

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Chatham Middle School is to provide a secure, challenging learning environment which will empower all students to achieve their greatest potential. The Chatham Middle School team joins the parents and community to assist students in developing skills necessary to become successful, responsible, contributing citizens.

## **VISION**

Chatham Middle School's vision is to be recognized as a place where learning never stops.

## **BELIEFS**

- All students can learn.
- All students learn in different ways.
- All students will be provided with a variety of instructional strategies based on students' unique intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs.
- All students will have opportunities to develop positive self-image, self-respect, and self-control to become productive citizens in society.
- The school team, parents, and community share in the responsibility for providing a supportive and conducive environment for learning.

## **STUDENT PLEDGE**

As a Chatham Middle School student, I will strive to be compassionate, practice self-discipline, be responsible, and persevere by never giving up. I promise to be honest in all I say and do and to show respect to everyone.

## **SCHOOL ADDRESS**

11650 US Highway 29 North, Chatham, Virginia 24531

### **SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER**

(434) 432-2169

### **SCHOOL FAX NUMBER**

(434) 432-2842

### **SCHOOL COLORS**

Red, White, and Black

### **SCHOOL MASCOT**

Cavaliers

### **SCHOOL WEB SITE**

<http://www.pcs.k12.va.us/cms/>

## **OFFICE HOURS**

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## **PARKING AREAS**

The safety of all students is our number one concern. Please comply with the signs and markings at the entrances and exits of the school's parking area. The parking area is an especially busy place during student arrival and dismissal, so extreme caution should be exercised when picking up and dropping off students.

Vehicles are not allowed in the area in front of the school when buses are present. **Vehicles may be parked along the sidewalk located to the left of the school's main entrance doors when picking-up and dropping-off students. As a safety precaution, students must exit from the passenger side of the vehicle closest to the sidewalk when getting in and out of vehicles.**

**Students are not allowed at any time to walk across the main parking lot or cross over the pick-up/drop-off zone unless escorted by an adult at the designated crosswalk areas.**

## **THE SCHOOL DAY**

The school day begins at 8:20 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

**Earliest Students May Arrive:        7:50 a.m.**

Students may not enter the school building or stand outside the school prior to the ringing of the bell at 7:50 a.m. Students arriving by private transportation may not get out of their vehicles before 7:50 a.m. Students arriving between 7:50 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. must report directly to the cafeteria. When the bell rings at 8:00 a.m., students may go to lockers then to homeroom.

**School Breakfast:                        8:00 a.m. – 8:19 a.m.**

**Homeroom Roll Taken:                8:20 a.m.**

It is important that students arrive at school on time and be in homeroom by 8:20 a.m. A student who arrives in homeroom after 8:20 a.m. is tardy and must report to the attendance office. After receiving the fourth tardy to school, the student will be assigned to after-school detention.

**Dismissal Bell:                            3:00 p.m.**

**After-School Detention:            3:10 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

For minor infractions, students may be assigned after-school detention (ASD), which is scheduled for every Tuesday. Students must complete school work during ASD. Students are not allowed to sleep, put heads on desks, talk, or move around during ASD. Students may not leave the assigned room during ASD; students must visit the restroom and attend to other needs prior to ASD.

- Students assigned to ASD will be excluded from all other extracurricular activities on the day of ASD.
- Failure to bring books and other necessary materials to ASD will result in further ASD or other disciplinary actions.
- Students who are tardy to ASD will be assigned an extra day of ASD.
- Students who create a disturbance in ASD will receive additional discipline.
- Unexcused absences from ASD are not allowed. Students who fail to notify the principal or assistant principal that they are unable to stay for ASD, or who fail to report to ASD, may be subject to other disciplinary actions.

Parents of students who are assigned to ASD will receive written notification, delivered by the student, prior to serving detention. Students are only allowed to serve ASD with a signed permission form from the parent. If school is closed on the day of ASD, detention will automatically be rescheduled for the following Tuesday.

Parents are responsible for the student's transportation home at 4:00 p.m. The student is not allowed on campus beyond 4:00 p.m. for any reason. Parents who fail to pick up their child at a responsible time are subject to notification of child neglect to the local authorities and/or ASD will not be an option as a form of punishment for that child in the future.

**After-School Tutoring:                3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

The school building is closed to students at 3:15 p.m. unless the student is under the supervision of a teacher or principal. Students staying after school for tutoring must have prior approval from a parent and teacher.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Grading Scale for All Core Courses**

A = Excellent (94-100)  
B = Good (86-93)  
C = Average (78-85)  
D = Poor (70-77)  
F = Failing (0-69)

### **Grading Scale for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Exploratory Classes**

S=Satisfactory  
N=Needs Improvement  
U=Unsatisfactory

### **Grade Point Average**

GPA is an abbreviation for Grade Point Average. In figuring GPA for Super Star and All Star academic lists at the end of each six weeks, letter grades in core courses carry the following point values. GPA is an average of point values.

1. Each "A" counts 4 points.
2. Each "B" counts 3 points.
3. Each "C" counts 2 points.
4. Each "D" counts 1 point.
5. Each "F" counts 0 points.

### **Reporting of Grades**

Interim progress reports are issued halfway through each six weeks marking period. Report cards are issued at the end of each six weeks. Report cards and interim reports are distributed on a Monday; they should be taken home by the student, signed by the parent or guardian, and returned to school on the following day.

### **Promotion/Retention**

Promotion or retention of students is based on the teachers' and the administration's judgment of what best serves the educational welfare of the child. Although many factors are considered when making the decision, the responsibility and authority for student placement legally belongs to the school.

Any student who fails two core subjects during the regular school year will be required to attend summer school for the entire session (approximately five weeks) in order to have an opportunity to pass his/her grade. Students who fail three or more core subjects will not be promoted to the next grade although they may attend summer school.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged. Core teachers on each team have a planning period at the same time each day, so it is possible to meet with all four core teachers during one parent-teacher conference time. If you would like to schedule a conference, call the school, contact a guidance counselor, or send a note to a teacher.

Student or parent concerns can usually be addressed during a conference with the teacher. If problems are not resolved, the student or parent should share their concerns with the administration.

### **Parent-Teacher Organization**

The P.T.O. enhances cooperation between the school and home and gives parents and guardians the opportunity to voice their concerns. All parents and guardians are encouraged to attend meetings regularly.

# SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

## Academic Honors

Students are eligible to be recognized for academic achievement each six weeks. They will be eligible for either the Super Star or All Star list. Names of students who are eligible for the Super Star or All Star lists will be posted on the bulletin boards on each grade level wing. GPA's are not rounded up.

- ☆ To qualify for the Super Star list, a student must have a GPA of 3.6 - 4.0.
- ☆ To qualify for the All Star list, a student must have a GPA of 3.2 - 3.5.



## B.U.G. Award



The purpose of the B.U.G. (Bringing Up Grades) Award is to encourage students to bring up grades and to recognize them for improvements. A wide range of students can be recognized for improvement. For example, B.U.G. Awards may be given to a student who had all F's one six weeks and brought up one of those to a D the next six weeks. B.U.G. Awards may also be given to a student who made all A's except for one B one six weeks and straight A's the next six weeks. The idea is for students with lower grades to improve each six weeks.

When report cards go out for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> six weeks, homeroom teachers turn in a list of students who qualify for the B.U.G. Award to the guidance department. The counselors will award each of those students with a B.U.G. certificate and a small prize such as a pencil or candy.



## Citizenship



Students must meet the guidelines listed below to qualify for recognition as a Cavalier with Character. Students who meet the guidelines will have their names listed on a bulletin board in the main hallway and receive a small prize each six weeks. Students who make the Cavaliers with Character Citizenship List for the entire school year will be recognized at the end-of-year awards assembly.

1. Exhibit good behavior.
2. Be respectful.
3. Be prompt.
4. Be helpful.
5. **Make all S's in conduct. (N's or U's in conduct disqualify students from the Cavaliers with Character Citizenship List.)**
6. **Have zero discipline referrals to the office, zero suspensions, and zero assignments to BMC, ASD, and ISS.**

## Perfect Attendance

Students who have perfect attendance for a six weeks will have their names listed on the bulletin board in their grade-level wing of the school. Students who have perfect attendance for the entire year will be recognized at the end-of-year awards assembly.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Call-in Procedures on the Day of Absence**

A parent "call-in" procedure has been established to provide greater accountability with regard to school absence. Parents are asked to call the school (432-2169) between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. each morning if their child will be absent. A call to a student's home will be made to check unreported absences.

### **Make-up Work for Absent Students**

It is the student's responsibility to make up work missed during times of absence from school. Students and parents may call the school's attendance clerk to request homework assignments.

Students who have excused absences may make up all work missed during the time of absence. Students who have unexcused absences will not be given the opportunity to make up any work missed during class time. This includes tests, labs, and any work that is done in class on the day of the absence.

Students are always allowed to make up homework. Homework done outside of the classroom can be accepted even in cases of suspensions and other unexcused absences.

### **Early Check-out Policy**

Students will not be permitted to leave school during school hours without a valid excuse from parents or guardians. The reasons for excused early check-outs are the same as the reasons listed on the next page for excused absences from school.

If it is necessary for a student to check out early, he/she must bring a note to the office upon arrival at school. When it is time for check-out, the student will be called to the office provided that a parent or guardian is present. Students must remain in class until called. Phone calls are not accepted as a form of check-out. A parent or guardian must be present before the child is granted permission to leave. Any adult checking out a child is subject to providing a photo ID upon request.

All students must check out through an administrator after checking out the seventh time.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Excused Absences**

Upon returning to school following an absence, a student must bring a written excuse to the office and pick up an admit slip, which will state if the absence is excused or unexcused. If the student does not bring a note on the first day upon returning to school, the student will receive an unexcused absence, but the student will have until the next school day to have the absence changed to excused. Absences not cleared in this time frame will remain unexcused.

All students are expected to attend school every day in order to receive maximum benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. When a student is absent, the student will normally be excused when the reason for the absence is consistent with the guidelines listed below.

1. Illness (Parent must initiate contact with the school each day of an absence. A doctor's note may be required when absences have become excessive.)
2. Quarantine
3. Death in family
4. Medical appointments (Medical appointments must be confirmed with a note from the doctor. Parents are encouraged to make medical/dental appointments after school hours.)
5. Court proceedings (A statement from the court is required.)
6. Religious observances
7. Educational opportunity (Absences for educational trips must be approved in advance. Although pre-approved educational trips count as excused absences, such absences will prevent students from qualifying for Perfect Attendance.)
8. If the number of absences becomes excessive, further proof or verification of the reason for the absence may be required.

### **Unexcused Absences**

If the reason for an absence does not fall within the guidelines listed above, the absence will generally be unexcused. Any exceptions to these guidelines must be approved in advance. When a student is absent due to suspension, the absence will be unexcused.

When an absence is judged to be unexcused, the student and/or parent may request an appeal before the school's Attendance Committee. This request for an appeal must be made in writing and must be received before the end of the school day following notification of an unexcused absence. If an appeal is successful, the absence will be excused, and make-up work will be allowed. Make-up work will not be given prior to the decision of the Attendance Committee. The appeal process does not apply to suspensions. The school's Attendance Committee will be composed of three people: the principal, the guidance counselor, and the student's homeroom teacher. This committee will meet within two school days and will render an immediate decision. The decision of the committee will be final.

The 1999 Virginia General Assembly enacted amendments to the current legislation regarding unexcused absences for students. Students who reach a total of five unexcused absences will be reported to the Attendance Officer, provided that the school has made a reasonable effort to notify the parents of their child's absence and parents have not given the school a reason for the child's absences. The officer will meet with the student and parents and develop a Corrective Action Plan for school attendance. If the unexcused absences reach seven days, with no indication from parents pertaining to the reason for the absences, the Attendance Officer must initiate court proceedings in Juvenile and Domestic Court. These amendments will be strictly enforced. Application of this policy to students with disabilities will be consistent with federal and state laws and regulations as well as School Board policy regarding students with disabilities.

### **Check-out During Lockdown**

Occasionally tornado warnings or other crisis situations result in schools being locked down. Please do not come to school and try to check out your child during a lockdown. All outside doors are locked during times of lockdown, so do not be alarmed when you cannot get inside the building. Your child's safety is our top priority.

During tornado warnings, the Federal Emergency Management Agency suggests that people get out of vehicles and take shelter in a nearby building. It is, therefore, in your child's best interest to remain inside the school building during a tornado warning. Please do not request check-out of a child during a tornado warning. For further facts about tornado safety, visit the FEMA website at [http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to\\_during.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_during.shtm).

### **Withdrawal from School**

Should it be necessary for a student to withdraw from school during the year, he/she should give his/her counselor a note from the student's parents/guardians stating the reason for the withdrawal, the withdrawal date, and the student's destination, so that the transfer can be completed. Students who are withdrawing must return all textbooks, library books, and instructional materials assigned to them. All financial obligations must be cleared.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Announcements**

Announcements are made either by intercom or by television each morning and over the intercom at the end of the school day. Students are expected to be quiet during announcements.

### **Assemblies**

Students are expected to practice rules of courtesy at all assemblies. Students should be absolutely quiet during assemblies, not talking or whispering, and remain with the assigned teacher when going to the assembly, sitting in the assembly, and returning to class.

### **Book Bags and Pocket Books**

Students may carry books and supplies to and from school in a book bag and/or pocket book. During the school day, book bags and pocket books must be stored in lockers. Rolling book bags are not allowed.

### **Care of Building and Property**

Everyone at Chatham Middle School should take pride in the appearance of the school. Acts such as theft and vandalizing school property are considered to be extremely serious. They are not only violations of our school's Code of Conduct; they are against the law. Students found stealing, damaging or defacing school or personal property will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension, and held responsible for the costs of repairs or replacement. Each case will be handled on an individual basis. All incidents can be reported to the Sheriff's Department.

### **Cafeteria**

The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the school health program. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced lunch is offered at a reasonable price. Students may also bring lunch in a bag or lunch box, but students are not allowed to have fast food or take-out orders delivered to them by parents during lunch. Students are also not allowed to bring sodas or other canned or bottled drinks into the cafeteria.

All students should report to the cafeteria to eat lunch, including those who bring their lunch to school. Students will not be permitted to leave the school grounds during lunch periods.

Students' behavior in the cafeteria should be based on courtesy and cleanliness. Students must sit at assigned tables and may talk quietly, using a normal, conversational tone. There will be no running, breaking lunch lines, loitering, or walking around in the cafeteria. Throwing of food/flicking food and other violations of cafeteria rules will not be tolerated.

After eating, pupils must place leftover paper, tray, plate, and silverware in the places designated for each item. Students should make sure the table and floor are clean. Students are to remain in the cafeteria until their class is dismissed unless a student is dismissed for an emergency. Food is not to be taken from the cafeteria under any circumstances.

Money for lunches will be collected as the student or adult goes through the lunch line. The cafeteria will not allow any charges during the school year. Parents may pay any amount in advance toward their child's lunch account. Students may pay by the day or week. No child is to go without lunch. If a student has lost or forgotten lunch money, a substitute meal will be given.

No student may receive free or reduced lunches until an application has been completed by the parent or legal guardian, returned to the school, and processed by the central office personnel of Pittsylvania County Schools. If a student received free or reduced lunch last year, he or she will be given a grace period of the first ten days of school for free or reduced lunch while the application is being processed.

Parents or guardians are allowed to eat lunch with their children, but they must check in through the main office and obtain a visitor's pass prior to lunch. Grandparents are allowed to eat lunch with students, provided that a written note is provided by the parent. Siblings, friends, and other relatives are not allowed to eat lunch with students.

### **Cell Phones**

Students are not allowed to bring cell phones. Possession of a cell phone at school (regardless of ownership) will result in disciplinary actions as outlined below.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense – Confiscation of Cell Phone and 3 Days of ISS

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – Confiscation of Cell Phone and 1 Day of Out-of-School Suspension

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense – Confiscation of Cell Phone and 3 Days of Out-of-School Suspension

### **Cheating**

Cheating gives a false sense of achievement and denies the student the basis for the next level of competency. If a student is caught cheating, a grade of zero will be given.

### **Clubs**

Students are encouraged to join school clubs and participate in extracurricular activities. Students must always be chaperoned by teachers during after-school club activities. Students are not allowed to be unescorted in any area of the building after school hours.

Future Farmers of America (FFA) – Students must be enrolled in an agriculture class in order to join FFA.

Junior Beta Club - Students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher will be invited to join the Beta Club. Students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.2 in order to remain an active Beta Club member. Beta meetings are generally held the first Tuesday of every month. Beta Club inductions for new members are held at the beginning of the school year.

FIRST Lego Team (For Inspiration & Recognition of Science and Technology) – Students must be enrolled in a technology class sometime during the year in order to join FIRST Lego Team.

Enrollment is limited to ten students. Meetings are generally held each Thursday.

Yearbook – Students interested in joining the yearbook staff should express interest to a teacher.

Yearbook staff members must be recommended by a teacher.

### **Closings and Delays**

The ALERTNOW system is used to contact parents by phone about weather-related school delays and closings. If you do not receive a phone call, please contact Chatham Middle School's attendance clerk so that your phone number can be updated. Closing and delays are also posted on the PCS website:

<http://www.pcs.k12.va.us/public/weather.html>

Announcements about weather-related school delays and closings are made as early as possible in the morning after it has been determined that road conditions are unsafe. Whenever possible, depending on weather conditions and the status of county roads, a decision will be made and announced the night before. In any case, a decision will be made and announced by 6:00 a.m. if at all possible. Changing weather conditions may dictate a change in the original decision. Therefore, parents should continue to listen to the radio and/or television stations in case changes are made in the first announcement.

Snow days do not count as suspension days. If a student is suspended on a day when school is not in session, the student will serve the suspension on the next day in which school is in session.

### **Computer Labs**

Chatham Middle School has the latest in computer technology, and it is imperative to provide care in maintaining this equipment. Absolutely no food, drinks, or gum are allowed in computer labs. When using school computers, students are required to follow the county's Acceptable Use Policy, as outlined online at the following address: <http://www.pcs.k12.va.us/aup/>.

### **Disruptions to the Learning Process**

Students are not allowed to behave in any manner which disrupts the learning process or to bring any items to school which may cause a disruption. For example, students are not allowed to have drawings or writings on arms or other body parts while at school. In addition, students are not allowed to bring games, trading cards, toys, or rubber bands to school during normal school hours.

### **Electronic Devices**

Students are not allowed to bring pagers, beepers, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's), iPods, digital cameras, boom boxes, Walkmans, CD players, DVD players, Game Boys or any other electronic devices to school. These items are also not allowed on school buses. Possession of an electronic device (regardless of ownership) results in the following consequences.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense – Confiscation of Electronic Device and 3 Days of ISS

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – Confiscation of Electronic Device and 1 Day of Out-of-School Suspension

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense – Confiscation of Electronic Device and 3 Days of Out-of-School Suspension

### **Family Life Program**

Family Life will be offered during the course of the year. If parents or guardians wish to have their children opt-out of this program, they must return an opt-out form to the school.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips may be taken when it is shown that they will enhance the curriculum. Pittsylvania County students must have written permission from parents or guardians to go on field trips. A student may be denied the opportunity to go on a class field trip if his or her citizenship experiences indicate that he or she would make the trip unpleasant, unrewarding, or unsafe for other students.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are held four times during the first month of school and once a month during the remainder of the year. Students should follow the basic rules listed below.

- Follow the exiting instructions given by teachers and posted in each classroom.
- Walk and do not talk. Move quickly and quietly to designated areas.

### **Food and Chewing Gum**

Students are not allowed to chew gum at school or have food in classrooms.

### **Hall Passes**

No student is to be in the hall, or any place other than the designated classroom without a hall pass, which is included in the school's planner.

### **Lasers and Matches**

Matches and laser lights, including key chains and toys with laser lights, are not allowed at school.

### **Library**

The library or media center is open from 8:05 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. each day. Students are encouraged to use the library as much as possible and will visit the library with a class or with an individual pass. A two-week due date is issued for most books. Please make sure that books are returned on time. Students will be held responsible for overdue, damaged, or lost books.

### Lockers

Each student will be issued one locker per school year. Locker combinations should not be revealed to other students, and lockers should be kept locked when not in use. Only one locker and one locker combination will be issued to a student during a school year. A student who gives his/her locker combination to another student will not be given another locker. Students should never switch lockers with someone else or share lockers with another student.

Students should see their homeroom teacher if they forget their locker combination. If the teacher is not available, the student should see the assistant principal for help with the locker.

Lockers are the property of Pittsylvania County Schools and are provided for the convenience of the students. Lockers are to be kept clean and free of unnecessary items. Decals and stickers are not to be applied on or in lockers. Students who abuse lockers will have their locker privileges revoked for a period of time by an administrator or teacher. The administration reserves the right to examine a locker at any time if there is a reason to believe that it may contain forbidden items.

### Lost and Found

If students lose something, they should check by the main office. If students find something, they should bring it to the main office. Parents may want to consider writing their child's name on a label inside coats, jackets, and book bags. Labeling helps with the return of lost belongings.

### Medications

Any student who needs to take medication during school hours must adhere to the following medication procedure. All medication must be brought to the school by the parent or guardian in its original container labeled with the student's name, the date, the name of the medication, and dosage instructions. The parent or guardian must complete a medical permission form in the office before medication can be given to the student. This procedure applies to prescription and non-prescription medication taken during school hours. **Students in possession of prescription or non-prescription drugs are subject to suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials.**

### Parent Portal

Parents have access to students' grades and attendance via a web-based Parent Portal. To access a child's educational records, a parent will log in at [www.pcs.k12.va.us/parents](http://www.pcs.k12.va.us/parents), create an account, enter a login name, and enter a password. Parents who have never obtained a login name and password should ask for a copy in the main office; a driver's license is required before a login name or password can be issued.

### Physical Contact / Public Display of Affection

Physical contact is prohibited. Students are not allowed to hit, kick, pinch, push, arm wrestle, hug, kiss, hold hands, or touch each other in ways which suggest or result in strong affection or sexual advancement.

### Planners

Two very important concepts for middle school students to understand and practice are self-organization and time management. In an effort to assist in the development of these two goals, the school sells a calendar planner for \$4.00. Students are encouraged to purchase a planner and use it daily to record homework assignments and other commitments. Planners should be taken to all classes every day and taken home each night to check homework assignments.

### **Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

State Law 22.1-202 of the Code of Virginia requires the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at the opening of each school day. Students must **stand** and recite the Pledge of Allegiance while facing the flag with their right hands over their hearts. No students will be compelled to recite the pledge if they or their parents or legal guardians object on religious or philosophical grounds.

State Law 22.1-203 of the Code of Virginia requires a minute of silence at the opening of each school day. This time is not intended to be, and shall not be conducted as a religious exercise, but is to be considered as an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day. This minute of silence will be observed during morning announcements.

### **Restrooms**

Students are encouraged to use the restroom before school and during class changes. Students are also asked to help keep the restrooms clean. No wrestling, scuffling, or congregating in the restrooms or trashing of the restrooms will be permitted.

### **School Supplies**

Students must have the appropriate supplies for their classes. Paper, pencils, and other items will be for sale at the school store in the mornings. Students should never use pencil sharpeners or scissors in a way that might cause injury to themselves or others.

### **Selling Items at School**

Students are not allowed to sell anything at school unless it is a school fundraiser.

### **Sickness/School Nurse**

The school nurse will be available each day. In case of illness, the student must get permission from the teacher to see the nurse. If illness occurs during class change, the student should get permission from the teacher of the next class. If the nurse determines that the student is too ill to remain at school, parents or guardians will be notified to pick up the student. In case of emergency, sanitary napkins are available in the nurse's office for \$.25.

### **Tardies**

It is important that students arrive at school on time. A student who arrives in homeroom after 8:20 a.m. is tardy and must report to the attendance office. After receiving the fourth tardy to school, the student will be assigned to after-school detention. After receiving the fifth tardy to school, the student will be assigned to in-school suspension (ISS). Tardies will be reset to zero at the end of each semester.

Each classroom teacher will require that students are in the classroom and ready for class during the allotted time for changing classes. Students who are tardy to class or tardy to school will be disciplined according to the following guidelines. Tardies will be reset at the end of each semester.

Fourth Unexcused Tardy to Class = ASD

Fifth Unexcused Tardy to Class = ISS for 1 Day

Sixth Unexcused Tardy to Class = ISS for 3 Days

### **Telephone Usage**

The school phone is a business phone. Only emergency calls can be made for students who have permission and a pass from the classroom teacher. The school phone cannot be used to make social plans for after school. Such plans are to be made at home the preceding night.

### Textbooks

Textbooks must be used for many years, so students are asked to take good care of textbooks. There is no rental charge for textbooks; however, students will be charged for damage to books or for lost books.

### Tornado Drills

Tornado drills are held in February and March. The safety precautions followed in drills are the same as the safety precautions followed during times of real tornado warnings. It is important for students to understand that a **tornado warning** means that **a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar**. Students should follow the basic rules listed below when told to follow tornado procedures.

- Follow the tornado evacuation instructions given by teachers and posted in each classroom.
- Move quickly and quietly to designated areas. Remain quiet so that you can hear instructions and noise from a possible tornado.
- If you are told to assume a tornado position, do so immediately.
- If you hear a loud roar, similar to a freight train, immediately assume a tornado safety position.
- If you hear large hail hitting the roof, immediately assume a tornado safety position.

For a tornado safety position, students should kneel or sit facing the wall and curl up in a ball with hands over the back of the head and neck. The head and neck are more easily injured than other parts of the body, so students should protect them as much as possible.

- For further facts about tornado safety, visit the FEMA website at [http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to\\_during.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_during.shtm).

### Visitors

All visitors, including parents and guardians, must enter the building through the main entrance and report to the office immediately. A visitor badge will be issued before visitors are allowed in the school. Visitor badges will only be issued to people who have completed Volunteer Certification. Unauthorized individuals may be prosecuted for trespassing. Students are not to bring children or visitors with them to school.

## STUDENT DRESS CODE

Chatham Middle School encourages students to take pride in their attire as it relates to the school setting. Students are to dress in a manner that, in addition to the following guidelines, takes into consideration the educational environment, safety, health, and welfare of self and others. Parents are asked to monitor their children's dress, making sure that they dress in a neat and appropriate manner.

The following dress code issues are not allowed at Chatham Middle School.

- Any clothing attire that displays alcohol, tobacco, obscene or questionable printing or depiction/promotion of racial, sexual, or violent behavior
- Tops not covering the midriff, chest, back, underarm or shoulder area
- Extremely low necklines (no cleavage)
- Spandex shorts, pants
- Disruptive Attire – pajamas, jelly bracelets, silly bands, rubber bands, spiked jewelry, including chains, collars, belts,
- Large belt buckles, medallions

Other dress code rules are listed below.

- No students are to wear bandannas, sweatbands, stocking caps, do-rags, hats, or sunglasses at school.
- Tattoos displaying defamatory writing, obscene language, obscene symbols, or symbols of drugs, sex, or alcohol, must be covered.
- Pants must cover undergarments and must be worn at waist; lettering across the buttocks is not allowed.
- Pocket area of pants, skirts, or shorts must be visible.
- Skirts / Shorts must be at least four inches above the top of the knee (even if leggings are worn).
- All students must wear shoes. Shoes designed to be tied or buckled must be tied or buckled. Backless shoes commonly known as “flip-flops,” “beach shoes,” “soccer sandals,” “zories” and/or thongs are inappropriate and will not be allowed. For safety reasons, students are not allowed to wear flip-flops, shoes or sandals without a heel strap.
- Outside coats are not allowed in the classroom unless there is a malfunction in the school's heating system; light sweaters are allowed as long as they comply with the rule about pocket area of pants.

**The administration reserves the right to establish other dress standards as the need may arise. Students who do not follow the above code will be disciplined according to the plan found in this handbook. Repeated dress code violations will result in suspension. Exceptions for special activities or health considerations may be approved by an administrator. Students who participate or volunteer in extracurricular activities, such as athletics, band, and chorus, are subject to the standards of dress as defined by the sponsors of such activities.**



## **TRANSPORTATION**



### **Meeting the Bus**

1. Arrive at your bus stop five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. It is dangerous for buses to remain stopped for long periods of time in roadways, so you should not expect drivers to wait for students who are not at the bus stop. Drivers will also not pick up students at points other than assigned stops.
2. While waiting for the bus, do not play in the roadway. Do not stand or place books and other articles in or near the roadway.
3. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before walking toward the bus.
4. If you must cross the road, wait on the left side of the road until the bus is stopped and the stop arm and crossing gate are activated. Do not cross the roadway until the bus driver assures you that the roadway is clear of traffic by signaling you to cross. If an emergency situation exists after you have been signaled to cross, the driver will blow the horn to advise everyone to clear the traffic lane.

### **Getting Off the Bus**

1. Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
2. Leave the bus in an orderly manner and do not stop or stand near the sides or rear of the bus.
3. If you must cross the highway, walk to a point at least ten feet in front of the bus and wait until all students crossing the road are in position to cross. Look at the driver. Upon the signal from the driver, walk straight across the highway. Do not stop to pick up articles dropped in the road or to get the mail. Also, do not cross back immediately behind the bus.

### **Bus Passes**

Students may ride only the bus to which they are assigned. If a child needs to temporarily ride a different bus due to child care or an emergency, a bus pass must be issued to the student by the office. Parents are to provide a written request for a pass to be issued. The written note must include a daytime phone number for the parent. Students should turn in the written note to the office as soon as they arrive at school in the morning. The pass then may be picked up when the student goes to lunch, so he/she will have the pass to present to the bus driver in the afternoon. The office cannot accept verbal permission over the phone. Bus passes will not be approved for overcrowded buses. Students are also never granted permission to load or unload a bus at a place of business.

### **Bus Behavior**

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Improper conduct on the bus will result in disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, suspension from school, suspension from riding the bus, and revocation of bus riding privileges.

1. All school rules apply to the school bus. Any offense committed by a student on the bus will be punished in the same manner as if the offense were committed at school. For example, fighting, profanity, rudeness toward the driver, and other major disciplinary infractions will result in suspension from school and the bus, regardless of whether the offense occurred at school or on the bus.
2. While on the school bus, students are expected to strictly obey the bus driver. Failure to obey the driver at any time will be considered an act of disobedience and will result in disciplinary action.

3. Unless otherwise instructed by the driver, students are allowed to talk quietly to seat partners, using a normal, conversational tone in a manner that will not disturb the driver. If the driver deems that a silent bus is necessary, then students should not speak or whisper.
4. For safety, students must keep their hands, heads, and arms inside the bus. Feet and books must be kept out of the aisle. Objects and instruments should never block the aisle on the bus.
5. Students must remain seated at all times. Students should not get out of seats until the bus comes to a complete stop.
6. Students may not chew gum, eat, or drink beverages on the school bus. Drink bottles, glass flower vases, cans, and breakable objects are not permitted on the school bus.
7. Students must ride their assigned bus unless they have a pass issued by an administrator.
8. Students are expected to keep the bus clean. Students should never throw paper, spitballs, or other debris on the floor of the bus or at another student. Students should never throw objects out of the bus windows or doors.
9. The bus driver will assign each student a seat. Damages to seats or other areas of the bus will be paid for by the student or parent/guardian. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus until compensation for damages has been paid.
10. Students should never tamper with the emergency door or any other controls on the bus. Opening or closing the front door is prohibited by anyone other than the driver. Opening the emergency door on a school bus will automatically result in suspension.
11. Students are not allowed to have pagers, beepers, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's), iPods, digital cameras, boom boxes, Walkmans, CD players, DVD players, Game Boys, or any other electronic devices on school buses. The bus driver has the right and will confiscate these articles if brought on the bus. Items will be given to an administrator.
12. Cell phones are not permitted on the school bus. Possession of a cell phone on a school bus will result in the same disciplinary actions as outlined for violating the cell phone policy at school.
13. Balloons or other objects that may obstruct the driver's view are not permitted on the bus. If it is necessary to bring school projects that are large and bulky to school, it is suggested that the student be provided with transportation to school by the parent or guardian.
14. The school has authority over students from the time they arrive within 1,000 ft. of the bus stop in the morning until they are at the same distance away from the bus stop in the afternoon.
15. Students changing buses at elementary and high schools will abide by regulations determined by the individual principals at the schools.

### **Bus Violations**

Violation of bus rules will result in bus suspension or out-of school suspension, depending on the severity of the misconduct. A student who has four bus referrals may be recommended for denial of bus riding privileges.

## DISCIPLINE

While under school jurisdiction, all students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner. Students are expected to obey administrators, teachers, substitutes, bus drivers, and other staff members while at school, while on school buses, and while attending any school-sponsored activity during or after school hours. Students will be subject to disciplinary action for misconduct. Disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, the actions listed below.

**After-School Detention (ASD)** - For minor infractions, an administrator may assign students ASD.

**Behavioral Management Center** – A teacher may, at his/her discretion, send a student to the Behavioral Management Center (BMC) instead of sending the student to the office. A student may be sent to the BMC for the following reasons: excessive talking, failure to remain seated, putting head on desk/sleeping, food/drink in class, failing to bring the appropriate materials to class, being discourteous, disrupting class, and not following classroom rules.

Trips to the BMC are counted school-wide; they are not counted by class. The fifth time a student is sent to the BMC during a semester, he/she will be sent to the office and will receive an appropriate punishment up to suspension for one day in addition to serving BMC time. For each subsequent trip to the BMC, the student will be sent to the office for appropriate disciplinary action. Students who misbehave while in the BMC will be suspended. Students who are sent to the BMC must report directly to the BMC and not go to the office, bathroom, or other classrooms.

**In-School Suspension (ISS)**—In some instances, students may be assigned to ISS by an administrator instead of being suspended from school. Upon arrival at school, students assigned to ISS should report to the cafeteria. Students will be escorted to their lockers after other students leave the cafeteria. Students must get all of their books, papers, and pencils when escorted to lockers; they are not allowed to return to lockers during the school day.

All school rules apply in ISS. Students misbehaving in ISS will be suspended. If a student misses ISS due to absence or illness, he/she must complete all ISS days upon returning to school.

Students in ISS must remain perfectly silent and must be working at all times. Students in ISS who refuse to work may be given additional days of ISS or may be suspended. Students in ISS will not be allowed to mingle with other students during the school day(s) in which he/she is in ISS. Students in ISS will be given bathroom breaks throughout the day; they are expected to remain silent to and from the restrooms. Students will also eat isolated, silent lunch.

Once assigned to ISS, students will remain with the facilitator for the duration of the day and complete assigned work given by the teacher or the administration. Students are expected to use this time to commit themselves to improving behavior and to becoming a positive contributor to the classroom environment.

**Out-of-School Suspension** - From one to ten school days of suspension may be issued by the principal or assistant principal as a disciplinary action. Out-of-school suspension requires a parent or guardian conference with the principal or assistant principal and/or teachers prior to readmission of the student to school. During suspension, class work can not be completed for credit. However, homework assignments may be completed and turned in for class credit.

When a student is suspended, he/she is suspended from all school functions and is not to be on school property at any time unless arranged in advance through the administration. Suspended students may not visit any other schools in the county during their suspension. Violation of these regulations will be grounds for further disciplinary action.

**Suspension with Recommendation to the School Board for Expulsion** – This disciplinary action may be issued by the principal for good cause; it may include suspension for up to ten days, pending action on expulsion recommendation.

**Expulsion** – The Pittsylvania County School Board may permanently bar students from attendance in Pittsylvania County Public Schools for causes including, but not limited to, total disregard for school rules; possession or use of a weapon or look-alike weapon; possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, or any drug, look-alike drug, or drug paraphernalia; and being under the influence of alcohol or any non-prescription drug.

## **AVOIDING DISCIPLINE REFERRALS**

When you realize that a discipline problem or a fight is about to take place, you should do all that you can to avoid fighting or breaking a school rule.

### **Ways to Avoid Fighting or Breaking a School Rule**

1. Ignore the student who is trying to get you in trouble.
2. Go to a teacher and seek assistance.
3. Go to a guidance counselor.
4. Go to the administration or the nearest adult for assistance.

### **Ways to Avoid Fighting or Breaking School Rules When There Are No Adults in the Immediate Area**

1. Walk away from the confrontation.
2. Do not get involved in name-calling or the use of profanity.
3. Say something loudly enough for witnesses to hear such as, “Let’s take the problem to a teacher, guidance counselor, or principal.”
4. Do not listen to others who may try to encourage a fight between you and other student(s).
5. Do not hit or make any type of physical contact.

### **Tips for Middle School Students**

1. Do not believe what others say unless you hear it yourself. Problems often occur because students are spreading false rumors.
2. Do not participate in gossip by word of mouth or by passing notes.
3. Remember that education is priceless. Your top priority in school is to learn, not to be popular.
4. True friendship should not cause problems or difficulties for you. Friends should always be kind and helpful.

## **MAJOR DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS**

**Any actions which have the potential for causing physical, mental, or emotional harm are considered to be major discipline violations. Students should expect suspension, expulsion, referral to law enforcement, and/or prosecution in the legal system for a first offense. First offense refers to the first disciplinary referral to the office. Students with disciplinary records should expect more severe punishments. Major discipline violations include, but are not limited to, those listed below and on the following page.**

**Alcohol or Drug Distribution** – Distributing alcohol, drugs, or look-alike substances on school property (including being within 1,000 feet of a school bus stop, being on a school bus, or being at any school-sponsored activity) will result in recommendation for expulsion.

**Alcohol Possession/Use/Influence** – Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol will result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, expulsion.

**Bullying** – Bullying is when a student is exposed repeatedly to negative actions on the part of one or more students using their power to hurt or humiliate others. Such behaviors may include repeated teasing or ridicule, name-calling, threats, theft, gossip, rumors, or physical intimidation of any kind. Bullying is strictly prohibited.

**Drugs in School** – State law requires that any student who is determined to have brought, used, or to have in his/her possession a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana on school property (including being within 1,000 feet of a school bus stop, being on a school bus, or being at any school-sponsored activity) will be expelled, unless other disciplinary action is deemed to be appropriate as determined by the Pittsylvania County School Board on a case-by-case basis.

No student should ever be in possession of drugs even if prescribed by a doctor. All medication must be brought to the school by the parent or guardian in its original container labeled with the student's name, the date, the name of the medication, and dosage instructions. The parent or guardian must complete a medical permission form in the office before medication can be given to the student. This procedure applies to prescription and non-prescription medication taken during school hours.

**Extortion** - Solicitation of money or something of value from another student, regardless of the amount, in return for protection or in connection with a threat to inflict harm, constitutes extortion.

**Fighting** - Any physical conduct for the purpose of inflicting harm on another person is considered to be fighting.

**Gambling** - Participation in games of chance for the express purpose of exchanging money constitutes gambling.

**Gang Activity** – Drawings and emblems may constitute gang activity.

**Inappropriate, Disrespectful, and/or Malicious Remarks** – Name-calling; racial, ethnic, gender, or religious slurs; and/or threatening statements made about other students or staff members are serious offenses. (Because of school violence that has taken place in this country, school safety is a top priority. Threatening remarks will not be treated lightly.)

**Insubordination** – Disobedience of an authority figure who is making a reasonable request is not tolerated. Refusal to follow instructions is a major discipline violation.

**Physical Assault** - Physical attack of one person, or a group of people, on another who does not wish to engage in the conflict and who has not provoked the attack is prohibited.

**Physical Contact with Potential to Harm** – Actions such as hitting, pushing, shoving, pinching, kicking, intentionally tripping other students, and pulling chairs out from under students can cause physical injury. Even when students do not cause physical harm, these actions will be considered as major discipline offenses when committed with malicious intent.

**Profanity and Inappropriate Gestures** – Spoken profanity, written profanity, and obscene, disrespectful gestures, such as holding up a middle finger, are prohibited. Words of profanity include, but are not limited to, \*ss, b\*tch, d\*mn, f\*ck, h\*ll, sh\*t.

**Rudeness and Defiance of School Staff Members** – The CMS staff consists of teachers, substitute teachers, secretaries, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, counselors, psychologists, student teachers, administrators, and other adults employed by the school system. Rudeness and defiance toward any staff members will not be tolerated.

**Sexual Harassment** – Students must respect each other at all times. There should not be any spoken words, written notes, or body movements of a sexual nature by a student toward another person.

**Sexual Pictures** – Pictures containing nudity and sexually explicit content are prohibited at school.

**Sexual Touching** – Students are never allowed to touch private body parts, including, but not limited to, breasts, buttocks, and groin.

**Skipping Classes** - Students must remain in their designated areas at all times. Students are skipping if they are absent from class without permission, in an unauthorized part of the building without permission, outside the building without supervision, or not present in class within five minutes after class begins. (If detained by a teacher, a note of explanation for the next teacher will be given to the student.) Students not in their assigned areas are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school.

**Stealing** - Taking other students' property or keeping valuables that are found at school constitutes theft.

**Tobacco Products** - Possession or use of any tobacco products including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco, is prohibited and illegal.

**Vandalism/Damaging or Destroying School Property** – Students who damage or destroy objects or materials belonging to the school, another student, or an adult on school grounds will be held liable for repair and replacement costs. Disciplinary options include suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement.

**Weapons in School** – Any student who is determined to have brought or to have in his possession a weapon or look-alike weapon on any school property (including being within 1,000 feet of a school bus stop, being on a school bus, or being at any school-sponsored activity) will be expelled for at least 180 student days, unless determined on a case-by-case basis by the Pittsylvania County School Board that other disciplinary action is appropriate.