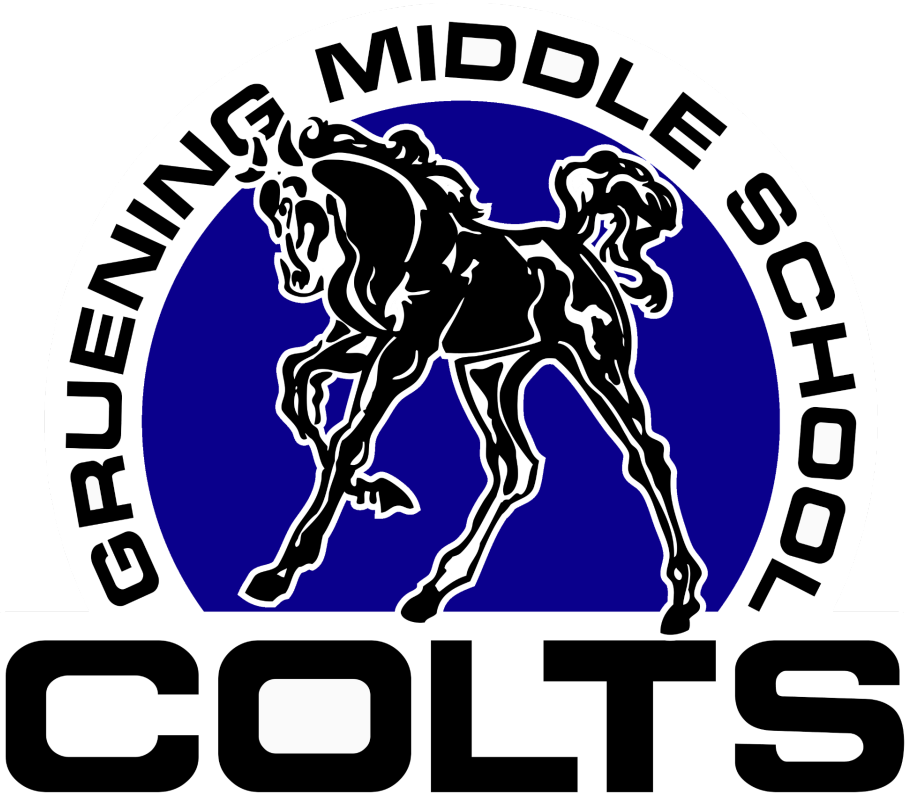


2026/2027
Student and Family Handbook

This student and family handbook is an attempt to share information that is most commonly asked by students and the community. It is not all-inclusive and is a relatively fluid document. Each year, we will update it as needs and circumstances dictate.

2026/2027 Middle School Student Handbook: District Guidelines / Rights & Responsibilities is found online at:
https://www.asdk12.org/cms/lib/AK02207157/Centricity/Domain/1179/2025-26_MS-Student-Handbook_Accessible.pdf

Updated on 7/31/26



GRUENING MIDDLE SCHOOL



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Students,

Welcome to Gruening Middle School, especially to our new 6th grade class and anyone else who is new to our school this year. Mr. Burningham and I are happy to have you joining our school community. We look forward to getting to know you individually and to helping you become the best person you can be. We will be doing this partially through our PBIS program where we are expecting you to follow three simple ASKs of you in all settings at Gruening Middle School.

Be **A**ccountable
Be **S**afe
Be **K**ind

This handbook provides essential information for you to read to understand and Be **A**ccountable with the expectations Gruening Middle School has for our students. We take pride in creating a positive learning environment that leads towards academic success. Please familiarize yourself with and make sure you understand the information in this handbook, as well as the Anchorage School District Handbook for middle school.

Being involved in different school activities like interscholastic sports, intramural sports, academic activities, clubs, or other school enrichment programs will help make your experience in school enjoyable. We encourage all students to participate in a program that we offer.

It is of utmost importance that we treat each other with respect and all follow the rules. By doing so, we will Be **S**afe. This is especially true as our number of students increases with the addition of 6th grade. Personal space will be monitored closely in the hallway. And above all, Be **K**ind to one another, you never know what the other person is going through.

High school is just around the corner, and we encourage you to do your best now to ensure a bright and successful academic future. Challenge yourself, and you might be surprised with what you can do.

Looking forward to a great year! Go Colts!

James Bell, Principal

School Colors: Royal Blue & White
Mascot: Colt

School-Wide Expectations

- Be Accountable | Be Safe | Be Kind

Students are responsible for knowing and following all the parameters described in this section. Not knowing the rules cannot be used as an excuse. GMS strives to provide a safe and secure environment that fosters academic success, citizenship, and social responsibility.

Basic Building Rules:

- Gruening is a GUM-FREE school (A)
- Deliveries to the school from delivery services will not be accepted for students (AS)
- Sprays/smells: due to allergies, perfumes, colognes, and body sprays are not permitted in the building. (ASK)
- Be courteous (K)
- You are responsible for your mess. Cleaning up after yourself in all areas of the building will be expected (A)
- Be on time for class (A)
- Respect other people and property(ASK)
- Bring required materials to class every day (charged Chromebook) (A)
- Have a pass when out of the classroom (AS)
- Do not lean over, place items on, or throw items over the railings (AS)
- Use indoor voices in the building – don't scream or yell or use obscenity or profanity (AK)
- Walk from place to place in the building; running is unsafe (AS)
- Refrain from play fighting and other forms of horseplay (ASK)
- Respond to staff direction the first time (even if that person isn't "your teacher") (ASK)
- Wearing hoods, hats, or other headgear in the building is not okay at all (AS)
  (Exceptions being for religious or medical reasons.)

- Field trips and large group activities require Accountability, Safety, and kindness. Students not adhering to these expectations could lose the privilege of attending the field trip or activity.

Gruening Middle School Discipline Playbook

Tier 1: Minor Offenses (Classroom managed)

Examples (not all inclusive):

- Talking out of turn
- Not following directions
- Unprepared for class
- Minor dress code violation
- Cell phone use
- Disruptive but non-threatening behavior

Consequences:

- 1st Offense: Verbal Warning, reteach expected behavior
- 2nd Offense: Student-teacher conference, parent contact
- 3rd Offense: Detention or loss of privilege (discipline referral to security)
- 4th Offense: Referral to collaboration team and/or counselor.

Documentation:

- Information about the incident is entered in Q visits.

Tier 2: Moderate Offenses (Office Managed)

Examples:

- Repeated Tier 1 behaviors
- Disrespect toward staff, substitute staff, or peers
- Inappropriate language
- Academic dishonesty (AI use w/out teacher permission, cheating, plagiarism)
- Minor vandalism
- Skipping class or leaving without permission
- Physical horseplay or roughhousing- unsafe behavior

Consequences:

- 1st Offense: Office referral + parent notification + 1–2 days detention or in-school suspension (ISS)
- 2nd Offense: Behavior contract + 2–3 days ISS
- 3rd Offense: Counselor/administrator-led restorative circle + possible out-of-school suspension (OSS)

Documentation:

- Formal discipline referral in Q, behavior plan update if applicable

Tier 3: Major Offenses (Administrative Action Required)

Examples:

- Fighting or physical aggression
- Bullying or harassment (including cyberbullying)
- Direct racial slur
- Theft
- Threats or intimidation
- Vandalism requiring repair or replacement
- Possession of prohibited items
- Severe defiance or insubordination

Consequences:

- 1st Offense: Parent meeting + 1–3 days OSS + restorative component
- 2nd Offense: 3–5 days OSS + re-entry meeting
- 3rd Offense: Extended OSS or alternative education referral

Documentation:

- Formal discipline referral in Q + district reporting (if required)

Tier 4: Extreme Offenses (Zero-Tolerance or Legal Implications)

Examples:

- Weapons on campus
- Drugs or alcohol possession/distribution
- Sexual misconduct
- Severe threats or acts of violence
- Arson or false fire alarm

Consequences:

- Immediate removal from campus
- Law enforcement involvement (as required)
- Possible alternative placement
- Mandatory re-entry plan with district approval

Documentation:

- Full incident report, legal documentation, district-level intervention

Restorative Practices (Optional/Recommended for All Tiers)

- Conflict mediation
- Restorative circles
- Student reflection forms
- Peer mediation
- Service learning or restitution

Campus Policies

Attendance & Tardies

- Students who arrive late must report immediately to the Attendance Office.
- A parent/guardian should either:
    - Send a signed note, or
    - Call the attendance office the same morning

Leaving Campus / Blue Passes

- All ASD Middle Schools are closed campuses.
- Students may not leave school during the day without a Blue Pass, issued by the office.
- To receive a Blue Pass:
    1. Bring a signed note to the office before school.
    2. A pass will be issued for the time you need to leave.
    3. Show the pass to your teacher when it's time to leave.
    4. When returning, bring the Blue Pass back to the office

Fidget devives

- These items need to be very low distraction to the individual and the group
- Liquid or gel-filled squishy items are not permitted at school

Backpacks, Purses, Handbags, fanny pack, & Crossbody Bags

- Must be stored and locked in lockers during the school day.
- Cannot be carried from class to class.

Building Office Hours

- Open: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
- Students arriving before 9:15 AM must wait:
    - On the down ramps or student center
    - In the cafeteria on Mondays
    - In the open gym or library (if open)
- Must leave the building by 4:15 PM unless involved in a school-sponsored activity.
- After-school activities typically end by 5:45 PM. Students must leave by 6:00 PM.
- No loitering without adult supervision.

PLC Mondays: Delayed start. Students must wait in designated areas if dropped off early.

Bus Transportation

- Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right.
- Buses transport students:
    - From their assigned bus stop to school and back.
    - Bus stop assignments are based on a verified home address (no daycare accommodations).
- Temporary Bus Pass requires:
    - A signed note from a parent
    - Turned in at the front office by the end of lunch
    - A valid bus pass will be issued for that day only.
    - Students will not be allowed on a different bus without a pass.

Safe Bus Riding Expectations

- Sit in assigned seats, face forward.
- Use indoor voices.
- Keep aisles clear.
- Use personal earbuds for music.
- Follow the bus driver's instructions.

Zone Exemption Students

- Do NOT receive bus privileges.
- All transportation requests must go directly to the District Transportation Office.
- GMS cannot authorize zone-exempt student bus rides.
- The district may grant a day pass (e.g., sleepovers) with a parent note submitted before lunch.

Refer to ASD Bus Rules: Middle School Handbook pages I5-6

Change of Contact Information:

Notify the front office immediately of changes to:

- Address
- Telephone number
- Guardianship

Counseling Services

- Counselors are here to help!

- Use a “Request to See Counselor” form in the main office or ask a teacher for a pass.
- Appointments are preferred unless it’s an emergency.
- Students must have a pass to visit a counselor during class time.

Dress Code & Appearance

General Guidelines:

- Dress should be appropriate for school.
- Clothing must foster a positive, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment.
- No clothing promoting:
    - Drugs, alcohol, violence, tobacco, or weapons
    - Racism, sexism, or other discrimination
    - Disrespect or disruption

Head Coverings:

- No hats, visors, or sunglasses inside.
- Exceptions: Religious, medical, or approved special events (must be approved by administration).

Shirts/Tops:

- Must cover midriff and undergarments.
- No halter tops or spaghetti straps unless covered.
- No sleeveless shirts with deep/revealing armholes.

Bottoms:

- Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must extend past fingertips with arms down (mid-thigh).
- Holes above mid-thigh must have leggings/tights underneath.
- No pajamas unless part of an approved event.

Additional Guidelines:

- No face/body writing or drawing.
- No writing on clothing (yours or others’).
- No outside coats during school hours—store them in your locker.
- Wear appropriate shoes for indoor/outdoor activities and weather. Not slippers.

PE Uniform:

- Daily dressing out is required.
- GMS PE uniform: Gray or blue Colt t-shirt, black shorts or athletic pants.
- PE shorts must be no higher than mid-thigh.

- Athletic shoes must be laced and tied properly.

Students dressed inappropriately will be asked to change.

Hallways & Passes

Hall Passes:

- Required anytime you're not in class during instructional time.
- Not issued during the first or last 5 minutes of class.

Hallway Conduct:

- Keep moving—no congregating.
- Walk, don't run.
- Be courteous.
- Respond promptly to staff directions.

Helmets

- Per city law (Municipal Code 3.98.200), students under 15 must wear helmets when biking to school.

Homework & Make-Up Work

- Students are responsible for obtaining and completing all missed work.
- One day per excused absence day is given to make up work.
- For short absences (1–2 days):
  - Ask classmates
  - Check Q and Canvas
  - Email or talk to teachers
- Canvas is the primary platform for assignments.
- Homework Help may be offered after school (4:15 – 5:45 PM). Days TBA.

Behavioral Expectations

Horseplay:

- Not tolerated—leads to accidents and conflicts.
- No pushing, shoving, hitting, chasing, etc.

Internet Use:

- A privilege, not a right.
- Improper use = loss of access.
- Protect your password and account.

Safety & Security:

- Security staff are here to help!
- Report problems (theft, locker issues, unsafe behavior, etc.) immediately.

Guest Teachers:

- Substitute teachers deserve the same respect as permanent staff.
- Disruption = disciplinary consequences.

Library

- Open at designated times.
- Follow posted procedures for check-outs and services.

Lockers

- Assigned for hall, PE, and possibly band.
- Do not share locker combinations.
- Keep lockers closed and locked.
- Scent-free school: No perfumes, sprays, or colognes.
- No food/drink spills—use sealed containers only. (No Gum in lockers)
- Inside decorating only, with magnets (no tape/adhesives or glue).
- Locker changes require administrative approval.
- Random locker searches will occur.
- Do not use personal locks on school lockers.

Lost & Found

- Located by the cafeteria entrance.
- PE has its own lost & found.
- Valuable items: Check with the front office.
- Unclaimed items are donated quarterly.

Lunch

- Students must attend lunch during their scheduled shift.
- Remain in the cafeteria unless you:
    - Have a pass from a teacher
    - Sign out properly
- Once you leave the cafeteria with a pass, stay at your destination.
- Lunchroom expectations:
    - Remain seated
    - Keep volume down
    - Follow directions from the lunchroom staff

General School Rules

Selling Goods:

- Selling/trading items is not allowed without administrative approval.

Snowballs/Thrown Objects:

- Throwing any object (snow, rocks, ice, etc.) is strictly prohibited—on or off campus while under school supervision.

Scent-Free Policy:

- Sprays (body spray, perfumes, aerosols) are not allowed due to allergy concerns.
- PE deodorant must be stick or roll-on only.
- Items will be confiscated and released to a parent.

Food, Snacks, drinks

- Drink containers that close/seal only. Students may not have beverages in containers with "to go" style lids or straws in the building. They will be asked to throw away the container, contents included. This will ensure our lockers don't have spills and last longer.
- Due to the adverse effects on students' development, energy drinks and sugary drinks are highly discouraged and should not be at Gruening.
- Large amounts of candy or sweets should not come to school.

Textbooks

- Most class materials are available online via Canvas.
- Class sets of physical books may also be available.

Visitors

- All visitors, including other students, must check in at the front office upon arrival. Please bring a Drivers License or State ID card.

Cafeteria Expectations & Procedures

The Gruening Middle School cafeteria is a shared space where students eat, socialize, and recharge. To maintain a safe, clean, and respectful environment, the following expectations are in place:

General Expectations

- Electronic devices are not allowed during lunch. Keep them off and stored away.
- No talking when the microphone is in use.
- Follow all directions given by adults and cafeteria staff.

Entering the Cafeteria

- Enter calmly using indoor voices.
- Be prepared with:
  - Your lunch or lunch money
  - Any required pass

Lunch Line Etiquette

- Remain in line and do not cut.
- Have your money or student ID number ready.
- Be courteous and respectful to others and staff.

Seating Rules

- Sit at your assigned table and do not switch tables.
- Changing seats within your table is allowed with staff discretion.
- Table capacity limits:
  - 4 students per bench
  - 8 students per side
  - 16 students total per table
- Sit correctly: both feet on the floor, legs under the table.
- On Mondays, students might sit at their Advisory-assigned table group.

Respect & Behavior

- Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Do not throw food or mishandle food in any way.
- Do not touch other students' food.
- Speak kindly and act respectfully toward others and adults. Voice level 2 max.



Clean-Up Responsibilities

- You are responsible for your own mess.

- Clean your table and floor area before dismissal.
- Walk your trash to the garbage can—do not throw it from a distance.
- Return trays, utensils, and recyclables appropriately.

Exiting the Cafeteria

- Wait for staff to dismiss your table.
- After dismissal, students must:
    - Go directly to class
- Students may not return to their lockers during lunch.

Outside Time / Open Gym (When Offered)

- Food and drink are not allowed outside or in the gym.
- Only tables that are clean and quiet will be dismissed first.
- Students must remain in designated outside areas.
- Stay off snow berms and keep snow on the ground.
- Students are not allowed to return to lockers during this time.

Lunch Passes

- A pass is required to leave the cafeteria during lunch.
- Only one person per pass.
- You must sign out with the supervising adult before leaving.

Lunch Detention

- Students assigned lunch detention must report directly to the assigned location.
- If unsure where to go, check in at the Student Center with your lunch.

By following these expectations, you help keep the cafeteria a safe, enjoyable, and respectful space for all students and staff.

Cell Phones & Electronic Devices Policy

To maintain a focused and respectful learning environment, the use of personal electronic devices is restricted during the school day. All student phones must be turned off or placed in airplane mode and stored in lockers. Middle school students will not be allowed to access phones during the school day. Board Cell Phone policy approved for 25/26

Chromebook: Link to ASD Chromebook information
https://www.asdk12.org/chromebook

- Assigned to all 6-12 students for educational use at school and at home
- Keep it charged, or bring the charging cord daily
- Do not touch or mess with anyone else's device
- Care for the Chromebook well. There are some situations in which families could be charged for the replacement of the assigned Chromebook.

Storage Requirements

- All electronic devices (cell phones, headphones, earbuds, gaming devices, smartwatches, etc.) must be turned off and stored in book lockers from 9:25 AM to 4:00 PM.
- No electronic devices are allowed in the lunchroom during lunch periods.

Consequences for Violations: Devices that are visible or in use during restricted times may be confiscated by any staff member and turned into the front office.

Infraction	Consequence
1st Offense	Warning and guardian contact, device returned to student locker. (facilitated by SSO*)
2nd Offense	Detention, Device confiscated and held in office; student may pick it up at the end of the day (guardian contact)
3rd Offense	Device confiscated and held in office; guardian or approved adult must pick it up
4th Offense	Device confiscation, guardian meeting, and behavior contract, other progressive discipline

*SSO = Safety and Security Officer

Location-Specific Rules

Locker Rooms & Bathrooms: Devices are never allowed in these areas.

- Devices confiscated from these locations will be held in the office and require a parent to pick up the device.

GRUENING MIDDLE SCHOOL
COLTS
Tardy Policy

Students not in the classroom at the start time for that class are considered tardy.

Unexcused tardies are cumulative per SEMESTER, then reset at semester

3rd Tardy	1 Detention. Teacher referral to security and notification to parent
6th Tardy	2 Detentions. Teacher referral to security; security notifies parent/guardian
9th Tardy	Office Referral = Community Service, ISS, or other consequence as determined by admin. Administration notifies parent/guardian

Subsequent Tardies = Parent Conference

All Tardies are cleared each semester. Consequences for tardies will be assigned either before, during, or after school.

Please see security for details.

Activities at Gruening Middle School

Middle school is the perfect time to try new things, make friends, and have fun. At Gruening, we encourage every student to get involved—no one is “cut” or turned away from activities. Explore, engage, and enjoy!

Activity Options

- Library Access

    - Open before school for reading, checking out books, or finishing homework.
    - Special lunch programs include Book Café Days and quiet reading opportunities.
- Academic & Enrichment Events
    - Battle of the Books
    - Spelling Bee
    - Geography/Civics Bee
    - WACKO (school-wide fun day)

Assemblies

Assemblies take place throughout the school year and are usually for the entire student body.

Student behavior is critical during these events. Misbehavior may result in loss of the privilege of attending assemblies or other disciplinary actions.

School Dances

School Dances may be organized by the Student Government. Only GMS students can attend GMS dances. There is no activity bus for dances.

Honor Roll

Recognizes all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students with:

- A GPA of 3.0 or higher
- No grade below a C

National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)

GMS hosts a chapter of NJHS, open to 8th-grade students who:

- Have attended GMS for at least one semester
- Meet the GPA requirement
- Demonstrate outstanding:
    1. Citizenship
    2. Service
    3. Leadership
    4. Character

Note: Disciplinary issues may disqualify a student from eligibility.

School Pictures

- Fall portraits are taken by an outside photography company.

- All students will have their picture taken and will receive a school ID card.
- Optional spring and sports pictures may also be offered.
- All dress code expectations apply. Students in violation of the dress code will be asked to change.

Sports at Gruening Middle School

Participation in athletics is a great way to build teamwork, character, and school spirit. At Gruening, growth and sportsmanship matter more than winning. Students are encouraged to develop leadership, self-discipline, and a lifelong commitment to health.
For district-wide sports info and eligibility:

- Schedules: ASD Middle School Sports
- Fees, forms, and registration: ASD Activities Info

Interscholastic Sports
These sports compete against other ASD middle schools.
Requirements:

- Current physical (valid through the end of the season)
- Activity Participation Form (signed by parent/guardian)
- Sports fee (or waiver) $150 per sport, $300 maximum per student (two-sport student cap)
- 10 days of practice at GMS before the first competition
- Attend at least half the school day on the day of practice or a game to participate in practices/games

Offered Sports (dates subject to change):

Sport	Start Date
Cross-Country Running	Aug 24
Boys' Basketball	Aug 24
Debate	Before Aug 31
Co-Ed Baseball*	Aug 24 (via American Legion)
Volleyball	Oct 19

Wrestling	Jan 4
Girls' Basketball	Jan 6
Cross-Country Skiing	Jan 11
NYO / Indigenous Games	March (TBD)
Track & Field	Mar 22
Girls' Softball*	TBA (via Anchorage Sports Association)

*Outsourced Sport

Equipment & Uniforms

- Some athletes may be required to purchase a GMS competition T-shirt if a sport-specific jersey is not provided.
- Most equipment is loaned for the season free of charge.
- Lost or damaged equipment must be replaced at current market value.

Refund Policy

Students are not eligible for a refund after the date of the first event in which they could have participated.

Practice Expectations

- Be on time, dressed out, and actively participating.
- Students with injuries or medical excuses should not attend practice.
- Simply attending practice without participating does not count toward the 10 required practices.

Away Meets & Competitions

For all off-campus sports events, students must be:

- Signed out by a parent/guardian (listed in Q)
- Picked up as arranged prior to the event

If a student cannot be picked up by a guardian, alternative arrangements must be made in advance with GMS administration. Coaches are not permitted to release athletes to anyone not listed in Q.

Intramural Sports

Intramurals do not compete with other schools but are fun, skill-building activities held on campus.

Requirements:

- Current physical
- Activity Participation Form

- No fee required

Possible Intramural Offerings:

- TBD

