2026 – 2027 NORTHWEST MIDDLE STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK



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Northwest Website - www.carrollk12.org/nws/
CCPS Website - https://www.carrollk12.org/

And so together they created a school they loved!

ATTENDANCE

School Day

Our school day/hours are 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. **Students are not permitted on school property prior to this time as there is no supervision and students must remain outside.** A bell will ring at 8:00 a.m. to allow students into the building. Students should report to their locker/homeroom – if students would like breakfast, they should report to the cafeteria, first.

Students must be in homeroom by 8:25 or they are considered late to school. If a student has an absent note, they should check in with their homeroom teacher and then bring it to the main office.

Absences

When your child is absent from school, a parent/guardian must call or e-mail nwsattendance@carrollk12.org by 9:00 a.m. with a valid reason for the absence. A message may also be left before or after school hours by contacting our main office. This would apply to every day your child is absent. Parents will receive a phone call when absences are unverified after 9:00 a.m.

Upon returning to school, it is the student's responsibility to obtain any missed assignments from their teachers. If you know in advance that your child will be absent for several days, please send-in a note to receive approval from administration. For absences of three or more days, parents are encouraged to request assignments, however teachers are not required to provide work in advance. Any work not being provided in advance will be provided upon the student's return to school. Assignments provided are intended to support learning, however they do not replace nor replicate classroom instruction.

A student with a non-medical excused absence exceeding 15 consecutive school days shall be withdrawn from school.

Tardy to School

Northwest Middle School recognizes the relationship between consistent attendance and academic achievement. Maintaining consistent attendance includes coming to school on time. If a student is late to school repeatedly, without an excused reason, there may be disciplinary consequences. It is our hope that we can work together to ensure that students come to school on time and ready to learn each day.

Vacations and Pre-Planned Activities

Family vacations during school days are discouraged due to the impact they may have on school performance and loss of instructional time – however, we understand that circumstances arise. Absences for family travel/activities may be excused if the request is made in advance, to the principal, and students will be permitted to make up any missed work. Instructional time and schoolwork such as class participation/discussion or laboratory experiments are difficult to make-up. Parents of students already having excessive absences and poor grades need to understand the implications of any extended absences. It is the student's responsibility to request any missing work.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

Northwest Middle School students will be expected to do their own work and refrain from cheating or plagiarizing their work.

Plagiarism is copying and using someone else's words, images or ideas and passing them off as their own work. Cheating refers to copying from someone else's tests, exams, handing in work done by someone else, using electronic or other devises to aid in completion of assignments that is not acceptable by the teacher.

Academic dishonesty/cheating in any form on graded assignments will not be tolerated and may result in loss of credit or disciplinary action.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students are only permitted to ride their assigned bus to and from school. Only in extenuating circumstances can a student ride another bus, but it must be approved in advance by administration. A parent note must be received by the main office prior to 11:00 with this request from both parties so a decision can be made in a timely manner. Appropriate administrative action will be taken for students receiving bus referrals for chronic behavior, as riding a bus is a privilege.

THE DAILY DOZEN OF BUS RIDING

1. Be at the bus stop ten minutes before pick-up time.
2. Walk safely to the bus stop and wait in a safe manner.
3. Watch your step and use the handrail when getting on and off the bus.
4. Take your assigned seat promptly and remain seated for your ride to and from school.
5. Sit in the seat-facing front; keep your feet, books, and other articles out of the aisle.
6. Always keep your hands and head inside the bus.
7. Report any damage that you see to the driver.
8. **Eating**, smoking/vaping, or using vulgar language is not permitted.
9. Your conduct should be quiet and orderly so the driver is not distracted from the important job of driving. If using your cellphone while on the bus, students must have the volume silenced or use earbuds/headphones.
10. Your driver is responsible for the safe operation of the bus; listen to the driver's instruction.
11. Wait until the bus has come to a stop before leaving your seat.
12. Cross ten feet in front of the bus with the warning lights only upon discharge and if you live on the opposite side of the road. Be sure you also check traffic both ways.

Transportation – Emergency Card - Parents/Guardian are to establish a way to and from school on the emergency card. Any changes must be made in writing.

Beverages/Drinks

Only water may be consumed throughout the day. If parents choose to send another beverage/drink with their child to school, other than water, these can only be consumed at lunch in the cafeteria.

CELL PHONES/PERSONAL ELECTORNIC DEVICES

The following regulations govern the possession and use of portable electronic devices in Carroll County Public Schools. Acceptable use guidelines for each school level will be developed, reviewed, and published annually in the CCPS student handbook.

NWS Students

1. Personally owned portable electronic devices must be silenced and stored (out of sight) for the entire school day. Students may not use their personally owned portable electronic devices during lunch.
2. Students may use their personally owned portable electronic devices before school and after school in a non-disruptive manner, with approval from a school administrator.
3. No portable electronic device shall be used to record, store, or transmit any type of image, sound, or video except for approved instructional activities utilizing CCPS-provided devices with the express permission of school staff.
4. Disciplinary action, as outlined in the Carroll County Public Schools student services manual, shall be taken when a student fails to follow the directions of a staff member regarding portable electronic devices or if a preponderance of evidence exists that the student has violated the terms of the acceptable use procedures and guidelines or other school policy.

NWS Portable Device Procedures

1st Offense – Verbal Warning – Ask the student to put personal device away. Teacher contacts the parent/guardian. If a student does not comply, call the main office.

2nd Offense – Minor Referral – Ask the student to put the personal device away. Teacher writes a minor referral and calls the parent/guardian. If a student does not comply, call the office.

3rd Offense – Minor Referral – Teacher calls and sends the student to the office with the personal device. Teacher writes a minor referral. Administration calls the parent/guardian. Student will receive personal device when they are dismissed for the day.

4th Offense – Major Referral – Teacher calls and sends the student to the office with the personal device. Teacher writes a major referral. Administration calls the parent/guardian to pick up the personal device from school.

DANCES/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Dances, afternoon activities, and extracurricular activities are a part of the middle school experience. We encourage attendance and participation, but these are privileged events/activities.

In order to attend students must:

- Be in school for the entire school day (exceptions must be pre-approved by an administrator)
- No more than 1 major referral (First Rec Night of the Year = no major referrals)
- No fights/altercations
- Stay for the entire duration of the event
- Snack money must be given to students before arriving at school the day of the event. Office staff will not accept money to give to students.

We expect students to follow school policies and procedures while in attendance. Students who do not comply with outlined expectations may forfeit their right to participate in any extra-curricular activity.

DELIVERIES TO STUDENTS

Northwest students may not receive deliveries such as flowers, food (Grub-Hub, Door-Dash, etc.), and balloons during the school day.

DRESS CODE

The Board of Education recognizes the value of allowing individual student expression as well as the necessity of protecting student health and safety while maintaining an atmosphere conducive to education. Student dress code procedures must be designed with the goal of balancing these competing interests.

All dress code procedures will adhere to health and safety codes and comply with applicable law. Student attire that can be reasonably forecasted to either materially disrupt the educational environment or infringe upon the rights of other students to access and participate in a safe and welcoming educational environment will be prohibited. No procedure will impose dress and grooming rules based on gender in violation of Title IX. Procedures will specifically define ambiguous terms, and examples will be provided when practical.

Cleavage Area: An area between the breasts exposed by a low-cut neckline
Midriff Area: An area between the chest and the abdomen
Undergarments: Clothing designed to be worn under other pieces of clothing. These include, but are not limited to, undershirts, tank-top undershirts, underpants, boxers, compression shorts or shirts, and bras, including bralettes and sport bras
Head Coverings: Include, but are not limited to, hats, sunglasses, visors, hoods, beanies, scarves, and bandanas

Procedure
Students of Carroll County Public Schools are required to groom themselves in a manner that is not disruptive to the educational process and is reflective of a learning environment. Students are expected to abide by this dress code from their arrival to the school building to the defined ending of the school day as well as at any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned event.

Head Coverings:

- Be removed upon entering the school building, unless approved for religious or medical reasons.
- Certain headbands, scrunchies, and folded bandanas, which are used to hold hair in place and do not cover the entire head, are permitted.
- One's face must be visible at all times.

Shirts:

- Shall reasonably cover the back, the cleavage area, and the entire midriff area.
- See-through or mesh shirts are not permitted, unless worn in conjunction with an appropriate top.

Dresses/Shorts/Skirts/Skorts/Pants:

- Shall cover the entire buttocks and private areas while the student is sitting, standing, and bending over.
- Pants shall cover undergarments at all times; that is, the waistline of the pants shall be on the upper hips.

Other:

- Appropriate shoes shall be worn.
- No bedroom slippers or pajamas shall be worn.
- Clothing that may endanger health or safety, that may be used as a weapon, or that may cause damage to property shall not be worn.
- Undergarments shall not be worn as outerwear or be visible through outer garments.
- Clothing shall not be worn that would lead school officials to reasonably believe that such attire will materially disrupt, interfere with, disturb, or distract from school activities, the safe operation of the school, or the rights of other students to access and participate in a safe and welcoming educational environment.
- Clothing shall not convey advertisements for or promote the use of condoms or other birth control devices, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or the unlawful use of weapons, stated or implied.
- Clothing shall not convey profanity or symbols/messages depicting, implying, or which are reasonably perceived as promoting intolerance, hatred, and/or a hostile educational environment or harassment/bullying on the basis of age, color, genetic information, marital status, mental or physical disability, ancestry or national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, Confederate Battle Flags and swastikas.
- Clothing and accessories shall not depict symbols/messages of groups which are generally recognized as promoting intolerance, hatred, and harassment/bullying, such as the Ku Klux Klan or Aryan nation.
- Clothing shall not convey establishments or products whose names can be directly interpreted or construed as carrying a "double meaning" involving sexual innuendo, gang symbols, or sexual activity.
- Body art, whether permanent or temporary, which would otherwise violate this policy if depicted on attire, must be completely covered during the school day or at any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned event.

Dress Code Violations

All student dress code violations shall be addressed in a respectful manner. When possible, a student's dress code concerns shall be addressed by a staff member of the student's gender identity.

A student found wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to change or remove the item (ex: hat). Should the student not be able to change or remove the item, clothing may be provided. Students that fail to cooperate will be referred to an administrator. Any student not complying with the direction of the administrator may be considered insubordinate and may lose class time or receive a disciplinary consequence.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the dress code for the purpose of school activities (i.e., spirit weeks, athletic game days, dances) are up to the discretion of the school administration.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE CARDS

Each student must have an Emergency Procedure Card on file with the main office. This card must be signed by a parent or guardian. **The signature of a step-parent or non-custodial parent is not acceptable.** The signed card indicates the names of people who the school may communicate with, either by phone or e-mail. This also gives permission for someone to pick up a student, only if a parent or guardian is not available. In cases where it is a planned pick-up, a note with the name of the person picking up the student should be given to the office.

HARASSMENT & BULLYING

The Board of Education of Carroll County is committed to establishing and promoting a safe, non-threatening environment for all students to learn. Therefore, the Board will not tolerate any acts of discrimination, harassment, hazing, bullying, hostile acts, or other forms of intimidation on the part of students or employees. Further, the Board believes that discrimination, harassment, hazing, bullying, and hostile acts are both morally wrong and offensive and will not tolerate such conduct on the part of any employee, supervisor, manager, administrator, student, or visitor. It is the Board's intent to provide all employees and students a work and learning environment free from such acts.

If a student feels that he or she is a victim of harassment or bullying it should immediately be reported to a staff member. Appropriate action will be taken regarding the incident. Actions may include but are not limited to peer mediation, mediation with a school counselor, administrative warning, or further disciplinary action.

To report a bullying concern, please go to - https://ext.carrollk12.org/brsext/

MEDICATION

If medication administration is necessary during school hours, a Medication Form must be completed before any representative of the school can administer the prescription or non-prescription medications to any student. These forms can be requested from the school nurse. The following procedures must then be followed:

1. Medications must be in original container and marked specifically for the student.

2. All homeopathic/herbal prescription AND non-prescription medicines require a parent AND a physician or nurse practitioner signature. Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen in age-appropriate doses do not require a physician's signature.

3. **Medications are not to be transported by students.** This is in violation of our Drug-Alcohol policy. Leftover medication will be returned to a parent, guardian, designated adult. Unused, unclaimed, or expired medicines will be destroyed at the end of the school year.

PARENT – TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents are welcome and encouraged to communicate with teachers, administrators, and counselors. Appointments must be made for teacher conferences through the individual teacher or the grade level team leader. It is requested that all e-mail communication be in reference to school and/or student information. Forwarded e-mails (junk e-mails) are not appropriate for school communications. We have three planned parent/teacher conferences throughout the school year in the evening. We also send out a weekly (every Friday) Northwest Glance via e-mail.

HOME ACCESS CENTER

1. Home Access Center is available for parents and legal guardians to login and view information pertaining to their students. Please follow these directions to login to your account:
2. Go to the Carroll County Public Schools website at www.carrollk12.org
   - Click on Academics
   - Click on Student and Family Resources
   - Click on the 'Home Access Center' link
   - A new page will open; click the 'Request Password' link.
3. Enter the email address you provided on your student's emergency card (it will be the email account where you received this message). You will receive an email to that account with a link to a web page. If the email message does not appear within several minutes, check your junk mail folder and make sure it wasn't delivered there. It will come from donotreply@carrollk12.org.
4. Click the link from the email message and follow the instructions on-screen. You will be prompted to answer 3 questions about one of your students. Once you have answered the questions correctly, your password will appear on-screen. Click the link on that page to be taken to the Home Access Center login screen.
5. Login using your email address and the password that was displayed on-screen. After logging in, be sure to click 'Profile' in the top right-hand corner and identify a new password for your account.

HALLWAY/BATHROOM PASSES

All students will be provided with their own Hall/Bathroom Pass. Students requesting to leave class for any reason should first ask the teacher for permission and have their teacher initial their pass before leaving the room. The student should go directly to the location requested and return to class promptly.

SERVICE-LEARNING HOURS

In order for a student to graduate from a Maryland High School, he or she must complete 75 hours of service-learning. These hours can be earned beginning at the conclusion of fifth grade. Students may earn fifteen hours in the eighth-grade Family and Consumer Science class. The Student Service-Learning Coordinator at Northwest Middle School is Mrs. Ricketts. Student Service Validation Forms are available in the counseling and main office as well as online at Service Learning - Carroll County Public School District (finalsite.com). Completed paper forms should be returned to our main office or Mrs. Ricketts, our Service-Learning Coordinator.

STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOTAPING

Throughout the school year, the Carroll County Public Schools' frequently reports and/or publishes school activities and may use a student's photograph, video image, or voice for educational, informational, or public relations purposes, with or without identification by name. The Board of Education of Carroll County believes that parents have the right, should they choose, to deny the use of their child's photograph, video image, or voice for such purposes.

Carroll County Public Schools Public Relations: If a parent does not wish to have their child appear in a videotape or photograph or have his/her voice reproduced on tape, the parent should notify the school principal in writing and indicate the extent to which they wish to deny such reproduction (e.g., class pictures, etc.). It is assumed that parents/guardians consent to their children being photographed, videotaped, or audiotaped unless such notification is received. At the beginning of each school year, the Office of Community and Media Relations will publish a statement in the Informational Calendar explaining to parents the process for notification. The same statement will be sent to all principals for inclusion in their first parent newsletter of the school year.

Carroll County Public Schools Website: There may be times when the school system would choose to use a child's image or likeness on its website. In this case, the school will contact the parent to seek permission through the use of the "Consent and Release Form for the World Wide Web." Students whose photos appear on the Carroll County Public Schools' website will be identified by first name and school only.

Coverage by News Media: There are also occasions when the media may cover certain school events (such as when a government leader visits a school). If a parent does not wish to have their child's name or likeness published by the media, the parent should submit their concerns, in writing, directly to the school involved so that the media may be so advised. Carroll County Public Schools has no control over the media when they are covering various newsworthy situations or events such as sporting events that are open to the public. This policy does not apply to coverage by student media of sports or other school events that are open to the general public (newspaper, yearbook, etc.). For any questions, contact the Office of Community and Media Relations.

Surveillance Cameras: This policy does not apply to the use of surveillance cameras for school security purposes. All questions regarding this administrative regulation should be directed to the Office of Community and Media Relations.

TELEPHONES/MESSAGES

In order to minimize classroom interruptions, we do not allow students to take phone calls or text messages during the school day. In case of emergency, please contact our main office and we will deliver a message to your child.

PARENTS VISITING SCHOOL

- Anyone who is not an enrolled student is required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building **must present a valid ID** and receive a visitor's pass to go beyond the main office.
- Parents must contact the school in advance if they would like to bring/eat lunch with their child. They are not permitted to bring food for other students. We kindly ask that parents

not be on their cellphones while eating with their child. This includes taking pictures of your child and their friends. We appreciate your cooperation in these matters.

- If a parent/legal guardian would like to observe their child's class, they must give 48-hour advanced notice to the administration. A parent/guardian may only observe for up to Two (2) hours within a given marking period. Procedures will be explained once a request is made.
- Every effort shall be made to limit interference with instruction and not to distract students or staff during a visitation. Visitors will be asked to remain seated in a designated area and will not be permitted to speak to staff or students during class. Should a parent/legal guardian have questions for the teacher, a separate appointment shall be scheduled for that purpose. Visitors wishing to observe a class are asked to make arrangements for other children in their care in order to minimize disruptions. Classroom observations shall last no longer than two (2) hours, include no more than two (2) individuals at a time, and be limited to one (1) time per marking period. If a representative of the family (i.e., advocate, attorney, etc.) is observing, that visit shall count as the quarterly observation.

Northwest Middle School Acceptable Use Policy for Technology

Technology Resources - https://www.carrollk12.org/operation/technology-services

Students must:

1. **Respect their privacy and that of others.**
   - Sign into the computers as themselves and access only their accounts.
   - Not get into the accounts of other students.
   - Not distribute private information about others or themselves.
2. **Respect the school equipment.**
   - Not adjust the equipment in any way (settings, homepages, desktop)
   - Not plug or unplug any devices to the computers.
   - Not play games unless instructed by a teacher for educational purposes.
   - Not use school equipment for email, instant chatting or messaging unless for school purpose and under the supervision of school personnel.
   - Not download anything onto the computers (including music or programs)
   - Keep food and drink away from the equipment.
3. **Respect the intellectual property of others.**
   - Not infringe copyrights (no making illegal copies of music, games, or movies!).
   - Not plagiarize.
4. **Respect the principles of community.**
   - Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
   - Report any inappropriate materials to a teacher.
   - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create inappropriate or illegal material (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or meant to harass.)
   - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
   - Be careful when printing. If you click but nothing happens, get assistance, **do not click print again.**

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Failure to follow these guidelines will result in consequences ranging from:

- Temporary loss of privilege to use equipment
- Permanent loss of privilege to use equipment
- Billing for repair costs
- Other consequences as mandated by school and county policy.

LOGGING INTO THE COMPUTER

All students must always use their login and password to log into school computers. It is important to use this log-in to gain access to your personal folder on the school server – username and password will be shared at the beginning of the school year. They are not to be shared with other students.

HALLWAY/CAFÉ EXPECTATIONS

Students may lose recess privileges for not following expectations.

Hallway Behavior	Cafeteria/Recess Behavior
• No Running, Jumping • No Yelling, Screaming • No Physical contact – pushing, shoving, or "horseplay" • No Cell Phone Use	• No Throwing Food • No Leaving Trash • No Food/Drink Outside • No Physical/Aggressive Behavior • No Kicking Basketballs, Footballs • Remain seated. Trash cans will be brought to you.

SAFE SCHOOLS – "SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING"

Safe Schools Maryland - an ANONYMOUS and FREE reporting system available to students, teachers, school staff members, parents, and the general public to report any school or student safety concerns, including mental health concerns. Safe Schools Maryland is Maryland's only official anonymous reporting system. Safe Schools Maryland operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

https://www.carrollk12.org/operation/school-security