the chairman of the Thomas County Board of Education. Contact information for the Thomas County Board Chairman may be found on the school system's website.
2. Any employee of the Thomas County Board of Education (temporary staff, full-time staff and/or contractors) who receives a report of fraudulent activity must report this information within the next business day to the superintendent or chairman of Thomas County Board Chairman at 229-225-4380. Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud. All reports can be made in confidence.
3. The Thomas County School district shall conduct investigations of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors as necessary.
4. If necessary, employees will be contacted for additional information.
5. Periodic communication through meetings should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

AHERA Notice

A written Asbestos Management Plan is available that documents inspection and surveillance activities, known and presumed asbestos containing materials in the building, records of asbestos-related building material disturbances and response activities, and post-response documentation. The Asbestos Management Plan is located in the main school office and at the Thomas County Board of Education and is available for review by parents, legal guardians, teachers and other school personnel, representatives of EPA, representatives of the State, and the public. If you have any questions, please contact the Thomas County Schools' Facilities and Maintenance Department at (229) 584-9130.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

Homeless Students Policy

To the extent practical and as required by federal law through the Mckinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Thomas County School System will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including children who experience one or more of the following characteristics.

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings;
7. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples; or
8. Unaccompanied youth who are not in physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Homeless children and unaccompanied youth will be identified through three main sources:

1. School personnel will be trained to inquire about homelessness upon enrollment and withdrawal of students. School personnel will notify the homeless liaison of any students determined to be homeless.
2. School staff will be trained on the identification of children in class who may be experiencing homelessness and appropriate procedures to follow.
3. Partnerships will be created between community agencies and the school system to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness. Outreach material will be provided to partner agencies by the homeless liaison to provide notice of the rights of homeless students.

Each homeless student has the right to remain at his or her school of origin, to the extent feasible, or to attend school in the attendance area in which he or she is currently residing. Students identified as homeless have the right to enrollment in school.

Homeless students are also entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If transportation is requested by the parent /guardian, the school shall notify the district liaison.

If a dispute arises over any issue related to the rights of any homeless student, then the student shall be immediately enrolled and provided all services until the dispute is resolved. All records of disputes shall be kept. The state level appeals process will also be provided following the district level appeal.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

Homeless students shall be provided comparable services to other students including the following: transportation, Title I education services where they meet eligibility criteria, vocational and technical education program, gifted and talented program, and school nutrition. Upon being identified as homeless, students automatically qualify for free school meals. Title I services should also be made available to all homeless students regardless of the school of enrollment's Title I status.

The district's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfer; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. The district liaison will also review and seek revisions to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

For any concerns regarding the rights of homeless students, please contact the Thomas County School District's Homeless Liaison, at 229-225-4380.

Notification of Provisions of Georgia's "Compulsory Student Attendance Law" (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1)

Georgia law requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 to be enrolled in and attend school. However, if a child is under 6 and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he/she is subject to the compulsory attendance law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1501).

A student is considered truant if he/she misses more than five unexcused absences during the school year. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 a parent/guardian shall be held responsible for the child's failure to report to school. Potential consequences for parents and/or students include: a referral to the District Attorney's office, misdemeanor charges with a fine of not less than $25.00 and not greater than $100.00 for each offense, imprisonment for up to 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction may be imposed. Each day's unexcused absence from school, after the initial five days, shall constitute a separate offense.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES POLICY

Definitions:

Truant: Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences. Note: School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Student Attendance Protocol: Procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with parents and guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for policies relating to tardiness.

Student Attendance Committee: A committee established by the chief judge of the superior court of each county for the purpose of ensuring compulsory school attendance, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school, and to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this state.

Excused Absences: Students may be temporarily excused from school:

1. Who are personally ill and attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
2. When in their immediate family there is a serious illness or death, which would reasonably necessitate absence from school.

3. On special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith.
4. When mandated by order of the governmental agencies (pre-induction physical examination for services in armed forces or court order).
5. A student may be excused from school when prevented from attendance due to conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.

When a child is absent from school, the parent will furnish the school with a written excuse within three school days of the absence. The school will require students to present appropriate medical documentation for absences due to illness upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence after accepting a parent **excuse six times per school year**. Students in military families whose parents are currently serving or previously served on active duty in the U. S. armed forces or in the Reserves or National Guard on extended active duty "**may be"** granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five days per school year, not to exceed two school years, for the day or days missed from school to attend military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation prior to the absence.

With proper verification, a student may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-31.

Students who miss an excessive amount of class time (as defined by school rules) may be required to participate in make-up activities as described by the individual schools or may be prohibited from attending special school functions such as dances, assemblies, field trips, and athletic competitions. The principals shall work with the superintendent to develop rules for implementing this policy.

Unexcused Absences: The Thomas County School System will notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five unexcused absences. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student, the school system shall send written notice via first class mail.

The Thomas County School System will provide the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of a written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local policy.

Excessive Absences: The following provisions apply to consecutive and non-consecutive absences during one academic year.

After Three Unexcused Absences: The attendance clerk or the principal's designee will contact the parent/guardian by telephone, letter, email, parental conference, or any other means of communication deemed necessary. All contacts will be documented.

After Five Unexcused Absences: The attendance clerk or principal's designee will notify the parent/guardian by mail, **and** by another means of communication deemed necessary. The mailed letter and/or contact will serve as the required notification that outlines the penalty and consequences of the student's unexcused absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. All contacts made will be documented.

After Seven Unexcused Absences: The counselor/parent coordinator will meet or make contact with the parent/guardian and the student. The parent/guardian and student will be informed of the consequences of

excessive unexcused absences. Strategies will be discussed to help improve the student's attendance. An attendance plan and contract will be signed and implemented. The counselor/parent coordinator will continue to monitor the student's attendance. The parent/guardian and the student will be contacted for non-compliance with the plan and contract. All contacts made will be documented.

After Ten Unexcused Absences: A mandatory attendance meeting will be scheduled between the parent/guardian, the student, and the grade level assistant principal. A plan that contains specific strategies to help improve the student's attendance will be created and signed. The parent and the student will also be reminded of the consequences for continued unexcused absences. The student's attendance will continue to be monitored. The parent/guardian and student will be contacted for non-compliance with the plan and contract. All contacts will be documented.

After Thirteen Unexcused Absences: The parent/guardian and/or student may be referred to the Thomas County School System's Truant Officer if the student continues to accrue unexcused absences.

After the student has been referred to the Truant Officer, the school will continue to monitor the student's attendance and continue to use school-based interventions to help prevent continued unexcused absences. The school will also continue to inform the parent/guardian, the student, and the Director of Pupil Services of any continued unexcused absences by any means of communication deemed necessary. All contacts will be documented. Based on the determination of the Truant Officer, the parent/guardian and/or student may be referred to the Community Based Risk Reduction Team (CBRRT).

COMMUNITY BASED RISK REDUCTION TEAM

The Thomas County Board of Education has adopted the Community Based Risk Reduction Team (CBRRT) as a sub-committee of the Thomas County Schools/Thomasville City Schools Student Attendance Protocol Committee. The CBRRT was created in an effort to help improve school attendance and to provide early community intervention for students who are at risk of becoming delinquent, unruly, or deprived. The CBRRT includes representatives from the following community agencies: the District Attorney's Office, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Family and Children and Services, GA Pines Mental Health, the Vashti Center, the Thomas County Sheriff's Department, the Thomasville Police Department, the Thomas County School System, and the Thomasville City School System.

Upon encountering chronic absences and/or tardies, along with other matters which may constitute educational deprivation, the Thomas County School System's designee may refer a student to the CBRRT. The team of school and community agency representatives will hold a scheduled mandatory meeting for the parent/legal guardian to attend. The student is also mandated to attend the CBRRT meeting if he/she is in grades 4th-12th. The meeting will be held in the Thomas County Judicial Center located at 325 N Madison St. in Thomasville, GA, and the parent/legal guardian will receive prior notification of the meeting's scheduled date and time.

The CBRRT will prepare a multi-agency intervention plan with the parent and student that will address factors which may be negatively impacting the student's education. If the parent and/or student fail(s) to attend the mandatory CBRRT meeting, or if the parent and/or student continue(s) to be non-compliant, then the CBRRT may recommend that the District Attorney's Office proceed with an educational deprivation petition in the Thomas County Juvenile Court or criminal prosecution in the Thomas County State Court for the parent/legal guardian and/or prosecution in the Thomas County Juvenile Court or and any other court having jurisdiction for the student.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

WITHDRAWALS

The Thomas County School Board authorizes the school to withdraw a student who:

1. has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences; and
2. is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and
3. is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and/or
4. is subject to compulsory attendance if the local superintendent or designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

Students shall be withdrawn retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

INTERNET ACCESS & COMPUTER USE

Technology equipment, the Internet, and digital learning provide vast, diverse and unique resources that can be used to transform learning. Our goal in providing these resources to teachers, staff and students is to provide a unique and personalized learning experience in the Thomas County School System. By promoting quality instruction while using digital tools, educational excellence can be achieved. This Acceptable Use Policy applies to all students and staff of the Thomas County School System.

In the schools, student access to and use of the Internet will be under teacher direction and monitored as any other classroom activity. The use of technology equipment and digital tools in the Thomas County School System is a privilege that requires all users to act responsibly. All users are accountable for any violations of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, Thomas County Schools has an Internet filtering system in place to protect the students in our schools. The filtering system blocks unacceptable sites that fall into the following categories: violence, pornography, weapons, drugs, chat, free email, hate/discrimination, etc. However, it is impossible to control all materials on a global network and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information. The school system cannot completely prevent the possibility that some users may access material that is not consistent with the educational mission, goals, and policies of the school system. Violations of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action.

It is the belief of the board that the Internet's advantages far outweigh its disadvantages. The Thomas County Board of Education views information gathered from the Internet in the same manner as reference materials identified by the schools. Specifically, the system supports resources that will enhance the learning environment with directed guidance from the faculty and staff. Exploration of resources, by both teachers and students, within the confines of this Acceptable Use Policy, is encouraged.

All students in Thomas County Schools will receive age-appropriate curriculum and instruction regarding safe and appropriate online behavior including, but not limited to, electronic interactions with others on social networking sites and in chat rooms; behaviors that may constitute cyberbullying; and how to respond when subjected to cyberbullying.

Guidelines for Internet Usage

- Internet use must be in support of education and research consistent with classroom curriculum.
- Use of the Internet must be consistent with the rules appropriate to any network being used or accessed.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material is prohibited, including accessing and/or downloading pirated music, movies, and television shows.
- Threatening or obscene materials are prohibited.
- Product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited.
- Commercial activities are not acceptable.
- Non-instructional games are prohibited on school computers.
- Staff and students shall not download software from home or unauthorized programs from the internet.
- The use of proxy sites and/or VPN services to access Internet sites which are blocked by Thomas County Schools is prohibited.
- Nothing should be posted on the Internet that would be inappropriate for parents, teachers, students, etc. to read. The Internet is a public forum. Any blog post or social networking post, including photographs, which are posted on the Internet are there permanently. Any post that is
- deleted may be cached in a search engine, school system server, or Internet archive. Internet posts that are in violation of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action.
- Faculty, staff, and students should refrain from the use of personal social networking sites including but not limited to, X(Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok during working and school hours.
- Faculty and staff should not post pictures of students or school activities to their personal social networking sites.

Privileges

- Access to the Internet is not a right, but a privilege.
- Unacceptable and/or inappropriate usage will result in the suspension or cancellation of the user's network account and/or Google account.
- Administration will deem what is inappropriate use and the administration's decision is final.
- Administration reserves the right to regulate any particular use of computing resources.
- An administrator, faculty member, or staff member may request the denial, revocation, or suspension of a specific user(s) account(s).
- Students may be issued electronic devices, such as Chromebooks, upon signing and returning a required parent and student agreement letter. Students are required to adhere to all policies set forth in the agreement notice and the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Appropriate Digital Citizenship

- Use of profanity, vulgarities or other inappropriate language is prohibited.
- Users should not reveal their or anyone else's personal information including, but not limited to, home address, phone number, credit card number, Social Security number, or student identification number.
- The network should not be used in a way that would disrupt the use of the network by others.
- Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Students should not use personal or school-issued devices or accounts in a way that would threaten, harass, abuse, intimidate, or embarrass others.
- The use of websites or other types of electronic communication to circulate gossip and rumors about staff or students is prohibited.
- The use of cameras, camera phones, or other camera devices to take or exchange threatening or potentially embarrassing photographs of staff or students is prohibited.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

Security

- Security problems should be reported to the system administrator immediately.
- Account passwords should be kept confidential.
- Users should use the network via the account assigned to them.
- Users must not interfere with or disrupt network users, services, traffic, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising, downloading and/or streaming music or videos that slow the network, propagation of computer viruses, and using a network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via a network.
- Attempts to log on as another user or log-in to any accounts belonging to another user will result in suspension or cancellation of privileges.
- Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access.

Vandalism/Harassment

- Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet or other networks. This includes, but is not limited to, creating and/or uploading computer viruses.
- Vandalism also includes the attempt to harm or destroy computer hardware and unauthorized installation of software.
- Students should carefully handle all technology equipment, including, but not limited to, iPads, Chromebooks, desktop computers, and all specialty equipment in labs or other specialized areas. For example, Chromebooks should be handled with two hands, should not be picked up by the screen, keys should remain intact, and all items should be removed from the Chromebook before the screen is closed.
- Users should report damages to the technology department in their schools and not attempt to make the repairs themselves. Applicable fees may be assessed for damages.
- Vandalism and/or harassment will result in the cancellation or revocation of the offender's privileges and disciplinary action will result.

Google for Education, Email, and other Electronic Communication

- Google Workspace for Education accounts are provided for all employees and students in grades K-12. Google Workspace for Education accounts include Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets, Google Classroom, etc. as a part of the tcjackets domain.
- Google for Education accounts are provided for professional and academic purposes. These accounts should not be used for personal gain, personal business activities, or to solicit for non-school system business. Broadcasting of unsolicited messages is prohibited.
- All users, including students, should not use school-issued email accounts to sign up for personal accounts on websites, including, but not limited to, social media and gaming websites.
- All school-related business should be sent via the email account provided by Thomas County Schools. Personal email accounts should not be used for school-related business.
- All electronic communication created, sent, or received via the Thomas County Schools email system is property of Thomas County Schools. Employees and students shall not have any expectation of privacy regarding this information. The Board reserves the right, as deemed necessary, to access, read, review, monitor, and copy all messages and files on its computer system without notice. Thomas County Schools reserves the right to disclose text, video, audio, or image files to law enforcement agencies without the employee or student's consent.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

- Student related messages should be guarded and protected in compliance with FERPA in order to protect the privacy of students. Employees must abide by copyright laws, ethics rules, and applicable state and federal laws.
- Email messages should only contain professional and appropriate language. Employees and students shall not send abusive, harassing, intimidating, threatening, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive messages.
- Thomas County Schools has a SPAM filter in place to prevent inappropriate email messages, viruses, malware, etc. However, this does not guarantee that this type of email message will not make it through and those who make use of electronic communication will occasionally receive messages that are found offensive or annoying. When this happens, the employee should delete the messages. The Thomas County School System is not responsible for the items employees or students may view via links to other web pages if the employee chooses to open and read these messages.
- Student Google email and Drive accounts are monitored for inappropriate usage through Gaggle.net. Browsing is filtered through onsite firewalls and GoGuardian. Inappropriate use of Google accounts is reported to school and system administrators and handled as a disciplinary violation.
- The use of school-issued Google accounts on personal/home devices will install extensions and/or apps for monitoring purposes for that account. School-issued student accounts are monitored on home and personal devices when students are logged in.
- Students should log out of school-issued Google accounts when not in use.

Electronic or Mobile Devices

- Students in all schools have access to either iPads, Chromebooks, or desktop computers.
- Students are strongly discouraged from bringing cell phones, headphones, smartwatches, or other personal technology devices to school. In compliance with the "Distraction-Free Education Act" (HB340) and Thomas County Schools' Board Policy JCDAF, students in grades PK-12 are not permitted to access personal electronic devices while on school premises during school hours, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, earbuds, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission during school hours. Any student found in violation of this policy and/or its procedures during the school day shall be subject to progressive discipline consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. The school is not responsible for any loss of personal property and will not assume liability.
- Students in grades PK-12 should ensure cell phones and all device cameras are turned off and not used during any testing or examination period. During the testing session cell phones/camera phones are to be stored in a case, book bag, knapsack, or purse, and may not be placed on the table, desktop, or individual's lap. Staff members have the right to confiscate devices during testing.
- Students in grades PK-12 should not use their own data connection in order to access the Internet during the school day. Students shall access the Internet via the Thomas County Schools' wireless network only while on school grounds in order to ensure their Internet connection is filtered through Thomas County Schools' filtering system as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act. Teachers and staff reserve the right to check an electronic or

mobile device for proper connection. Students who do not follow this guideline may potentially lose the right to use their own electronic or mobile device while at school.

- Devices used by students in grades PK-12 are to be used only for school-related or school-approved activities.
- Teachers and staff reserve the right to check devices for inappropriate use or inappropriate material.
- **Electronic or mobile devices should not be used to video or take pictures of disruptive behavior such as fights or other class/school disruptions. The sharing or posting of such videos or pictures or any other inappropriate videos or pictures is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. This activity is a violation of privacy under FERPA and, depending upon the severity, may be reported to law enforcement.**
- Students who use their own personal devices at home to access their Google Workspace for Education accounts should realize that Google email and Drive account activity is monitored through Gaggle.net. Web browsing is filtered by an onsite firewall while on campus. Inappropriate usage or violations of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy are still applicable.

Penalties

- Any user violating these provisions, applicable state and federal laws or posted classroom and district rules is subject to the loss of network privileges and other system disciplinary options, including criminal prosecution.
- School and system administrators will make the final determination as to what constitutes unacceptable use and their decision is final.

Disclaimers

The Thomas County School System makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The Thomas County School System will not be responsible for any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence or errors or omissions. The use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The system will not be responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet connection.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE

The Thomas County Board of Education believes that all students will achieve better academically in a learning environment free from distraction due to the use of personal electronic devices. The Thomas County Board of Education intends to promote a distraction-free learning environment, which means a learning environment where access to personal electronic devices is restricted to minimize distractions, improve academic outcomes, and increase meaningful interactions and focused learning experiences. This policy outlines the access and use of personal electronic devices for students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade while on school premises during school hours.

Students in grades PK-12th are not permitted to access personal electronic devices while on school premises during school hours, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, earbuds, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission during school hours. Any student found in violation of this policy and/or its procedures during the school day shall be subject to progressive discipline consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

This policy applies to students in grades PK-12th on school premises, during school hours. School activities such as trips, athletic events, extracurricular activities may be used in accordance with the appropriate use guidelines in the Student Code of Conduct. A student whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or medical plan explicitly mandates the use of a personal electronic device shall be permitted access to the device as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the respective program or plan. Parents wishing to reach their child during school hours should contact the front office.

The district or individual schools within the district shall not assume any responsibility or liability for the theft, loss, or damage to a personal electronic device.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS UNDER SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as “Section 504” is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504 or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your system’s Section 504 Coordinator at the following address: Beth Weiss, School Psychologist, 229-225-4387, bweiss@tcjackets.net -office email.

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents.
2. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students.
3. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student.
4. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs.
5. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students.
6. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility.
7. You have the right to not consent to the school system’s request to evaluate your child.
8. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement.

11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Thomas County schools notifies parents and students that Section 504 student rights and procedural safeguards are included in their entirety in our student handbooks and on our website. Parents and students are entitled to Section 504 student rights and procedural safeguards on request.

1. **Overview:** Any student, parent, or guardian may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding a child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.
2. **Hearing:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following: Student name, Address of student, School student is attending, Reason for request of the hearing, Decision objecting to, Remedy suggested, Name and contact information of person requesting a hearing

Within 10 business days from receiving the Request for Hearing, the 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request from the parent, guardian, or student is complete, the 504 Coordinator will tell the grievant what specific information to complete the request. All timelines and processes will stop until the Request Hearing contains all the above noted information.

1. **Mediation:** The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues. Mediation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. If mediation is terminated without an agreement, procedures for conducting an impartial hearing will be followed without an additional Request for Hearing.
2. **Hearing Procedures:**
   a. The 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official and hearing within 45 calendar days unless a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
   b. A continuance request in writing to all parties may be granted by the hearing officer with good cause.
   c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
   d. The grievant may be represented by legal counsel at his/her own expense. The grievant may participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If represented by legal counsel at the hearing, the grievant or legal counsel must notify the 504 Coordinator in writing

e. at least 10 calendar days before the hearing. Failure to do so will constitute good cause of continuance of the hearing.
f. The burden of proof will be on the grievant. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the school or 504 Coordinator to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A school or 504 Coordinator shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the system unless demonstrated by the school or 504 Coordinator that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C. F. R. § 104.34) One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
g. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
h. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence.
i. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
j. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
k. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
l. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the system. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the system.
m. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
n. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

5**. Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

6**. Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to him or her under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND

Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions

may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/chemotherapy or students with other serious health conditions). Students must be enrolled in a public school in Georgia in order to receive HHB services.

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

For HHB forms or questions contact your school counselor or Clay Stanaland, at 229-225-4380 EXT 9159, cstanaland@tcjackets.net -office email.

MEDICATION POLICY

All medications other than the exceptions listed in this policy, whether prescription or over-the-counter, may be administered only in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the principal of each school.

All medications must be taken by the student, parent, or guardian to the school office immediately upon arrival at school and must be in original pharmaceutical containers, clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the times for dosage. Any student possessing prescription or over-the-counter medication not in accordance with these guidelines will be considered in violation of the School District's drug policy and shall be subject to the discipline set forth in the student code of conduct and/or the student/parent handbook.

A student for whom the school has on file supporting medical documentation may carry at all times with parent/guardian permission inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine for allergic reactions, ready-to-use glucagon, and all necessary supplies and equipment to perform monitoring and treatment functions authorized by the student's diabetes medical management plan or medication and supplies authorized by the student's seizure action plan. Students authorized to self-administer such medications shall be instructed not to permit any other student to handle, possess, or otherwise attempt to use his/her medication and shall be informed that violations of such instructions will be dealt with in accordance with the student code of conduct. In order for the student to carry and self-administer such medications, or in order for the school to store and administer the medication for students who are unable to self-administer because of age or any other reason, parents must provide a written statement from a licensed physician confirming that the student is able to self-administer the medication, if applicable, and written permission from the parent for the nurse or designated employee to consult with the doctor regarding any questions that may arise concerning the medication. Such permission shall release the school district and its employees and agents from civil liability for administering such medication to students, or if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of self-administration of such medication. The terms of this paragraph may be met through a student's diabetes medical management plan or seizure action plan developed and implemented pursuant to state law.

Parents are encouraged to provide the school duplicate medication and supplies in the event a student is unable to self-administer or fails to bring the medication or equipment to school.

Nurses or other school employees are authorized to administer auto-injectable epinephrine, if available, to a student who is having an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse (allergic) reaction, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for epinephrine. Such persons also are authorized to administer levalbuterol sulfate, if available, to a student in perceived respiratory distress, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for levalbuterol sulfate. Any school employee who in good faith administers or

chooses not to administer such medication to a student in such circumstances shall be immune from civil liability.

Parents of students who are being treated for epilepsy or a seizure disorder may provide the school with a seizure action plan. If you would like more information regarding how to develop a seizure action plan for your student, please contact the school nurse.

To prevent the spread of head lice, The Thomas County School System will follow the Head Lice Regulation stating that when a student is found with head lice, the student will be sent home with a letter containing recommendations for treatment. If the student has siblings in the school system, the siblings will also be examined. The school nurse/designee will examine every student readmitted to school. If the student is free of lice, the student will be given a written clearance to return to class. The school nurse/designee will re-examine the student within 7-10 days or as often as deemed necessary by the nurse. After a student is absent more than two days, the principal or his/her designee should notify the family and urge them to get the student treated and back in school. Students found with the head lice will not be allowed to ride the bus or participate in school activities until cleared by the nurse.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All employees of the Board of Education, as well as persons who attend to a child pursuant to their duties as a volunteer for the school system, who have reason or cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred shall notify the principal or the school system's designee, who shall report such abuse immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases for Thomas County, Georgia.

Under no circumstances shall the principal or designee to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification, or make any change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.

USE OF FRAGRANCES & CLEANING PRODUCTS

Many of our students and staff have respiratory sensitivity to airborne chemicals, including strong fragrances and cleaning products, that may trigger asthma, allergies, and coughing episodes. For this reason, the following items should not be used in classrooms or shared indoor spaces when students are present in the building:

- Aerosol sprays (e.g., air fresheners, disinfectant sprays such as Lysol)
- Perfumes, colognes, and body sprays
- Strongly scented lotions or personal care products
- Essential oil diffusers or plug-in air fresheners

If you choose to clean your classroom, you must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Perform cleaning after school hours, unless a situation meets emergency criteria.
- Use low-odor or fragrance-free cleaning products when possible.
- Do not spray disinfectant products (i.e. Lysol) into the air; apply directly to surfaces.

- Disinfectant sprays must not be used while students are present. After use, the area should remain vacant for at least 15 minutes and until surfaces are fully dry. Ensure adequate ventilation before students return.

Emergency or infection-control situations (e.g.vomiting) may require limited spray use but may only occur *with approval from administration.*

BULLYING

The Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system.

Bullying is defined as an act that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
    a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
    b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
    c. Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
    d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at the designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system.

The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Electronic communication includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence or any nature transmitted in whole or in part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

According to the School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting System (SESIR) organized by the Department of Education, bullying must <u>include all 3</u> of the following elements:

1- It must be repeated.

2- It must be intentional.

3- It must involve a power imbalance (be one sided).

Procedures may be developed encouraging a teacher or other school employee, student, parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in the person's name, at the person's option, to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity. Any teacher or other

school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying is encouraged to immediately report it to the school principal. Any report will be appropriately investigated by the administration based on the nature of the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented and what other steps should be taken. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will also be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with school procedures.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal Law, requires that Thomas County Middle School, with certain exceptions, obtain a parent/guardian's written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, the school may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" at the discretion of the school unless the principal or designee has been notified in writing by August 31 of each school year by the parent/guardian or eligible student that some or all of this information shall not be designated as directory information. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from the student's education records in certain school publications. Directory information includes student name, address, year of birth, enrollment, dates of attendance, grade level, degrees and awards received, date of graduation, photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports.

THE THOMAS COUNTY PROGRAM FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The Thomas County Program for Exceptional Children offers services for children who have been identified as having a disability. A child with a disability is a child evaluated and determined to be eligible for special education services for intellectual disabilities, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, or deaf/blindness.

Special education is specially designed instruction provided at no cost to parents that meets the unique needs of each student that is identified with a disability. Special education includes instruction in the classroom, in the home, hospitals, institutions and other settings, physical education, travel training, and vocational education.

Related services are services such as transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability to fully benefit from special education.

Decisions regarding eligibility, least restrictive environment, and services are made by a committee of individuals that work directly with the child and the child's parents or guardian. Parents can contact the Thomas County Program for Exceptional Students by calling 229-225-4380.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT POLICY

As part of the emergency procedures in place in our schools, any student who poses an imminent risk of injury to him/herself or others may be physically restrained by school staff in accordance with Thomas County Board of Education policies. This restraint could occur along with other emergency actions such as contacting law enforcement. Significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be

reported to law enforcement. Within a reasonable time, not to exceed one school day, parents or guardians will be informed in writing when any of these actions occur.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

It shall be the policy of the Thomas County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, creed or disability in educational programs and activities, in employment or recruitment for employment, admission to facilities, or in any related policies, practices or benefits.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs of activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Employees, students, and the general public are hereby notified that the Thomas County School District does not discriminate in any educational programs or in employment policies. Dr. Bob Dechman, Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs and Accountability for Thomas County Schools, is responsible for coordinating the district's effort to implement this nondiscriminatory policy. Inquiries concerning the application of Title II, Title VI, or Section 504 to the policies and practices of the district may be addressed to: Dr. Bob Dechman, Thomas County Schools, 200 North Pinetree, Thomasville, Georgia 31792. Inquiries concerning Title IX (discrimination based on sex) can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator Clay Stanaland, 200 N. Pinetree Blvd, Thomasville, GA; or 229-225-4380, or cstanaland@tcjackets.net

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The school has an approved emergency management plan on file in the principal's office. This plan has provisions for tornadoes, fire, terroristic situations, and other emergency situations.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire Drills will be held monthly. Students are to file out of the building to the designated area where their teacher will take roll. Students remain in place until an all-clear is given.

Lockdown Drills
A soft lockdown means all exterior and classroom doors are secured but class activities continue as scheduled. In the event of a hard lockdown, all exterior and classroom doors are secured. Staff and students remain in place until further notice is given.

Intruder Drills an intruder drill must be held by October 1st. The intruder drill will follow the same procedures as a hard lockdown. All doors will be locked and remain locked until unlocked by administration or law enforcement.

Severe Weather Drills
When a tornado watch is issued, staff secures all exterior doors and students remain indoors and continue to conduct the day as usual. A tornado warning is issued when tornadic activity has been spotted in the vicinity. Staff and students transition to safety zones and remain in place until an all-clear has been given.

All Emergency drills are practiced throughout the school year.

Federal/State/BOE Policies

SCHOOL COUNCIL

School councils were established by the General Assembly of Georgia to improve communications and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of local schools. The purpose of the school council is to bring communities and schools closer together in the spirit of teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process. The management and control of public schools continues to be the responsibility of the local board of education with the principal being the designated school leader.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Each school day students shall be afforded the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States, as required by Georgia law. Students participating in the pledge will be expected to stand, face the flag, and recite the pledge.

Students not participating in the pledge may (1) stand and refrain from reciting the pledge or (2) remain seated.

“In each public classroom, the teacher in charge shall, at the opening of school upon every school day, conduct a brief period of quiet reflection for no more than 60 seconds with participation of all pupils assembled. The moment of quiet reflection authorized by this law is not intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service or exercise, but shall be considered as an opportunity for a moment of reflection on the anticipated activities of the day.”

WATER SAFETY/SWIM LESSONS

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that drowning is one of the top causes of injury and death in children each year in the United States. Parents can help prevent these tragedies by enrolling children in water safety courses and swimming lessons. In our community, the Everett-Milton and Butler-Mason YMCA locations offer swim lessons with year-round and seasonal options. Private, semi-private, and group lessons are available. Please contact the YMCA (229-226-3446) for more information.

This information is provided in accordance with H.B. 402, also known as the Edna Mae McGovern Act.

County & School Personnel

County and School Personnel

Thomas County Board of Education 229-225-4380

Mr. Ed. Hopper, District 7, Chair
Ms. Leah Smith, District 5, Vice Chair
Ms. Joy West, District 1
Mr. Mark NeSmith, District 2
Mr. Ken Harper, District 3
Mr. Chris Hayes, District 4
Mr. Dan Stewart, District 6

Superintendent of Thomas County Schools 229-225-4380

Dr. Lisa Williams

Thomas County Middle School 229-225-4394

Administration

Ms. Deann Garcia - Principal
Ms. Emily Ross - Assistant Principal
Ms. Fannetta Powell - Assistant Principal
Mr. Michael Rigdon - Assistant Principal
Mr. Al Whatley - Assistant Principal
Ms. Debbie Lasseter - Curriculum Coordinator
Ms. Dana Studdard - MERIT/Gifted Coordinator
Ms. Nancy Rogers- ELA/MERIT Curriculum Coordinator

Media Specialist
Ms. Kathie Craven

Technology Specialist
Mr. Brandon Ray

Digital Learning Specialist
Mr. Matt Casper

Parent Involvement Coordinator

Ms. Misty Taylor

School Counselors

Ms. Cynthia Forde, 5th grade
Mr. Kevin Keve, 6th grade
Ms. Andrea Brady, 7th grade
Ms. Logan Odom, 8th grade

Department Chairpersons

Ms. Whitney Robertson - Math
Ms. Stacy Solberger - English/Language Arts
Ms. Claudia Upton - Social Studies
Mr. Ben McLain - Foreign Language
Dr. Tashara Jackson -Special Education
Ms. Kaleigh Glass - Science
Ms. Emily Holton - Exploratories
Mr. George Romans - Physical Education

Clerical Staff
Ms. Celina Sholar
Ms. Malina Covington
Ms. Felicia Ross

Financial Office
Ms. Sharon Mobley

Student Information Systems
Ms. Summer Dollar

ISS Coordinator
Mr. Lee Taylor

School Nurses
Ms. Hillari Garren
Ms. Revana Mills
Ms. Lynlie Brogan

Thomas County Schools Calendar

THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOLS
2026-2027 Calendar

Event	Day(s) of the Week	Dates
Independence Day Holidays	Thursday-Friday	July 2 & 3, 2026
Preplanning	Monday-Friday	July 27 - August 7, 2026
First Day for Students	Monday	August 10, 2026
Labor Day Holiday	Monday	September 7, 2026
Fall Break	Monday-Friday	October 12-16, 2026
Teacher Workday/Student Holiday	Monday	October 19, 2026
	44 days in first nine weeks	
First Day, Second Nine Weeks	Tuesday	October 20, 2026
Thanksgiving Holidays	Monday-Friday	November 23-27, 2025
Winter Holidays	Monday-Friday	December 21, 2026 - Jan.1, 2027
Teacher Workday/Student Holiday	Monday	January 4, 2027
	39 days in second nine weeks	
First Day, Third Nine Weeks	Tuesday	January 5, 2027
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	Monday	January 18, 2027
Teacher/Student Holiday	Friday	February 12, 2027
Presidents' Day Holiday	Monday	February 15, 2027
Teacher/Student Holiday	Friday	March 12, 2027
TeacherWorkday/Student Holiday	Monday	March 15, 2027
	45 days in third nine weeks	
First Day, Fourth Nine Weeks	Tuesday	March 16, 2027
Spring Break	Monday-Friday	April 5-9, 2027
Last Day for Students	Wednesday	May 26, 2027
	47 days in fourth nine weeks	
Post-planning	Thursday-Friday	May 27-28, 2027
Memorial Day Holiday	Monday	May 31, 2027

Veterans Day will be observed as part of a planned activity at each school.

Attendance/Grades/Promotion & Retention

ATTENDANCE

Late Arrivals/Tardies: Students who arrive on campus after 8:00 a.m. must sign in at the front office. Tardies are excused for the same reasons that absences are excused. **If a student accumulates more than six unexcused tardies in a nine week period, he or she will be assigned after school detention.** Students who are chronically late may be assigned more severe consequences. Reasons for a tardy include sickness, death in family, religious holidays, and doctor/dentist appointments.

Early Dismissals: All parents/guardians must present a picture ID prior to being allowed to sign out any student. Parents should refrain from signing students out after 2:30 due to end of day traffic.

Lunch Sign outs: Parents are discouraged from signing out students for lunch. Lunch sign outs should not occur often and should be reserved for special events. Lunch sign outs are not excused absences and should not interfere with class assignments, tests, review, etc. In lieu of leaving campus, parents are welcome to eat lunch at school with their children.

Excessive Absences

When a child is absent from school, the parent will furnish the school with a written excuse within three school days of the absence. The school will require students to present appropriate medical documentation for absences due to illness upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence after accepting a parent **excuse six times per school year**.

Students who miss an excessive amount of class time (as defined by school rules) may be required to participate in make-up activities as described by the individual schools or **may be prohibited from attending special school functions such as dances, assemblies, field trips, and athletic competitions.**

After Three Unexcused Absences: The attendance clerk will contact the parent/guardian.
After Five Unexcused Absences: The attendance clerk will notify the parent/guardian by mail, **and** by another means of communication deemed necessary. All contacts made will be documented.
After Seven Unexcused Absences: The counselor/parent coordinator will meet or make contact with the parent/guardian and the student. The parent/guardian and student will be informed of the consequences of excessive unexcused absences. Strategies will be discussed to help improve the student's attendance. An attendance plan and contract will be signed and implemented. The counselor/parent coordinator will continue to monitor the student's attendance.
After Ten Unexcused Absences: A mandatory attendance meeting will be scheduled between the parent/guardian, the student, and the grade level assistant principal. A plan that contains specific strategies to help improve the student's attendance will be created and signed. The parent and the student will also be reminded of the consequences for continued unexcused absences. The student's attendance will continue to be monitored. The parent/guardian and student will be contacted for non-compliance with the plan and contract. All contacts will be documented.
After Thirteen Unexcused Absences: The parent/guardian and/or student may be referred to the Thomas County School System's Truant Officer if the student continues to accrue unexcused absences.
After the student has been referred to the Truant Officer, the school will continue to monitor the student's attendance and continue to use school-based interventions to help prevent continued unexcused absences. All contacts will be documented. Based on the determination of the Truant Officer, the parent/guardian and/or student may be referred to the Community Based Risk Reduction Team (CBRRT).
Refer to page 10 & 11 in this Handbook for more detailed Thomas County BOE attendance information.

Attendance/Grades/Promotion & Retention

GRADES

Report cards will be sent home with students at the end of each nine week period during the week following the end of the grading period. Report cards may be held for students who owe debts to the school. Parents who do not receive report cards on the dates printed on the school calendar should contact their child's teacher. The grading scale is as follows: A = 90 -100, B = 80 - 89, C = 70 - 79, F= below 70

PROMOTION & RETENTION

To be **promoted** in **grades five** through **eight** students must earn a yearly average of 70 or above in all academic and exploratory classes. **The Georgia Milestones Assessment in grades five and eight will be used in making promotion, placement, and retention decisions for students.**

MAKEUP WORK

Students will complete make-up work within five days upon their return to school. The five-day rule does not apply to assignments that were previously assigned to be due on the date of a student's absence; when a student is absent on the day that an assignment is due, it must be turned in on the first day of the student's return. When a student is absent on a test day, he or she should be prepared to take the test on the first day of his/her return. Teachers may require students to schedule time after school to make up assignments. Work for students returning from suspension is due the day the student returns to school.

MISSING & LATE WORK

Students may turn in missing work for five days past the completion of all three of the following conditions.

1. Past the due date
2. Student is aware the work is missing
3. This missing grade is entered into Infinite Campus as missing

CURRICULUM

TCMS curriculum includes English/Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Exploratory classes. Reading will be integrated throughout the content areas. Services are offered in all subjects to support special education, general education, and gifted learners. Gifted and accelerated eighth grade students may have the opportunity to earn high school credit for Algebra I, Ninth Grade ELA, Physical Science, Spanish, Basic Agriculture, and Intro to Computers. These subjects are aligned with the State Board of Education adopted Georgia Standards of Excellence. Students are placed in specific classes based upon school developed criteria.

PARENT/ TEACHER CONFERENCES

The faculty at Thomas County Middle School welcome the opportunity to discuss with students and parents the student's classroom performance, behavior, or any other related concern. Parents/guardians wanting to inquire about their child's progress at school may contact the front office and set up an appointment to meet with the teachers. You may also reach out to teachers through Parent Square to set up a conference. All academic teams have a common planning time. Conferences are encouraged for the benefit of the student and parent. Teachers must be given at least 24 hours notice for conferences.

Enrichment & Character Education

MERIT Program

The MERIT program (**M**aximizing **E**ducation to **R**ealize **I**ntellectual **T**ransformation) challenges students to achieve their maximum academic potential while providing a supportive learning environment for advanced study and recognition for outstanding academic achievement. Middle school students will have the opportunity to earn high school credits in English, Math, Spanish, Latin, Science, and Computer Science.

To qualify for placement on a MERIT team, the following criteria will be considered:

1. Meet or exceed expectations on each section of the most recent standardized test;
2. Have no serious disciplinary referrals within the last year and/or no more than two minor referrals within the last year: a serious referral is one which resulted in a home suspension of three days or more.
3. Submit an application;
4. Provide a letter of support (Parent/Student Compact) signed by the parent and the student;
5. Gifted eligibility **OR** three of the following:
    a. Achievement at or above the 75th percentile on Reading and Math sections of the most recent ITBS;
    b. All A's or all A's and one B in core academic classes for the previous year;
    c. Achievement at or above the 75th percentile on the most recent CogAT or other test of mental ability;
    d. No major disciplinary referrals.
    e. Good Attendance, includes tardies and early sign-outs.

To be considered a MERIT student at Thomas County Middle School:

1. Must take academic classes designated as part of the MERIT Program.
2. Must take Spanish or Latin as a class each year beginning in sixth grade.
3. Must maintain an academic accumulative average of an 85 or better.
4. Must complete 20 hours of community service each year.
5. Must maintain an exemplary disciplinary record.
6. Must maintain good attendance.

Middle school students wishing to be assigned to a MERIT team should complete an application and return it to TCMS to Dana Studdard, TCMS MERIT Coordinator. For more information, contact Mrs. Studdard at dstuddard@tcjackets.net or Mrs. Erin White, District Director of MERIT, at ewhite@tcjackets.net.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

At Thomas County Middle School, we are committed to developing the whole child through our Character Strong program. Character Strong is a research-based curriculum designed to help students build positive character traits, strengthen relationships, develop social-emotional skills, and make responsible

Enrichment & Character Education

decisions. Fifth Grade will participate in weekly lessons and activities where students learn important life skills. Our goal is to create a positive school culture where every student feels connected, supported, and prepared for success both in school and beyond. Character Education will be implemented throughout our school day. Ten character traits that will be highlighted at TCMS during this school year are:

1. **Kindness**
2. **Respect**
3. **Responsibility**
4. **Graditude**
5. **Empathy**
6. **Perseverance**
7. **Honesty**
8. **Cooperation**
9. **Courage**
10. **Creativity**



NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The National Junior Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding middle level students. More than just an honor roll, NJHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. These characteristics have been associated with membership in the organization since 1929.

NJHS eligibility includes: a scholastic average of 3.7 or above in academic courses and elective classes, as well as evidence of leadership qualities, exemplary school citizenship, upstanding character, and school or community service. Seventh graders are considered for membership after the third grading period; eighth graders are considered after the second grading period. Eighth grade members who do not maintain academic and behavioral guidelines will not be allowed to participate in the annual spring NJHS trip. There are no exceptions.

EXPLORATORIES

Classes are offered in the areas of fine arts, vocational, and life skills. Exploratory classes include agriculture, art, band, chorus, spanish, computer science, coding, dance, strings, family and consumer science, technology/robotics/mass media, health, and physical education.

ATHLETICS

Rising sixth through eighth graders may try out for sports at TCMS. Students must meet eligibility requirements for athletes, demonstrate appropriate behavior, and keep a current physical on file.

Fall Sports: Cheerleading, Cross Country, Volleyball, Football, and Softball
Winter Sports: Basketball, Cheerleading, Swimming, and Wrestling
Spring Sports: Baseball, Golf, Soccer, Tennis, and Track

Enrichment & Character Education

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Students who will be practicing, trying out for, and/or participating in COMPETITIVE extra-curricular activities may have no more than two academic classes with a grade below 70 in the semester immediately preceding participation. Individual sports may have additional qualifying eligibility requirements for practice and participation. Students not meeting this requirement will be ineligible for one semester and until they pass five of seven subjects in the semester prior to participation. Faculty members who are involved in extracurricular activities are responsible for knowledge of and compliance with all eligibility requirements. It is the responsibility of faculty members to check eligibility before any tryouts, practices, or participation of students in extracurricular competitive activities. Contact school counselors for help with eligibility checks.

NOTE: All new students are considered ineligible until school records from the former school have been received and checked. All competitive extra-curricular activities will be suspended at the end of the first semester until eligibility can be checked for the new semester.

Club Descriptions

TCMS CLUB DESCRIPTIONS

Club/Organization Brief Description	Sponsor Room # Grades:	Contact Email	Meeting Day/Time	Competitive
4-H 4-H is the nation's largest youth organization where kids learn through fun, hands-on projects in STEM, healthy living, agriculture, and civic engagement. Great for students who ride the bus since it meets during school hours.	TBA 5-8	Cindy Mott Wynn cmwynn@uga.edu	TBD Once a month, some Sat. (usually at the 4-H office).	DPA-yes
Archery Club (FCA Outdoors) All skill levels are welcome! Come practice shooting a bow while uniting and inspiring to make the world a better place.	618 5-8	Ben McLain bmclain@tcjackets.net	Tuesdays 3:30-4:30	Yes
Builders Club Are you interested in helping your community? This is the club for you! Sponsored by Kiwanis. We are a student-led service organization focusing on leadership development.	820 5-8	Logan Odom lodom@tcjackets.net	TBD	No Only Service Learning Projects
Chess Club This club is for anyone who wants to learn more about chess: beginners and intermediate players. This is a great opportunity for students to expand their knowledge of a timeless game while improving their problem-solving skills and having fun at the same time.	615 5-8	Betsy Garbett jgarbett@tcjackets.net	Tuesdays 3:30-4:30	Yes
Dance Club The TCMS Dance Club is an exciting opportunity for students who love to dance, perform, and work as a team. Members will learn a variety of dance styles while building confidence, creativity, teamwork, and stage presence in a fun and positive environment. Throughout the school year, Dance Club members may perform at selected school events, community functions, and athletic events.	Dance Studio 6-8	Katie Gaston kgaston@tcjackets.net	Monday 3:15-4:30	No

Disc Golf Disc Golf is a healthy, inexpensive, recreational activity that provides upper and lower body conditioning, aerobic exercise, and mental stimulation. From keeping score to choosing the right angle, to knowing standings in competition, playing by the numbers is part of disc golf. Disc golf is played like golf except, instead of a ball and clubs, players use a flying disc. Disc golf is quick and easy to learn, so anyone can play!	720 5-8	Gavin Wilson gwilson@tcjackets.net Britain Pyle bpyle@tcjackets.net	Weekly starting in February (Day TBA) 3:30-5:00	No
Drama Club Drama Club gives middle school students the opportunity to explore acting and theatre through rehearsing and performing short plays and skits. The program concludes with a community performance where families and community members are invited to watch the collection of student-performed and student-directed plays. Drama Club encourages creativity, collaboration, and confidence while introducing students to both acting and directing.	819 5-8	Kimsey Hodge khodge@tcjackets.net	Wednesdays Year Round 3:00 - 4:00	No
Dramatic Jackets Show Choir Dramatic Jackets Show Choir is a performance ensemble where students develop skills in singing, movement, and stage performance. Students must audition and are selected based on their audition. Members rehearse musical numbers that combine vocals and choreography.	819 5-8	Kimsey Hodge khodge@tcjackets.net	Wednesdays Year Round 3:00 - 5:00	Yes
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) FCA focuses on serving local communities around the globe by engaging, equipping, and empowering coaches and athletes to unite, inspire, and change the world.	612 5-8	Wade Davidson wdavison@tcjackets.net	Beginning in September Weekly 7:30 am	No
FCA Outdoors The Fellowship of Christian Athletes Outdoor program is designed for any student who wants to learn more about the outdoors while growing in their faith.	608 5-8	Kevin Keve keve@tcjackets.net Ben Huntzinger bhuntzinger@tcjackets.net	Tuesdays 3:30-4:15	No

FCCLA Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. FCCLA is a nonprofit national career and technical student organization for young men and women in Family and Consumer Sciences education in public and private schools through grade 12.	FCS Lab 5-8	Megan Palmer mpalmer@tcjackets.net	First Thursday of each month 7:30 AM	No
FFA The FFA (formerly known as the Future Farmers of America) is a premier youth leadership organization. It prepares middle and high school students for career success and personal growth through agricultural education. Members learn about agriscience, business, and technology, while developing practical skills through hands-on experiences and community service.	Ag Room 5-8	Tyler Jackson tjackson@tcjackets.net	Monthly on Tuesdays 7:00 AM	Yes
Girls With Poise Our goal is to empower young girls by cultivating confidence, grace, and leadership through the teaching of proper etiquette, personal grooming, and self-development. We are committed to shaping future leaders who carry themselves with dignity, inspire others, and make a positive impact in our communities and beyond.	Girl's Conditioning Room 5-8	Deborah Anderson danderson@tcjackets.net Valarie Williams vwilliams@tcjackets.net Tashara Jackson tajackson@tcjackets.net	2nd Thursday of each Month	No
Heart & Soul - Girls on the Run Running Club for girls! What fun! Girls of all abilities learn to embrace their inner strength and make meaningful connections with others.	802 6-8	Rena Ramirez rramirez@tcjackets.net	Weekly (Spring)	No
Interact Club Interact Club is a student service organization sponsored by The Rotary Club of Thomasville that encourages middle school students to develop leadership skills while giving back to their community. Members participate in service projects, volunteer opportunities, and activities that promote teamwork, responsibility, and compassion.	722 5-8	Melissa Artz martz@tcjackets.net Jill Russell jrussell@tcjackets.net	Thursdays 3:20-4:00	No

Jigsaw Puzzle Club Promotes critical thinking, visual -spatial reasoning, collaboration, and problem solving through the study of jigsaw puzzles!	616 5-8	Kedist Chen-Black kchenblack@tcjackets.net	Bimonthly for semester one	No
Jotting Jackets Calling all storytellers, poets, and idea-makers! Do you love to write or want to try something new? Join our school's creative writing club! We'll dive into fun and inspiring activities, share our stories, and even enter writing competitions. No experience needed-- just bring your imagination!	719 5-8	Kristi Keve krkeve@tcjackets.net Rena Ramirez rramirez@tcjackets.net	1st and 3rd Thursday of each month 3:30-4:30	Yes
Latin Club The Thomas County Schools Junior Classical League is a chapter of both the Georgia and National Junior Classical Leagues, which are organizations committed to an appreciation of the impact of the Classical Greek and Roman cultures on modern life. It is an academically competitive club and participates in several testing events, as well as state and national in-person events.	703b 6-8	Charlie Gammel cgammel@tcjackets.net	Fridays 7:30	Yes
LEGO League- 2 Teams First Lego League encourages students to think like scientists and engineers. They compete in three areas: Robot, Core Values, and Project. Students will research and solve a real-world problem. They will build, test, and program a robot.	614 0r Hanna's Room 5-8	Will Hanna whanna@tcjackets.net Sarah Rigdon srigdon@tcjackets.net Sam Sturrup ssturrup@tcjackets.net Brandi Clapper bclapper@tcjackets.net	Weekly 3:30-4:30	Yes Students must apply for this club in August.
Math Olympiad 5th/6th Come explore mathematical concepts while developing flexibility in solving non-routine problems with multiple solution paths.	510 5-6	Sarah Rigdon srigdon@tcjackets.net	TBD At 3:30	Yes
Math Olympiad 7th/8th Math Olympiad is a prestigious, competitive problem-solving contest for students. Rather than testing standard	803	Stacie Layne slayne@tcjackets.net	TBD	Yes

school curriculum, it features complex, puzzle-like problems—often proof-based—designed to challenge participants to develop logical thinking, creativity, and deep analytical skills	7-8			
National Junior Honor Society The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) elevates a school's commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship and helps middle-level students develop the knowledge and skills to become well-rounded student leaders in their school, community, and beyond.	613 804 8th only	Brenton Smith bsmith@tcjackets.net Stacie Layne slanye@tcjackets.net	Monthly 3:30-4:30	Trip to Washington DC
Omega Mentorship Exposes young men to the benefits of planning, organizing, though collaboration, while simulating good leadership characteristics designed to raise their aspiration levels.	817 5-8	Matthew Moore mmoore@tchackets.net	Every other Wednesday	No
Reading Bowl Reading Bowl is a club that allows students who love to read to dive into books of all genres. Students will compete against other students across the state of Georgia to answer questions as a group about the books they enjoyed. Come join us starting in September!	615 611 5-8	Betsy Garbett jgarbett@tcjackets.net Nicole Boyd nboyd@tcjackets.net Jennifer Brinn jbrinn@tcjackets.net	Tuesdays 3-4	Yes
Rubik's Cube Club All skill levels are welcome—from beginners to advanced solvers! This club offers a fun and supportive environment to practice solving Rubik's Cubes and connect with fellow enthusiasts. Each student should bring their own standard 3x3 Rubik's Cube. Each week, we will focus on a new step in solving a Rubik's Cube. As students progress, we'll hold friendly in-club competitions to challenge and celebrate improvement.	510 5-8	Sarah Rigdon srigdon@tcjackets.net Katie Brewer kbrewer@tcjackets.net	Weekly for 6 weeks Day TBD	No
Science Academy Students will explore Space Science, Animal Science, and Roller Coaster Physics in an after-school program, followed by a 4-day field excursion to Kennedy Space Center, EPCOT,	603	Dana Studdard dstuddard@tcjackets.net Djuana Rinehart drinehart@tcjackets.net	Mondays 3:30 - 5:00 8th- December 7th - October 6th-	No

Wonderworks, Disney's Animal Kingdom, SeaWorld, and Universal Studios. A must-do for all Science Nerds!		Kim Simmons ksimmons@tcjackets.ne	February Overnight Field Trips Involved	
Spanish Club Students will study Spanish cultures, prepare dishes, and create Spanish arts and crafts. Students practice and prepare for a Spanish speaking competition where they use the language to have a conversation with a judge.	618 6-8	Dina Ortiz dortiz@tcjackets.net Ben McLain bmclain@tcjackets.net Amanda McConnell amcconnell@tcjackets.net	TBD 3:30-4:30	Yes
Student Council This club is for students who like to be involved in setting up school events, such as dances and the can drive. We also try to help MERIT students get their service learning hours.	513 5-8	Rachel Henderson rhenderson@tcjackets.net Sarah Rigdon srigdon@tcjackets.net	Every other Tuesday (subject to change)	No Service Learning Projects
TCMS Bass Fishing TCMS Bass Fishing will be the first of its kind at TCMS. Once a month we will meet at Tired Creek Lake in Cairo, GA. We will meet twice a month in my classroom to discuss tips and tricks for beginners all the way to experts.	608 5-8	Ben Huntzinger bhuntzinger@tcjackets.net	1st Wednesday of each Month	Yes
Young Local Historians Travel back in time to see how big events like the Civil War, World Wars, and the Great Depression impacted Thomas County! In this club, we'll explore our local history through museum visits, guest speakers, and real historical documents. If you're curious about how the past shaped our community, this is the club for you!	804 5-8	Brenton Smith bsmith@tcjackets.net Allyson Smallwood asmallwood@tcjackets.net	Thursdays 3:30-4:30	No

School Nutrition

SCHOOL NUTRITION

"Fueling Bodies, Fueling Minds"

Thomas County Schools

Nutrition Program

"Our mission is to be a partner in education by providing quality school meals that provide students with the nutrients they need to grow and LEARN."

The school nutrition program strives to be a partner in education by providing delicious and nutritious meals to our students, promoting health and wellness, and supporting academic success. Through good nutrition and healthy habits, every student in Thomas County Schools will be ready to learn and have the opportunity to be successful. The school nutrition program participates in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) which allows ALL students in Thomas County Schools to eat breakfast and lunch at **NO COST** to the student. We provide quality school meals to help your student get the nutrition they need to learn, grow and develop.

Thomas County School Nutrition Program must comply with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) federal guidelines regulating school meals. Each age/grade group served has different nutritional requirements regulating calories, sodium, fat, and serving sizes for meal components. USDA Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals can be found by visiting https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/short-and-long-week-calculations.

Thomas County Middle School participates in "Offer versus Serve" when providing your student school meals which means that we offer the required meal components (fruit, vegetable, grain, meat, milk) to your student and they get to choose which items they want on their tray. Your student must pick up at least 3 of the meal components (fruit, vegetable, grain, meat, milk) with one of those being a fruit or vegetable. Each tray served must contain at least ½ cup of a fruit or vegetable. If your student does not have a fruit or vegetable on their tray, the cashier will ask the student to go back through the serving line to pick up a fruit or vegetable. If your student refuses to pick up a fruit or vegetable, then the meal is not considered reimbursable (by the USDA) and we would then charge your student "a la carte" pricing for the items that they put on their tray. Please encourage your student to put a fruit and/or vegetable on their tray at school. Students are limited to one entree (meat) and one milk on their trays, but can pick up 2 servings of fruits, vegetables, and grains. Milk is offered at each meal, but students do NOT have to pick up milk at breakfast or lunch.

Thomas County Middle School's cafeteria menu is posted monthly on the Thomas County School's website, https://www.tcjackets.net/departments/school-nutrition/breakfast-lunch-menus. You can also view the school menu with allergens and nutrition facts on the LINQ CONNECT website, https://tinyurl.com/ThomasCountyMenus

Breakfast: Thomas County Middle School offers breakfast in the hallway from 7:30 until 8 AM, during which students can pick up breakfast and take to their classroom to eat. In addition to breakfast before school, TCMS offers Second Chance Breakfast for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades via mobile carts set-up in various hallways during the breaks between 1st and 3rd periods (time varies by grade.) Students participating in Second Chance Breakfast should pick up their items from the breakfast carts and take them back to their classroom to eat. At breakfast, students must pick up a fruit in order to make the breakfast reimbursable (i.e. to avoid their student account being charged for the meal.) We offer a variety of fruit (juice, fresh, canned, and/or fruit cups) at breakfast.

Lunch Number: Each student and staff member is assigned a lunch number that they will need to key in when eating lunch in the cafeteria.

Online Cafeteria Payments: Adults (staff, parents/guardians, special visitors) are welcome to eat in the cafeteria with us. Parents/guardians must check in at the front office and should check with the supervising

School Nutrition

teacher in the cafeteria before taking students to the patio to eat. Adult meal prices are **$5.25** for lunch and **$3.00** for breakfast. Adults must present cash or check at time of meal service or if employed by the district, may set up a lunch account and pre-pay for meals online with a credit/debit card or by bringing cash or check to the cafeteria for deposit into their account. Students are allowed to purchase a la carte items or extra meals, but each student must have a complete meal from the cafeteria (or lunchbox) before purchasing any "a la carte" (extra) items. Students wishing to purchase "a la carte" items (above what is offered in the free school meal) must have cash, check or money in their lunch account. There will be no charging of "a la carte" items by students or adults. Students wishing to purchase an additional school meal (after already receiving their free school meal), must pay the adult price ($5.25 for lunch or $3.00 for breakfast.) School Nutrition uses LINQ Connect for online meal payments. To set-up a cafeteria account online visit https://linqconnect.com/main (you can also access this link via our website.)

Food Allergies or Intolerances: If your student has a food allergy or intolerance, you must notify the School Nutrition Director in writing (jeana.smith@tcjackets.net) in order for your student to receive accommodations to meals served at school. Some meal accommodations require a medical statement signed by a licensed healthcare provider. The school nurse or school nutrition director can provide you with a meal accommodation form that you can take to your healthcare provider to document any food allergies or intolerances requiring special meal accommodations. You can also find this form on our website at https://www.tcjackets.net/departments/school-nutrition. Food allergy documentation sent to school nutrition is also shared with the school nurse. Once food allergy or intolerance documentation is on file, this information stays with your student as they move through each grade in Thomas County Schools. If food allergies or intolerances change over the years, new documentation must be sent to the school to either add or remove food allergies or intolerances from the student's file. Cashiers will see a pop-up when your student comes through the lunch line that lists any food allergies or intolerances and will check the student's tray for any non-compliant foods, removing foods or sending students back through the line if needed. Since breakfast is served outside of the cafeteria, students will need to verbally let the school nutrition staff know of any food allergies when they go to a breakfast cart to pick up a meal. Allergen Information for our menu items can be found on LINQ Connect: https://tinyurl.com/TCMS-MENU

Food/Beverages brought in the cafeteria during the school day: Federal guidelines and our local school board policy prohibits the sale and marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages during the school day in all areas of the school campus. With this in mind and in order to promote healthy eating habits for all of our students, staff, students, and parents **are not allowed** to bring in food or beverages to school from outside restaurants any time during the school day (with the exception of special events like parties and celebrations.) Of course, lunches from home sent with students in lunch boxes or plain bags are permissible. We encourage parents and staff to set a good example for healthy eating throughout the school day.

Parties and Celebrations:

When bringing food for celebrations or parties, we strongly encourage healthy food choices, such as those listed below. Due to the number of food allergies in our schools, we ask that all foods be brought in sealed containers with food labels that list nutrition facts and ingredients. Homemade goods, including cupcakes & other snacks will not be served to students.

Healthy Celebration Snack Ideas:

- Whole Fruit, Applesauce or Fruit Cups
- Pretzels, Goldfish, Cheese Crackers
- Animal Crackers, Graham Crackers
- Trail Mix
- Yogurt

School Nutrition

- Light Popcorn
- Raw Veggies/Low Fat Dip
- Low Fat Pudding Cups
- String Cheese
- 100% Fruit Snacks
- Whole Grain, Reduced Sugar Cookies
- Fruit Sherbet, Sorbet, or Italian Ice
- Reduced Sugar, Low-Fat Ice Cream
- Reduced-Sugar or Whole Fruit Popsicles

More information about Thomas County School Nutrition can be found on our website https://www.tcjackets.net/departments/school-nutrition. Follow us on Facebook at Thomas County School Nutrition or on Instagram at bee_well_tc to see the quality school meals served to your student throughout the school year.

School Nutrition Contact Information: For questions or concerns regarding school nutrition, please contact Jeana Smith, Director of School Nutrition and Wellness by email at jeana.smith@tcjackets.net or phone at 229-584-9139. "USDA is an equal opportunity provider."

School Bus Safety & Traffic

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY INFORMATION

Smarts

- Stay out of the danger zone at all times!
- Remember -- if you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you!
- Never go near the bus unless the driver has given you the signal to come!
- Never walk or play behind a vehicle!
- When you go near the bus, always be sure you can see the bus driver!
- If you drop anything in the danger zone, leave it. Never stop to pick it up!

Know the Danger Zone

- Every child must know the DANGER ZONES around the school bus.
- Children should never enter the DANGER ZONE unless the driver has given them permission.
- If a child can touch the bus, he or she is too close.
- If a child must cross the street, know all the rules to cross safely.
- The 10 Giant Step rule is a good measurement for children to identify the DANGER ZONE around the school bus, particularly when crossing in front of the bus.
- When near a bus, the children must have the attention of the school bus driver.
- Children should never play around or near school bus vehicles.
- When leaving the bus, children must walk directly home.

Getting On and Off the Safe Way

- Always be on time with your school things tucked safely away.
- Never run to or from the bus.
- Wait for the bus at a safe place away from the road.
- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching to get on.
- Remember if you can touch the bus, YOU ARE TOO CLOSE!
- Your driver will tell you when to get on.
- Walk up the steps, one at a time, using the handrail.
- Never push or shove.
- IF YOU DROP ANYTHING IN THE DANGER ZONE LEAVE IT, NEVER STOP TO PICK IT UP!
- Sit facing the driver, feet in front of you.
- Keep the aisle clear at all times.
- ALWAYS LISTEN TO AND OBEY YOUR SCHOOL BUS DRIVER!

Getting off the Bus

- Use the handrail.
- Do not push or shove.
- Walk; don't run away from the bus.
- Never go behind the bus.
- Go right home.

Crossing the Street after Getting Off the Bus

- If you must cross the road after getting off the bus, use the 10 GIANT STEPS as a guide to take you out of the DANGER ZONE at the front of the bus.
- Be sure you can see the driver and that the driver sees you.
- Watch for the driver's signal that it is safe to cross.
- Stop when you reach the edge of the bus.

School Bus Safety & Traffic

School Rules and Discipline Code apply while students are riding school buses.

Minor Misbehavior on Buses	**1st Offense:** Warning **2nd Offense:** 1 day of bus suspension **3rd Offense:** 3 days of bus suspension **4th Offense:** 5 days of bus suspension **5th Offense:** 7 days of bus suspension **6th Offense:** 10 days of bus suspension **7th Offense:** 20 Days of bus suspension **8th Offense:** Student may no longer ride the bus for the remainder of the school year.
Fighting on a bus, physical aggression, threat(s) to harm students, throwing objects from bus, vaping, damage to the bus, profanity directed towards bus personnel, and drug possession	**1st Offense:** 10 days of bus suspension and appropriate school discipline **2nd Offense:** 9 days OSS, parent/guardian notice, Law enforcement notification

SCHOOL DAY, PARKING, AND TRAFFIC CONTROL

The school day officially begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:55 p.m. Students are encouraged to be present and on time for all classes.

Buses unload and load on the TCMS bus line. Parents of 5th and 6th graders bringing students to school are to use the driveways between Hand-in-Hand and TCMS. Afternoon pickup for 5th and 6th graders is in the front circle. Parents of 7th and 8th graders will drop off and pick up on the tennis court side of the school. After 3:25, parents of 7th and 8th grade students will have to pick them up in the front circle. Afternoon dismissal begins at 2:55 p.m. **Students are to be picked up no later than 4:00 unless participating in an after school club/activity. TCMS does not have an after school childcare program. Walking to and from TCMS is prohibited.**

Students who occasionally need to ride on a different bus must have an official bus pass to ride that bus. Please notify the front office **BEFORE 10:00 a.m** to request this pass. Please include a telephone number in case of any questions. **TCMS students are not allowed to bring vehicles on campus.**

Students, parents, staff members, and all visitors are permitted to park on school property as a matter of privilege and not of right. The Board of Education, through its delegated representatives, retains authority to conduct routine patrols of parking lots and inspections of vehicles on school property. Such inspections may be conducted by school officials or by appropriate law enforcement officers. The interiors of vehicles may be searched when a responsible school official has reason to believe that illegal or unauthorized objects may be contained within vehicles. Vehicle owners and or operators may be required to unlock vehicles in order to permit such searches. Such patrols, inspections, and searches may be conducted without notice, without the vehicle owner or operator's consent, and without a search warrant.

TCMS Code of Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The code of conduct provides for the welfare and safety of all students and ensures a productive learning environment. The school's primary goal is to educate, not punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by the following progressive code of conduct.

This code of conductive is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time
- Off school grounds at any school activity, function, or event and while traveling to and from such events
- On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system

Students may also be disciplined for conduct off campus which is felonious or which may pose a threat to the school's learning environment or safety of students and employees.

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

All dispositions for offenses listed in the discipline code are considered minimal. The severity of the offense may dictate stricter measures.

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-766) provides that school administrators who identify a student as a chronic disciplinary problem may require the parent to attend a conference to participate in the development of a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Parents who do not attend such conferences may be referred to the courts where they may be fined up to $500. The need for a parental conference is indicated whenever a student is suspended at home when a teacher or administrator informs the parent a conference is needed.

DISCIPLINE CODE

Definitions of terms and basic information relating to the discipline code:

Teacher-assigned Detention: Upon 24 hour notice, teachers may assign students to detention. Students who fail to report will be referred to the administrator for disciplinary action. The time and location of teacher-assigned detention may be determined by the teacher.

Administrative-assigned Detention: Upon 24 hour notice, administrators or designee may assign students to detention in a designated classroom. Students who are assigned detention for being tardy to class will serve administrative detention. Students who fail to report for detention will be assigned to In-School Suspension.

Time-out: Time out is the removal of students from a specific class or classes for a specified period of time. Parents will be notified by phone or letter when students are assigned. Students are counted present for school attendance and are provided assignments from their regular classroom teacher.

TCMS Code of Conduct

In-School-Suspension Program (ISS): ISS refers to the removal of students from their regular classes for a period of one or more days to a highly-structured, supervised environment. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior and/or repeat school offenses are subject to ISS. Parents will be notified by phone or letter when students are assigned. Students are counted present for school attendance and are provided assignments from their regular classroom teachers. Students who fail to abide by the rules and regulations of ISS will receive additional ISS days.. Any absences during an ISS assignment will be made up during an ISS assignment will be made up before the student returns to the regular classroom. Students will bring basic learning supplies and will do assigned work quietly in their seats. Students will obey all school rules and regulations.

Level B: A level B is issued when a student receives multiple behavior corrections in a single day. This documentation serves as a record of the behavior incident and the consequence administered by the teacher. The Level B system is designed to keep parents informed about their child's behavior and to encourage students to reflect on and improve their conduct. Some consequences for receiving a Level B may include: lunch detention, Team Time Out, After School Detention, etc. Level Bs do not go to the grade level administrator unless students receive their fifth Level B.

Out-of-School Suspension: Out-of-School suspension is the removal of students from school for a specified period of time. Students are not allowed on campus during the school day nor are they allowed to attend any school functions or activities during the period of suspension.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A contract between the school, student, and parent that addresses a student's disruptive behavior.

Behavior Intervention Groups: Students with a BIP will be monitored and receive support from a school counselor.

The Renaissance Center: Housed at the Board of Education, The Renaissance Center provides an alternative learning environment featuring small class sizes and individualized instruction for students who have exhibited behavior that has led school administrators to believe that the student should be removed from the regular middle school environment. Students who continually display poor behavior that does not follow the code of conduct may be assigned to The Renaissance Center. Students placed at the Renaissance Center are prohibited from participating/attending all TCMS extra curricular activities.

Investigations: School representatives have authority to conduct investigations, may question students, and may search students' belongings when there is reason to believe the search could prevent danger or disruption or the continued violations of established district policies and/or school rules. Students may also be charged with insubordination, up to level 3, for failure to comply with a search directive.

Security Cameras: Security cameras are strategically placed throughout the building and on the campus to assist building administrators in maintaining a safe and supervised environment. Students who are videotaped while engaging in misconduct are subject to the same disciplinary action that they would receive if their behavior had been directly observed by a teacher or administrator.

Searches: Teachers will not be interrupted to retrieve an item that has been taken. The school will not be held responsible for any personal items. Administration/law enforcement will not conduct classroom/area searches for missing items. Only administration will conduct searches of bookbags, personal items, lockers, or anything deemed necessary due to reasonable suspicion. Administration may use metal detecting equipment during searches.

Weapons: It is the policy of the Board of Education that a student shall not possess, use, handle or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon on property or in a building owned or leased by a school district, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation provided by the school district. Weapons may include, but are not limited to:

(1) Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.C.A. 16-11-121. Including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.

Disposition: Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year expulsion. The superintendent shall have the authority either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing to reduce the mandated one year under circumstances where the one year expulsion appears excessive to the superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment. Finally, in any tribunal decision appealed to the board of education, the board may reduce the mandated punishment but shall consider whether the superintendent and/or tribunal considered a reduction and any rationale in denying such a reduction.

(2) Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nunchuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or taser. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

Ten (10) days OSS, notification of parents and law officials if the law is violated; possible recommendation for tribunal. A student who uses or threatens to use a weapon on a student or employee will be suspended for a formal hearing. Punishment by the state is a fine of not more than 10,000; imprisonment for not less than two nor more than ten years; or both. (O.C.G.A. 13-11-37).

Reporting Requirements: Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student possesses a weapon as defined in paragraph 1, is involved in an assault using a weapon as defined in paragraph 2, or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus must report such violations to the principal or assistant principal of the school. If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that such a report is valid, he/she must immediately make an oral report to the superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney.

TCMS Code of Conduct

The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any activity involving weapons.

Students will be given a copy of the Code of Conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to weapons and possible disciplinary actions.

T.C.M.S. (Tolerant, **C**ooperative, **M**otivated, **S**uccessful) **Behavior Matrix**

	Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Be Ready
Classroom Behaviors	Be quiet during morning and afternoon announcements. Follow classroom rules and procedures. Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself. Use an appropriate tone with others.	Be an active participant. Use resources appropriately. Complete assigned tasks.	Arrive on time. Report to class with appropriate materials.
Cafeteria Behaviors	Use proper table manners. Be polite to lunchroom staff. Use inside voices.	Clean your area. Use good table manners regarding food and self.	Stay in line. Make food choice before entering the lunchroom. Pay meal fees.
Hall Behaviors	Walk quietly in a single file line.	Keep hands to yourself. Use self- control with your body and words.	Walk to your destination in a timely manner.
Gym/ Media Center Behaviors	Follow directions given by adults. Be courteous to teachers and students.	Use self- control. Walk to designated areas. Stay seated.	Have materials for class. Have proper gym/clothes. Go directly to your area.
Restroom Behaviors	Wait your turn. Keep hands to yourself.	Take care of school property.Keep restroom clean.	Spend the appropriate amount of time in the restroom.
Bus Area Behaviors	Listen and respond politely to the bus driver.	Follow posted rules.	Arrive at Bus Stop on time. Leave on correct busload. Listen to afternoon announcements.

TCMS GENERAL RULES

1. No food, gum, or beverages are allowed in classrooms except for water and school meals as designated by a teacher.
2. Personal electronic devices must be turned off and kept in the student's bookbag or locked areas with a teacher during school hours (7:30-after afternoon announcements). Any piece of equipment that will create a disturbance in the school is prohibited and will be confiscated including gaming consoles.
3. Students are responsible for providing their own pencils and paper for each class.
4. Students are not to participate in any school fundraising activity without prior approval of the Thomas County Board of Education.
5. Public displays of affection such as hugging, kissing, holding hands, etc. will not be allowed.
6. Non-academically related items should not be brought to school without prior approval. Such items will be confiscated and returned to a parent only.

7. No gambling will be allowed.
8. Students must be picked up no later than 30 minutes following the end of the school day or any extra-curricular event. Pickup arrangements should be made in advance. Failure to arrange timely pickup may result in disciplinary action.
9. Students who have received disciplinary consequences for bullying, fighting, any sexual offense, and/or threats/intimidation for the current school year prior to the dance/school event will not be permitted to attend the school sponsored dances/events. Students receiving ISS/OSS on the day of the dance/school event will not be allowed to attend that particular dance/school event. No face coverings will be allowed at the school dance.
10. Students with 13 or more unexcused absences may not be allowed to attend the dance/school event.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

All personal phones/devices, including SmartPhones/watches, tablets, e-readers, and headphones at TCMS will be turned off from 7:30 a.m. until after the afternoon dismissal announcements **and stored in students' bookbags (not purses). Students will not have cell phones on their person during this time. Following the afternoon dismissal announcements, students will continue to follow the TCMS cell phone/electronic device policy. Students that do not have a bookbag, will turn his/her cell phone to the homeroom teacher upon arrival to school. The teacher will keep it in a LOCKED cabinet and will return it at the end of the day.** Phones should not be left on stand-by, silent, or vibrate mode. Students who have their phones/electronic devices confiscated may pay a **$10.00 fee** to get their device back at the end of the day. Phones/devices will be returned to parents/guardians free of charge.

During the school day students who fail to adhere to the rules as stated in Student Code of Conduct may be referred for disciplinary action. Refer to page 49 regarding Field Trips and cell phone use.

Cell phones/electronic devices should not be used to video or take pictures of disruptive behavior such as fights or other disruptions. The sharing or posting of such videos or any other inappropriate videos or pictures is prohibited. TCMS administrators reserve the right to check devices for inappropriate use or inappropriate material.

Students should access the internet via the Thomas County Schools' wireless network while on school grounds using only Thomas County Schools' issued devices in order to ensure their internet connection is filtered through Thomas County Schools' filtering system as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act. Teachers and staff reserve the right to check an electronic or mobile device for proper connection.

TCMS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS INCLUDING CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES, EARBUDS, AIRPODS, HEADPHONES AND GAME CONSOLES SUCH AS PS5, XBOX OR NINTENDO SWITCH.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's use of all social media including e-mail, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and all other forms of electronic or digital media. **Many disciplinary matters and conflicts among students are rooted in communication that originates in social media.** Students and parents should be aware that students may be **subject to disciplinary action** for their communication on social media even if such communication occurs **off campus and during non-school hours**, if such communication constitutes **cyber-bullying**, and/or if such communication **in any way interferes with the good order of the school day or the ability of other students to feel safe and comfortable at school**. When posting messages on social media, students should apply this four-way test:

1. Is it the truth?

2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendship?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

If the answer to any one of these questions is “no,” it is probably better not to post. **The school appreciates the help of parents in monitoring student use of social media.** Disciplinary action for inappropriate use of social media will be at the discretion of the administration and may include counseling, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, recommendation for a tribunal,or referral to law enforcement, depending on the severity of the offense.

DRESS CODE

It is expected that every student will maintain the level of personal hygiene and safety necessary to ensure a healthy school environment and will refrain from any mode of dress which is distracting to classroom instruction or which contributes to the disruption of the normal function of the school. **The dress code applies to all school functions.**

Thomas County Middle School complies with the dress code policies of the Thomas County School district. The following types of clothing are considered inappropriate at Thomas County Middle School:

1. Footwear (shoes) must be worn and appropriate for the school setting both in appearance and safety. House shoes/slippers are not acceptable footwear for school.
2. No headgear is permitted in the building at any time during the school day. This includes bandanas, head wraps, and shower caps. The hoods of hooded sweatshirts are not allowed on head while in the building. This does not include any head coverings worn for religious reasons.
3. Clothing or ornamentation, which advertises alcohol or substances that are illegal for minors, or which displays suggestive phrases, designs, markings, or profanities are also prohibited.
4. Clothing that displays weapons, violence, gang affiliations, or other logos that cause dissension are not permitted.
5. Clothing or accessories which emulate non-human characteristics are not permitted.
6. No gang related signs, symbols, names, or other items that can be associated with any street gang. The principal or designee shall have the final say in determining if an item is gang related.
7. No tattoos depicting gang signs or symbols will be permitted.
8. Backless or strapless dresses or shirts are not permitted.
9. No midriff shirts or blouses are permitted. Midriff areas must be covered so that no skin is exposed on the torso at any time (front or back). Shirts are not to be tied in such a manner to reveal skin in the front or back. No sheer garments and no low-cut necklines are permitted. Cleavage must not show.
10. Appropriate undergarments must be worn. Clothing must not reveal undergarments.
11. If sleeveless shirts are worn, the straps must be 3 fingers wide. Tank tops, strapless tops,and thin strapped tops may not be worn.
12. Shorts, dresses, and skirts that are more than 4” above the knee are considered too short.
13. Slits in dresses and skirts may be no shorter than fingertip length (standing or sitting).
14. All pants and trousers must be worn at waist level and must fit properly. Pants may not have holes 4” above the knee, unfastened belts, or exposed undergarments.
15. Piercings will not be tolerated with the exception of the ears. Clear nose retainers must be worn in place of nose jewelry. Band aids and other items will not be permitted to cover up piercings.
16. Distracting hairstyles are prohibited.

School officials will make the interpretation of what is acceptable dress. Students who are judged to be inappropriately dressed will be allowed to correct the violation. Students will be assigned detention or ISS. Students who are unable to correct the violation will be suspended or placed in ISS until the violation is corrected. Repeat offenses may result in ISS or OSS. Dress code rules will **apply** at school sponsored dances.

FIELD TRIPS

All students are encouraged to participate in field trips. They are experiences that can enhance and reinforce our students' education.

If a student has more than two incidents of administrative ISS/OSS (Infinite Campus) and/or chronic minor behavior issues**,** the teacher may communicate with parents that their child is in danger of not attending an upcoming field trip.

Students may bring a cell phone on a field trip at their own risk. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Cell phones may be used:

- During designated free time as approved by the supervising teacher or administrator.
- To communicate with parents only when permission is granted by a staff member.
- For educational purposes when directed by a teacher.
- In emergency situations as directed by school personnel.

Cell phones may not be used:

- During instructional activities, tours, presentations, performances, or guided learning experiences unless directed by staff.
- To take photographs or videos of students, staff, or members of the public without permission.
- Post pictures, videos, or comments on social media that violate school rules or compromise the privacy of others.
- To access inappropriate content, send inappropriate messages, or engage in cyberbullying.
- Including headphones, earbuds, or other personal listening devices unless specifically authorized by staff.

DELIVERIES

Flowers, balloons, gifts: TCMS will not accept the delivery of food, gifts, flowers, and/or balloons to students.

EMERGENCY CLINIC CARDS

All students are asked to have parents/guardians fill out and sign an emergency card, which will be kept on file in the clinic. Names of relatives or neighbors who have permission to check the student out in an emergency should be listed on the cards as well as names of doctors, etc. All students must have a card on file. As soon as information changes, parents/guardians should notify the front office. The emergency card will be used only in the case of a valid emergency. It will not be used on a regular basis when a parent cannot be reached.

Thomas County System Testing Calendar
2026-2027

SCHOOL(s)	DATE(s)	TEST
HH	August 10-Sept 18	GKIDS Readiness check
TCCHS	Sept. 12	SAT Weekend
TCCHS	Sept. 19	ACT Weekend
TCCHS	Oct. 1	School Day SAT
TCMS (8th)	**Oct. 21**	**PSAT 8/9**
TCCHS, RC, TCA	Oct. 22	PSAT/NMSQT
TCCHS	Oct. 29	School Day ACT
TCCHS	Nov. 7	SAT Weekend
TCA	Dec. 3-4	End of Pathway Assessments
TCCHS	Dec. 5	SAT Weekend
TCCHS, RC, & TCA	Dec. 14-18	Georgia Milestones EOC: ELA, Math, Science, SS
TCMS (5-8)	**Jan 11-15**	**CogAT**
HH (K), GP (1st-2nd), CC (3rd-4th)	Jan 25-29	COGAT K&1
HH, GP, CC, TCMS, TCCHS, TCA	**Jan. 6- Feb. 26**	**ACCESS for ELLs**
TCCHS	March 4	School Day SAT
TCCHS	March 17-March 31	End of Pathway Assessments
TCCHS	March 18	School Day ACT
CC, TCMS, TCCHS	**March 22-April 30**	**GAA Admin Window**
TCCHS	Apr. 10	ACT Weekend
TCA	April 14-15	End of Pathway Assessments
TCCHS	April 21-April 28	End of Pathway Assessments Retest
CC, TCMS, RC, TCA	**April 26-30**	**Grades 3-8 GA Milestones: ELA & Math**
TCCHS	May 1	SAT Weekend
CC, TCMS, RC, TCA	**May 3-6**	**Grades 3-8 Georgia Milestones Science & Social Studies**
TCCHS	May 4-May 15	Advanced Placement Testing
TCCHS, RC, & TCA	May 5	Ga Milestones EOC Literature and Composition II Day 1
TCCHS, RC, & TCA	May 6	Ga Milestones EOC Literature and Composition II Day 2
TCCHS, RC, TCA, & TCMS	**May 10**	**GA Milestones EOC Algebra 1**
TCCHS, RC, & TCA	May 12	GA Milestones EOC Biology
TCCHS, RC, & TCA	May 13	GA Milestones EOC US History
TCCHS	May 18-22	AP Late Testing
CC, TCMS, RC, TCA	**June 2 - 3**	**GA Milestones EOG Retest Grades 3, 5, 8**
TCCHS, RC & TCA	June 14-17	GA Milestones EOC Summer School

Thomas County Middle School Code of Conduct Matrix			Thomas County Middle School Code of Conduct Matrix													
			Teacher Managed & Tier 1				Administrator Managed & Tier 2								Administrative Managed & Tier 3	
Disciplinary Infraction	**Level**	**Definition of Infraction**	**Teacher Manage-Level B/Parent Contact**	**Counselor Referral**	**Restitution (Admin Handled)**	**Confiscation**	**Adminstrative Detention/ Admin Conference Parent Contact**	**In-School Suspension (1-5)**	**In-School Suspension (6-10)**	**Behavior Intervention Group**	**Out of School Suspension (1-5)**	**Out of School Suspension (6-10)**	**Report to Law Enforcement**	**FBA and BIP**	**Long Term Suspension(more than 10 days but not beyond current semester or school year: Request for tribunal**	**Expulsion beyond the current school semester or year: Request for Tribunal**
1. Academic Dishonesty Grading: 1st--Alternate Assesment/Level B 2nd--ISS and Alternate Asignment 3rd-- ISS + zero	I	Intentional receiving or providing of unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assessments and assignments. May include but is not limited to failure to cite sources	**1**				**2**	**2**	**3**							
	II	Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a minor classroom assignment or project. Includes but is not limited to intentional dishonesty on minor classroom projects, assignments, homework, etc.	**1**				**2**	**2**	**3+**							
	III	Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a major exam (includes benchmarks), statewide assessment or project or the falsification of school records. Includes but is not limited to cheating on major exams, statewide assessments or other state mandated academic work; Includes the falsification of school records; forgery; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy of academic dishonesty three or more times during the same school year						**1**	**2**		**3+**					
2. Accessory		Causes someone else to commit a violation, helps in commission of violation; or advises, encourages, hires or procures acts in concert with another to commit violation					Subject to the same interventions and consequences as the students who are actively involved in the infraction									
3. Alcohol	I	Unintentional possession of alcohol				**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**				**1**			
	II	Under the influence of alcohol without possession										**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**
	III	Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol											**1**		**1**	**1**
4. Arson	II	Attempt to commit arson or use of matches, lighters or incendiary devices at school; includes but not limited to the use of fireworks; Includes but is not limited to trash can fires without damage to school property			**1-2**			**1**			**2**		**1-2**			
	III	Intentional damage as a result of arson related activity or the use of an incendiary device; Includes but not limited to setting fires to school property											**1**		**1**	**1**

Thomas County Middle School Code of Conduct Matrix			Thomas County Middle School Code of Conduct Matrix													
			Teacher Managed & Tier 1				Administrator Managed & Tier 2								Administrative Managed & Tier 3	
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5. Aggressive avior/Battery (The key difference between battery and fighting is that fighting involves mutual participation)	I	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in no bodily injuries; Includes but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other intentional physical contact					**1**	**1-2**	**2**	**3**	**3**					
	II	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries; Includes but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical contact that result in mild or moderate injuries							**1**		**2**	**3**	**1**			
	III	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any unintentional battery on school personnel; Physical attack on teachers should be reported as Violence Against a Teacher. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on battery three or more times during the same school year; Includes but not limited to choking, pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical contact resulting in severe injuries; Includes any physical attack on school personnel; includes incidents serious enough to warrant calling the police or security									**1**	**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**

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6. Bullying- See State Definition	I	**First Report** of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4: Includes but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or using any type of electronic means to harass or intimidate		**1**			**1**	**1**	**1**				**1**	**1**		
	II	**Second Report** of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4:Includes but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or the use of electronic equipment on school property or using school equipment to harass or intimidate		**1**					**2**	**2**	**2**		**2**	**2**		
	III	**Repeated acts**, as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4, occurring on school property or school possession that is a willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, or apparent means to do so, any display of force that puts victim at fear of harm, any written, verbal or physical act that threatens, harasses, or intimidates; causes another person physical harm; interferes with a student's education; so severe and pervasive that intimidation threatens educational environment. Includes but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or the use of electronic equipment on school property or using school equipment to harass or intimidate		**1**							**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**
7. Breaking & Entering – Burglary		Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft). (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building)			**1**								**1**		**1**	**1**

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8. Bus Misconduct		Refer To TCMS Bus Conduct														
9. Classroom Disruption	I	Minor disruption that includes not following classroom behavior rules; **horseplay**--Level B	**1-4**	**3**				**5**								
	II	Major classroom disruption that stops instruction for an extended period of time and requires administrative intervention					**1**	**1-2**	**3-4**	**4**	**5+**					
	III	Pattern of disruptions during the same school year. Documentation of Tier 1-3 interventions implemented and effectivness									**1**	**2**	**1**		**1+**	**1+**
10. Computer/Internet Misuse	II	Unauthorized use of school computer for anything other than instructional purposes. Includes but not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view inappropriate material, and violation of school computer use policy	**1**				**1**	**2**	**3**		**1**	**1**			**1**	**1**
	III	Unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, obtaining confidential information or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data; includes disclosure of a number, code, password, or other means of access to school computers or the school system computer network without proper authorization. Includes but not limited to hacking, using school computer to change or alter school records (grades, attendance, discipline, etc.)			**1**			**1**				**2**			**2**	**2**
11. Defiance/Willful Refusal	I	Failure to comply with instructions	**1-3**	**2-3**			**4**	**4+**								
	II	Blatant insubordination, willfully and defiantly refuses to immediately follow school staff directives. Students may also be charged with insubordination, up to level 3, for failure to comply with a search directive.						**1**	**2**	**3**	**1-3**					
	III	Failure to comply with administration; Pattern of blatant insubordination; Documentation of Tier 1-3 interventions.								**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**		**1**	**1**

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12. Disorderly Conduct--School disruption, fake fire alarms, terroristic threats, social media threats or sharing of threats	I	Creating or contributing to a moderate disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others						**1**	**1**		**2**	**2**				
	II	Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others; may represent a repeat action									**1**	**1**			**2**	
	III	Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the school environment or poses a threat to the health and safety of others. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on disorderly conduct three or more times during the same school year. If a violation of HB 268, then persons ages 13-17 must be referred to superior court.											**1**		**1**	**1**
13. Disrespect to Teacher/Staff	I	Disrespect to school personnel that is generally considered disrespectful actions	**1-2**	**2**				**3+**	**4**		**5+**					
	II	Inappropriate language/actions directed towards school personnel (includes theft from staff)						**1-2**	**3**		**1-2**					
	III	Pattern of major disruptions during the same school year. Documentation of Tier 1-3 interventions implemented and effectivness. Threat to school personnel - verbal, written, or electronic.										**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**

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14. Dress Code Violation	I	Non-offensive and non-suggestive clothing (such as pajamas), jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance	**1-2**				**3-4**	**5**	**6**							
	II	Offensive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 2 may include but are not limited to depiction of profanity, vulgarity, obscenity or violence; promote the use or abuse of tobacco, alcohol or drugs; accessories or clothing that emulate non-human characteristics; creates a threat to the health and safety of other students; creates a significant risk of disruption to the school environment; clothing worn in such a manner so as to reveal underwear, cleavage or bare skin; spaghetti straps, strapless tops, halter tops, see-through or mesh garments or other clothing that is physically revealing, provocative or contains sexually suggestive comments; clothing, logos, or symbols that cause dissension.					**1-2**	**1-3**	**4**						
15. Drugs, Except Alcohol and Tobacco	I	Unintentional possession of prescribed or over the counter medication. Does not include the possession of narcotics or any illegal drugs					**1**	**1**	**2**							
	II	Any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school; also includes the distribution of over the counter medication to another student					**1**	**1**	**2**		**1**	**1**	**1**			
	III	Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics; substances represented as drugs; Cannabidiol (aka "CBD" or "hemp oil") with or without THC											**1**		**1**	**1**

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16. Electronic Violation	I	Use of any electronic device, including but not limited to cellular phones, smart watches, bluetooth headphones, and similar devices from 7:30 A.M. until after afternoon announcements.	**1-2**			**2+**	**3**	**3**	**4**		**5+**	**5+**				
	II	Use of any electronic device to take or share unauthorized photos/videos of students or staff and disrupts learning during the school day.						**1**	**2**		**3**	**4**	**1**		**1**	**1**
	III	Use of any electronic device to share inappropriate photos or videos that are sexual in nature and disrupts learning during the school day.									**1**	**2+**	**1**		**1**	**1**
17. Electronic Smoking Device	I	Unintentional possession of an electronic smoking device				**1**	**1**	**1**			**1**					
	II	Use or knowledgeable possession of an electronic smoking device					**1**		**1**		**2**	**3**				
	III	Distribution and/or selling of electronic smoking devices: Level 3 may be used for students that violate school policy on electronic smoking devices three or more times during the same school year; Cannabidiol (aka "CBD" or "hemp oil") with THC or any illegal substance										**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**
Fighting - Involves Mutual Participation (including school activities and transportation)	I	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in no bodily injuries							**1**	**2**	**1-2**	**2**	**1-3**	**3**	**2-3**	**3**
	II	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries							**1**	**2**	**1-2**	**2**	**1-3**	**3**	**2-3**	**3**
	III	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in severe bodily injuries. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on fighting three or more times during the same school year											**1**		**1**	**1**

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19. Gambling		Engaging in a game or contest in which the outcome is dependent upon chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value			**1-4**		**1**	**2**									
20. Gang-Related	II	Wearing or possessing gang-related apparel; communicating either verbally or nonverbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang; possession or wearing of gang-related clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or using colors to convey gang membership or affiliation; gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc. to convey gang membership or affiliation; committing any other illegal act or other violation of school policies in connection with gang-related activity					**1**	**1**	**1**		**2**	**2**	**2**				
	III	The solicitation of others for gang membership, the defacing of school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans, threatening or intimating on behalf of a gang, the requirement or payment for protection or insurance through a gang. Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to gang activity. Soliciting students for gang membership; tagging or defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang; requiring payment for protection, insurance, otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity; inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity											**1**		**1**		**1**
21. Inappropriate Language	I	Use of vulgar or inappropriate language towards another student or staff member	**1-2**	**3**				**4**	**5+**		**6+**	**6+**					
	II	Use of discriminatory based slurs or comments towards another student or staff member		**1**				**1**	**2**		**3**	**4**					
22. Skipping/Attendance		Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardiness; including failure to report to class, skipping class, in an unauthorized area without permission, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions					**1**	**1-2**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**4**					

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23. Possession of Unapproved Items	I	The possession of any unauthorized item. Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous. Includes but is not limited to possession of toys, mobile devices, gadgets, personal items, gum, candy, etc; includes possession of pepper spray	**1**				**2**	**2-3**	**4**		**4**					
	II	The use of the any unauthorized item (i.e. toys, mobile devices, or gadgets). Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous; includes the use of pepper spray without injury					**1**	**2**	**3**		**4+**					
	III	The use or possession of unauthorized items including but not limited to toy guns or other items that can be construed as dangerous or harmful to the learning environment; Includes the possession of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks. The use of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks should be coded as Arson; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to unapproved items; includes the use of pepper spray with injury						**1**	**1**		**2**	**2**	**1-2**		**1-2**	**1-2**
24. Repeated Offenses		Collection of major incidents; Pattern of misbehavior											**1**		**1**	**1**
25. Sexual Harassment	I	Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes or suggestive jokes that are not directed towards specific individuals	**1**	**2**			**2**	**2**	**3+**	**3**						
	II	Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes, suggestive jokes or lewd gestures that are directed towards specific individuals or group of individuals		**1**			**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**4**				
	III	Physical or non-physical sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on sexual harassment three or more times during the same school year.						**1-2**	**1-2**		**3+**	**3+**				

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26. Sex Offenses	I	Inappropriate sexually-based physical contact including but not limited to public groping, inappropriate bodily contact, or any other sexual contact not covered in levels 2 or 3		**1**			**1**	**1**					**1**			
	II	Inappropriate sexually-based behavior including but not limited to sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts		**1**							**1**		**1**		**1**	**1**
	III	Engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or during school activities									**1**		**1**		**1**	**1**
27. Taunting		Teasing, taunting, demeaning others, picking, emotional stress (not on a repeated basis)	**1-2**	**3**			**3**	**3-5**	**3-5**		**5+**	**5+**				
28. Theft/ Larceny	I	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between $25 and $100			**1-3**			**1**	**2**	**2**	**3**		**1-3**	**3**	**4**	**4**
	II	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between $100 and $250			**1-3**			**1**	**2**	**2**		**3**	**1-3**	**3**	**4**	**4**
	III	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value exceeding $250. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on larceny/theft three or more times during the same school year			**1-3**				**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1-3**	**2**	**3**	**3**
29. Threat / Intimidation	II	Physical, verbal, written or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack						**1-4**	**1-4**	**1**	**1-4**	**1-4**		**4**		
	III	School-wide physical, verbal, written or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack; Note: Students that display a history of behavior that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm, threat of harm or visibly bodily harm											**1**		**1**	**1**

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30. Tobacco	I	Unintentional possession of tobacco products					**1**	**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**	**1**			
	II	Use of or knowledgeable possession of tobacco products					**1**	**1**	**2**		**3**		**1-4**		**4**	**4**
	III	Distribution and/or selling of tobacco products; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on tobacco three or more times during the same school year.											**1**		**1**	**1**
31. Vandalism	II	Participating in the minor destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission			**1-2**		**1**	**1-2**	**1-2**		**2+**	**2+**	**1+**			
	III	Participation in the willful/malicious destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on vandalism three or more times during the same school year			**1**								**1**		**1**	**1**
32. Weapons – Knife	I	Unintentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate					**1**	**1**			**1**		**1**			
	II	Intentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate						**1**			**2+**		**1**			
	III	Intentional possession, use or intention to use a knife or knife-like item with the intent to harm or intimidate											**1**		**1**	**1**
33. Weapons – Handgun	II	Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a handgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm											**1**		**1**	**1**
34. Weapons – Other	II	Unintentional possession of a weapon, other than a knife or firearm, or similarity to a weapon that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm						**1**	**1**				**1**			
	III	Intentional possession and/or use of any weapon, other than a knife or firearm, in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Intentional possession of item that has the appearance of a weapon											**1**		**1**	**1**
35. Weapons – Rifle/Shotgun	III	Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a rifle or shotgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm											**1**		**1**	**1**

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