Manchester Middle School

Student & Family Handbook
2026–2027

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to Manchester Middle School! We are excited to begin another school year filled with learning, growth, and opportunity. Our staff is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and engaging learning environment where every student can thrive.

This handbook serves as a guide to our school's expectations, procedures, and opportunities. We encourage families to review it together and refer to it throughout the school year. Thank you for partnering with us to support every student.

Together, Panther Pride Continues Here!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Willis
Principal

District Mission

The Mission of the Manchester Local School District is to provide an emotionally and physically safe and encouraging environment that promotes academic and extracurricular excellence, develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and nurtures essential life and relationship skills.

District Vision

The Vision of the Manchester Local School District is to inspire every student to achieve personal excellence while preparing them to become productive, responsible citizens, and lifelong learners.

About This Handbook

This handbook provides students and families with an overview of school expectations, procedures, services, and district policies. It should be reviewed together and referenced throughout the school year.

School Information

Information	Details
Grades	6–8
School Day	7:35 a.m.–2:39 p.m.
Office Hours	7:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Primary Communication	ParentSquare
Grades & Attendance	ProgressBook
Learning Platform	Google Classroom
Website	www.panthercountry.org

Panther Pride Continues Here

Manchester Middle School is committed to helping every student be Safe, Respectful, and Responsible. Panther PATH expectations guide student behavior throughout the building.

PANTHER PATH

	HALLWAYS	CLASSROOM	CAFETERIA	RESTROOM	RECESS	ASSEMBLIES
Be Safe	• Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Walk	• Enter and exit the classroom calmly	• Walk to and from the lunch room • Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Wait patiently • Stay seated with feet on the floor	• Wash and dry your hands • Avoid groups	• Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Use equipment appropriately • Walk (for indoor recess only)	• Enter and exit quietly and calmly with your teacher • Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Sit in assigned seat; keep aisles clear • Leave materials in class • Ask permission to leave
Be Respectful	• Voice Level = 1 • Help others and be considerate	• Voice Level = 1 • Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Listen when the teacher is talking	• Voice Level = 2 • Listen and follow directions	• Voice Level = 0 • Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Clean up after self • Respect other's privacy	• Voice Level = 3 • Use kind words • Include everyone • Respect equipment • Follow rules of the game • Be a team player	• Voice Level = 0 (unless otherwise instructed) • Keep eyes and ears on presentation • Show appreciation for speaker
Be Responsible	• Report to class on time • Keep your lockers and hallway clean • Have a hall pass	• Bring all materials needed • Clean up your space • Be ready to learn • Encourage others and be kind	• Clean up your area • Use food and drink as intended • Remember lunch code • Report problems to adults	• Take care of school property • Return to class quickly with pass • Report problems to adults	• Dress appropriately for the weather • Ask permission to leave	• Remain seated until dismissed • Follow directions of the speaker and teacher

Voice Level: 0 = Silent, 1 = Quiet Voice, 2 = Conversation, 3 = Outside Voice

Visitors

All visitors must report to the office, sign in, and receive permission before entering the building. Student visitors from other schools require principal approval.

Before & After School

Students arriving before 7:25 a.m. should report to the cafeteria for supervision. After dismissal, students must leave campus promptly unless participating in a supervised school activity.

Section 2 – Attendance & Academics

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for student success. Students are expected to attend school daily, arrive on time, and remain in school for the full instructional day whenever possible.

- Attendance is recorded each morning during homeroom.
- Parents/guardians should notify the office by 9:00 a.m. when a student is absent.
- Unverified absences require school follow-up.
- Medically excused absences are handled according to district policy.

Attendance Review

- Families are contacted when students have missed 5% of the school year and when students are on track to miss 10% of the school year.
- Students who miss more than 80 hours of school without a verified medical excuse will be referred to the Attendance Intervention Team.
- Students who are habitually truant will be referred to the Attendance Intervention Team and may be referred to the Summit County Truancy Officer when appropriate.

Tardy to School

The warning bell rings at 7:30 a.m. and the tardy bell rings at 7:35 a.m.

- Students arriving after the tardy bell must report to the office.
- Students accumulating four or more tardies during a grading period receive a lunch detention for each additional tardy.

Early Dismissals

- Students leaving early must be signed out through the office.
- Advance parent notification is requested whenever possible.
- Early departures affect perfect attendance recognition.

Academic Success

Students are expected to come prepared, participate in learning, complete assignments, and seek help when needed.

ProgressBook & Google Classroom

- Monitor grades, attendance, and missing assignments in ProgressBook.
- Teachers may post assignments, resources, and announcements in Google Classroom.
- Families are encouraged to review student progress regularly.

Homework

Homework reinforces classroom learning. While time may be provided during the school day, students should expect to complete some work at home.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued to students every 9 weeks during the school year.

Grade	Percent	Description
A	90–100	Outstanding
B	80–89	Above Average
C	70–79	Average
D	60–69	Below Average
F	0–59	Failing
I	N/A	Incomplete

Promotion & Retention

- Fail one core class: promoted.
- Fail two core classes: promotion may require tutoring and/or summer school.
- Fail three or more core classes: student may be retained.

State and Local Testing

Students participate in all required Ohio State assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science at the appropriate grade levels. Additionally, students may be assessed for Superior Cognitive and Creative Thinking gifted identification in 6th grade, and reading and math gifted ability in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Scheduled conferences are held during the fall and spring. Additional conferences may be arranged by contacting the school or classroom teacher.

Student Vacations & Make-Up Work

- Vacations during the school year are discouraged.
- Notify teachers and the office at least one week in advance.
- Obtain a vacation form from the office.
- Work assigned before the student leaves is due upon the students return.
- Make-up work assigned after returning is generally due within five school days.

Withdrawals and Transfers

- The procedure for withdrawal or transfer is as follows:
- Notify the office of your intent to withdraw or transfer at least one week before the actual date.
- Obtain a withdrawal form from the office.
- Follow instructions of the school secretary.
- Have each teacher check off the form provided.
- Return the completed form to the office and receive a transfer slip at that time.

Section 3 – Student Life

Student Support Services

Manchester Middle School is committed to supporting the academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being of every student.

School Counselor

The school counselor provides individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, academic planning, problem-solving support, and assistance with social-emotional concerns.

Medication at School

Students requiring medication during the school day must have the appropriate authorization forms completed and on file. All medication must be stored and administered through the main office.

Lockers

- Each student is assigned a locker.
- Lockers remain school property and may be searched when permitted by Board policy.
- Students are responsible for items stored in their lockers.
- The school is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items.

Transportation

Safe transportation depends on cooperation between students, families, and staff. Students are expected to follow all bus rules and directions from the driver. Any problems or questions regarding bus transportation should be directed to Christina Gray, Transportation Supervisor.

- Ride only your assigned bus.
- Remain seated while the bus is moving.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- No eating, animals, or unsafe behavior on the bus.
- Report concerns to the driver or school staff.

School Closings

School delays and cancellations will be communicated through ParentSquare and other district communication channels.

Textbooks & School Property

- Textbooks and Chromebooks are loaned by the district.
- Students are responsible for loss or damage beyond normal wear.
- School property should be treated with care and respect.

Band & Choir

Band or Choir is required for Grade 6 students. Participation is optional for Grades 7–8. If students choose not to participate in band or choir in 7th or 8th grade, they must opt-out by the end of the previous school year. Once scheduling is finalized, drop requests may not be able to be accommodated.

Student Activities & Clubs

Activity	Grades	Typical Schedule
Student Council	6–8	Throughout Year
Youth to Youth	6–8	Monthly
Art Club	6–8	Monthly
Builder's Club	6–8	Monthly
Arnold Service	6–8	Ongoing
Power of the Pen	7–8	Weekly
School Play	6–8	Seasonal
Ski Club	All	Winter

Athletics

Students who meet eligibility requirements may participate in school-sponsored athletics.

Sport	Season
Football	Fall
Volleyball	Fall
Cross Country	Fall
Cheerleading	Fall/Winter
Basketball	Winter
Wrestling	Winter
Track	Spring

Cafeteria Expectations

- Walk at all times.
- Use appropriate voice levels.
- Clean your area before leaving.
- Follow staff directions.
- Remain respectful of others.

Students are encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities, demonstrate Panther Pride, and contribute positively to the school community.

SECTION 4

Student Expectations & Panther PATH

Panther Pride Continues Here

Every Panther contributes to a positive school culture by demonstrating safe, respectful, and responsible behavior in every area of the building. The Panther PATH expectations provide a common language for students and staff and are taught, modeled, and reinforced throughout the school year.

Panther PATH Expectations

Expectation	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
Hallways	Walk; keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.	Voice Level 1; help others.	Report to class on time; hall pass; keep halls clean.
Classrooms	Enter/exit calmly.	Listen to the teacher; Voice Level 1.	Bring materials; be ready to learn.
Cafeteria	Remain seated; wait patiently.	Voice Level 2; clean your area.	Use food appropriately; remember lunch code.
Restrooms	Wash hands; avoid groups.	Respect privacy; Voice Level 0.	Return promptly with pass.
Recess	Use equipment safely.	Include everyone; be a team player.	Care for school property.
Assemblies	Remain seated.	Voice Level 0; show appreciation.	Follow speaker and teacher directions.

Behavior Expectations

- Follow directions the first time they are given.
- Treat students, staff, visitors, and property with respect.
- Use appropriate language and demonstrate good citizenship.
- Take responsibility for your choices and actions.
- Report unsafe situations to an adult.

Discipline Philosophy

Manchester Middle School believes discipline is most effective when it teaches students to make positive choices. School staff work with students and families to promote accountability, restore relationships when appropriate, and maintain a safe learning environment.

Progressive Interventions

Possible Intervention	Examples
Teacher Supports	Redirection, conference, classroom intervention
Parent Communication	Phone call, email, ParentSquare
Detention	Lunch or assigned detention
DAC	Disciplinary Action Class for repeated or serious violations
Suspension	In-school or out-of-school as permitted by Board policy

Lost & Found

Lost items should be claimed promptly. Valuable items are secured in the office. Unclaimed clothing is periodically donated.

Emergency Preparedness

Students participate in required fire, tornado, and lockdown drills during the school year. During every drill or emergency, students are expected to remain calm, follow staff directions immediately, and help maintain a safe environment.

Panther Pride Reminder

Be Safe • Be Respectful • Be Responsible

SECTION 5

Dress Code & Technology

Panther Pride Continues Here

Student dress and technology expectations help maintain a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. Students are expected to arrive each day dressed appropriately and prepared to learn.

Cell Phones & Personal Devices

Cell phones must be turned off and placed in student lockers upon arrival. Phones may not be removed until the end of the school day unless specifically authorized by school staff.

Violation	Consequence
1st Offense	Two (2) detentions
2nd Offense	One (1) day in DAC
3rd Offense	Three (3) days in DAC and phone turned in to the office daily

Dress and Grooming

Dress and grooming should be clean and appropriate for the school environment. While styles change, any style that is disruptive to the educational process, poses a threat to the safety or health of self or others, or violates any law or school policy will not be permitted. The school may contact parents when student attire is deemed inappropriate for school. *This list is not intended to include every possible dress code violation.*

Dress Code Guidelines

Clothing and Coverage

- No bare midriffs. Shirts must be long enough to be tucked into pants, shorts, or skirts.

- No exposed cleavage, low-cut tops, backless tops, off-the-shoulder shirts, spaghetti straps, or halter tops. Tank tops must be at least four fingertips in width.
- No sheer or see-through clothing.
- Undergarments must not be visible.
- All skirts, shorts, dresses, and long sweaters/tops must be worn at fingertip length or longer.
- Lycra, spandex, or other form-fitting shorts are not permitted.
- Pants and skirts must be worn at the waist.
- Leggings may not be flesh-colored.
- No pajama pants unless approved as part of Spirit Week.

Condition and Appearance of Clothing

- If jeans or shorts have holes above the knee, leggings must be worn underneath
- No clothing that is soiled with grease, oil, paint, dirt, or similar substances.
- No clothing, slogans, pictures, or messages that are derogatory, suggestive, offensive, or reference drugs or alcohol.

Accessories and Personal Appearance

- No bandanas, hats, or sweatbands.
- No sunglasses.
- Unnatural hair colors are strongly discouraged.
- No facial piercings. Small jeweled nose studs and nose rings are permitted.
- No articles that could cause damage to self, others, or property (e.g., chains or inappropriate jewelry).

Footwear

- Shoes must be sturdy, fit securely on the foot, and remain on while walking.
- Slippers and Heely shoes are not permitted.

Other Items

- Jackets and coats may not be worn during school hours.
- No bags of any type (e.g., book bags, gym bags, purses, backpacks, etc.) may be carried during school hours.

Enforcement

The principal is the final authority regarding student dress and grooming.

School groups may periodically request special dress days through the administration.

Students who violate these guidelines may be required to change clothing and/or may be sent home. Repeated violations may result in detention.

SECTION 6

Code of Conduct & Student/Parent Acknowledgement

Manchester Local School District is committed to providing a safe, orderly, respectful learning environment where every student can succeed. Students are expected to follow school rules while on school property, school transportation, or participating in school-sponsored activities.

Student Expectations

Area	Expectation
Respect	Treat others with courtesy and follow staff directions.
Attendance	Attend school regularly and arrive on time.
Academic Integrity	Complete your own work honestly.
School Property	Respect facilities, textbooks, lockers, and technology.
Technology	Use school technology responsibly and for educational purposes.
Safety	Follow all school safety procedures and emergency directions.

Zero Tolerance

Serious violations of Board policy may result in parent conferences, detention, DAC, suspension, expulsion, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by district policy.

Examples of Major Rule Violations

- Assault, fighting, or threats
- Weapons or dangerous objects
- Alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, vaping products, or look-alike substances
- False alarms or bomb threats
- Theft, vandalism, or destruction of property
- Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or discrimination
- Insubordination or persistent disobedience
- Truancy or repeated tardiness
- Inappropriate technology use
- Conduct that substantially disrupts the educational environment

Substitute Teachers

Students are expected to demonstrate the same respectful behavior for substitute teachers as they do for their regular classroom teachers.

MANCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

(This code complies with ORC 3313.661)

The Board of Education of the Manchester Local School District has zero tolerance for student conduct that is violent, disruptive, and/or inappropriate, including, but not limited to, truancy. Violation by a student of any one of the following rules of conduct will result in disciplinary action(s), which may include oral warning, written warning, detention, parental contact, rearrangement of schedule, referral to legal authorities, emergency removal, suspension, and/or expulsion.

EXPULSION - (Generally, the student is removed from school for up to eighty (80) school days, which may result in loss of credit for such time.)

SUSPENSION - (The student is removed from school for up to ten (10) school days.)

The items in the code are inclusive for all students while on school property, or while under school authority, on school buses or during a school activity, function, or event whether on property owned, rented, or maintained by the Manchester Board of Education or property owned, rented, or maintained by another party.

This code shall also be inclusive for the right to exercise authority and for personal and property protection of administrators, teachers, librarians or media clerks, substitute teachers, teacher aides, monitors, authorized volunteers, tutors, secretaries, cooks, custodians, bus drivers, visitors, or other authorized school personnel.

School suspension, also known as DAC (Disciplinary Action Class), may be assigned to students who violate rules in the student handbook. All school work is to be done in DAC, and students are monitored by teachers.

Grounds for disciplinary action(s) shall include, but not be limited to:

1. ASSAULT, ASSAULT AND BATTERY, or threat thereof to any school personnel, student, visitor, or any other person.

2. FALSE ALARM, including fire or bomb threats.

3. Use, possession, concealment, or transmitting of ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES on school property (including buses), or at any school sponsored activity.

4. Illegal use, possession, concealment or transmitting of any NARCOTIC, DRUG, OR OTHER MIND-ALTERING SUBSTANCE, CAFFEINE, OR SUBSTANCE PURPORTING TO BE ANY OF THE ABOVE, on school property (including buses), or at any school sponsored activity.

5. DISRUPTION OF SCHOOL by use of violence, force, coercion, threat, harassment, noise, or disorderly conduct. This shall include use of the same to incite others toward acts of disruption.

6. ARSON OR ATTEMPTED ARSON to any building or property belonging to the Board of Education.

7. POSSESSION, USE, OR THREATENED USE OF FIREWORKS, EXPLOSIVES, OR OTHER SUCH INSTRUMENTS capable of inflicting bodily injury.

8. POSSESSION, CONCEALMENT, USE, TRANSMISSION, OR THREATENED USE OF WEAPONS, or any object which might be considered a dangerous weapon or instrument of violence.

The Board is committed to providing the students of the district with an educational environment which is free of the dangers of firearms, knives, and other dangerous weapons.

The definition of firearms shall include any weapon (including a starter gun) which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler of firearm silencer; or any destructive device (as defined in 18 U.S.C.A. Section 921.), which includes any explosive, incendiary or poisonous gas, bomb, grenade, or rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine or device similar to any of the devices described above.

Students are prohibited from bringing a firearm on school property, in a school vehicle, or to any school-sponsored activity. If a student brings a firearm on school property, in a school vehicle, or to any school-sponsored activity, the Superintendent shall expel this student from school for a period of one calendar year and notify the appropriate criminal justice or juvenile delinquency authorities. Any such expulsions shall extend, as necessary, into the school year following the school year in which the incident occurred. The Superintendent may reduce the one-year expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Matters which might lead to a reduction of the expulsion period include: an incident involving a disabled student, where the incident is a manifestation of the student's disability; the age of the student and its relevance to the punishment; the prior disciplinary history of the student; and/or the intent of the perpetrator.

Students are also prohibited from bringing knives to school property, in a school vehicle, or to any school-sponsored activity. The definition of a knife includes, but is not limited to, a cutting instrument consisting of a blade fastened to a handle. If a student brings a knife on school property, in a school vehicle, or to any school-sponsored activity, the Superintendent shall expel the student from school, subject to the same conditions stated above.

9. DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION, AND/OR DEFACEMENT of school property or private property or school premises.

10. USE, SMOKING, OR POSSESSION OF TOBACCO.

SPECIAL NOTE: When a student violates this rule by using or smoking tobacco for the third time in a school year, that student shall automatically be suspended for 10 days with a recommendation that the student be expelled. However, the third violation in a school year is not the only violation for which discipline may be imposed. In addition, possession of tobacco is also subject to discipline, although not to automatic suspension for 10 days with a recommendation that the student be expelled.

11. PROFANE, INDECENT, OR OBSCENE LANGUAGE: written or verbal language directed toward or used in the presence of school personnel, students, visitors, or any other person. This shall include use of obscene gestures, pictures, and signs.

12. INSUBORDINATION - refusing to comply with direction of school personnel.

13. TRUANCY from school; including study hall, class, or any other assignee activity for part or all of a day, without school authorization.

14. TARDINESS to class or school.

15. THEFT of school property or equipment, of personal property of any school personnel, of another student or visitor, or any other person, including property at any school sponsored activities.

16. FIGHTING among two or more students.

17. The act of EXTORTION from any person.

18. GAMBLING for money or valuables.

19. THE ACT OF FALSELY REPORTING INCIDENTS, making accusations, or giving testimony to school personnel which may affect the welfare of others.

20. FALSIFYING in writing the name of another person, times, dates, grades addresses, or other data on school forms or correspondence directed to the school.

21. VIOLATIONS of any school rules or accepted standards of school behavior.

22. Participation in a STUDENT STRIKE OR STUDENT WALK-OUT.

23. It should be noted that other possible student conduct, PERSISTENT DISOBEDIENCE, OR GROSS MISCONDUCT may also serve as grounds for discipline.

24. IMPROPER OR UNAUTHORIZED USE OR ABUSE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of school computer equipment or software for non-school purposes.

MANCHESTER LOCAL SCHOOLS DRUG-FREE PROGRAM

Youth to Youth- Prevent and Neutralize Drug Abuse. The middle school program provides training regarding chemical abuse, school leadership, and an opportunity for community service.

S.A.D.D. - Students Against Driving Drunk. This high school organization promotes abstinence, leadership within the school, and service to the general community.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG PROBLEMS IN ADOLESCENCE

A home-school-community partnership can protect students, reduce risk, and increase resistance to drugs by employing the following measures.

Protective Factors:

1. Clear norms and standards of behavior in the home, school, and community;

2. Skills to resist social influences, solve problems, and make decisions; and

3. Bonding to family, school, and community, which can be promoted by:

- Active participation in group activities

- Learning skills for working with others

- Recognition for skillful individual and group performance.

General Principles of Prevention:

1. Focus on reducing risk factors.

2. Intervene early - before behavior stabilizes.

3. Target high-risk persons and high-risk communities, but avoid 'labeling" students and setting up negative expectations for behavior.

4. Employ a variety of initiatives in a comprehensive, multi component prevention effort.

J. David Hawkins and Richard F. Catalano, University of Washington - National Commission on Drug-Free Schools

Drug-Free Schools

Manchester Local Schools supports a drug-free learning environment through prevention education, student leadership opportunities, and partnerships with families and the community.

Title IV Coordinator – Rachel Willis, 6285 Renninger Rd, New Franklin, OH 44319, 330-882-6926, Rachel.Willis@panthercountry.org or Derrick Mauger, 407 W Nimisila Rd, New Franklin, OH 44319, 330-882-3291, Derrick.Mauger@panthercountry.org

Final Note

The administration reserves the right to interpret and apply school rules in accordance with Board policy. Official Board policies and applicable state and federal law take precedence over this handbook when necessary.

All of the staff, faculty, and administrative personnel at Manchester Middle School sincerely hope that this handbook is informative and helpful to each parent and student.

Should problems arise during the school year, you are certainly welcome to visit or call the school office. Your interest in, and support of, your school will be welcome throughout the school year.

Student & Parent Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we have received and reviewed the Manchester Middle School Student & Family Handbook. We understand that students are expected to follow school and district policies and that this handbook serves as a guide to school expectations.