

HEPHZIBAH MIDDLE

Teacher Handbook 2023-2024

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that is vital for the daily and efficient operation of our school. The policies and procedures of this guide will supplement the Richmond County Employee Handbook. The Richmond County policies and procedures take precedence in the instance of any conflict with this guidance. There are several changes in policies, procedures, and staff requirements so therefore, read the contents of this handbook **carefully**. This handbook along with your curriculum maps, middle school guide, and Richmond County Teacher Handbook provides you with information and policy procedures to facilitate your position as a professional member of Hephzibah Middle School.



VISION

Our goal is for all Hephzibah Middle School students to embrace the importance of being life-long learners and to always demonstrate respect and understanding for all people, perspectives, and values.

MISSION STATEMENT

Hephzibah Middle School seeks to educate students to be compassionate, inquisitive, and informed citizens who support and respect the value of cultural perspectives throughout the world.

We endeavor to work with parents, community, and partner schools to develop curriculum and assessments that hold students to a rigorous standard of achievement that strengthens students' knowledge, their cultural and societal insight as well as their ability to succeed.

BELIEFS

- All students can learn and have a right to a quality education.
- Education is a shared responsibility that unites the students, home, school, and community in the decision-making and problem-solving process while creating a mutual bond of respect and trust.
- The community serves as a means to support a safe learning environment for children as well as offering resources that will enhance students' awareness of real-life applications.
- Students learn best in an atmosphere where continuous communication and support exist among parents, students, teachers and the community.
- Education prepares everyone for the challenges of today and tomorrow and is a continuous learning process.
- Education should include programs that meet the needs of all areas of exceptionalities.
- Goals for achievable education outcomes should be clear and explicit.
- School personnel will engage in ongoing job-embedded professional learning that impacts student achievement.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1861, the minutes of the Hephzibah Baptist Association specified that a “seminary of learning” be erected in Brothersville for both boys and girls. A structure with two wings and two stories was erected. It was located on the present site of Hephzibah Elementary School. The school opened in the spring of 1861 with thirty-four students. This building was used until 1925 when a new structure made of white stucco was completed for Hephzibah students at a cost of sixty thousand dollars. There is a photograph of this building in the Media Center.

In 1964, the present Hephzibah Elementary School was built to accommodate white children in grades one through eight. Floyd Graham Elementary School housed black children in grades one through eight. A new Hephzibah High School was built one mile east of the city of Hephzibah in 1969. In 1970, the entire school system was integrated and Floyd Graham Elementary became the school for all students in grades one through three. Hephzibah Elementary housed grades four through seven. The old high school became Hephzibah Junior High School.

During the following years, many changes took place as grades were divided among the four schools. With each change, a new interest in the education of Hephzibah’s youth was pursued.

The new Hephzibah Middle School was completed in the spring of 1982. This was the first facility in Richmond County designed for the middle school concept. During the 1999-2000 school year, nine new classrooms, a new roof, additional storage areas, and a new gym floor were all part of a renovation package for facility upgrades.

Hephzibah Middle School is organized very much like several schools within a school. Each grade level is separate with three to four teams made up of two to four members. Each grade is organized with an interdisciplinary approach and a common planning time of ninety minutes daily.

School enrollment at Hephzibah Middle School has fluctuated over the years. During the 1995-1996 school year, 1,315 students attended the school with classes housed in nineteen portables as well as the main building. A new middle school opened in 1996-1997 and Hephzibah Middle School’s enrollment dropped to approximately 910 students. The 1999-2000 school year brought an enrollment of 942 students housed in the main building and nine portables. During the 2000-2001 school year, the construction of nine new classrooms was completed. Growth in the Hephzibah community brought new students to the school. During the 2001-2002 school year, approximately 945 students attended Hephzibah Middle School.

The 2002-2003 school year brought a new principal to the school. Three additional portable classrooms were added to house sixth-grade students. A school council was established to comply with state laws. This council was composed of the principal, two teachers, two parents, and two business members. Renovations were completed in the front office and foyer area of the school. The school’s average enrollment for the year was 975 students.

The 2003-2004 school year saw Hephzibah Middle School accepting students from several other Richmond County middle schools because of the “School Choice” option allowed by the No Child Left Behind Act. The Hephzibah Middle School chapter of the Junior National Beta Club was revived and a large number of students were inducted into this academic club. Improvements to the school grounds were completed with the addition of new lights and safety markings in the parking lot area and the removal of trees. The school’s average enrollment for the year was 1,065 students.

The 2004-2005 school year brought middle school championships for the cheerleaders, softball, and golf teams. The baseball team was the runner-up for the baseball championship. Not only were the students athletically successful, but they were also academically successful. Improvements continued to be made to the physical plant. A new alarm and surveillance system were installed and the PTO purchased a marquee sign for the school. The school’s average enrollment for the year was 1,040 students.

The 2005-2006 school year was Hephzibah Middle School’s twenty-fifth anniversary and success both academically and athletically. All subgroups made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as determined by student reading and math scores on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests. A number of our students were recognized on the district and state levels for various academic accomplishments. The softball and football teams won the county middle school championships. The baseball and golf teams won second place at the middle school level this year. The cheerleaders continued to win on the local, state, and

national levels. This school year brought the addition of a new computer lab for the students. This lab was used to bolster math scores and provide students with opportunities to integrate technology into their assignments. The *HMS Morning Show* was introduced this year. The morning show allowed students to broadcast daily announcements, weather, instructional assignments, and other important information directly into each classroom. HMS students under the direction of the technology education teacher produced the entire show. The school's average enrollment for the year was 935 students.

The 2006-2007 school year brought new challenges and opportunities to the faculty and staff of HMS. The year began with a quest to continue with the academic gains from the previous school year. After making AYP for the 2005-2006 school year, the faculty began the year with a renewed dedication to once again making AYP. Organizational changes were made to better serve the students with disabilities. A full inclusion model was implemented for students with disabilities. Many of our students won academic awards in various content areas. The athletic program at HMS saw a stellar year with middle school championships in softball, boys' track, and baseball. The football team and the golf team both won second place for the year. Although we continued to make academic gains, we did not make AYP for the school year.

The 2007-2008 school year opened with an influx of technology into our eighth-grade classes to enhance instructional delivery. Ten of the twelve eighth-grade classes were outfitted with Activ-Boards, LCD projectors, and wireless access. A mobile computer cart with twenty-five laptops was made available to our eighth graders. These additions were made possible through a grant from the Georgia Department of Education and our PTO. Gender-separate classes were established for our sixth graders. The seventh and eighth graders were assigned to gender-separate classes for connections and PE. The quality of our academic program was further advanced with additional implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards in several content areas. Our students were once again successful in numerous academic contests throughout the year. The athletic program at HMS again saw success. Our teams won five of the seven middle school championships for the year. Hephzibah Middle School made AYP for the 2007-2008 school year.

During the 2008-2009 school year, teachers continued to integrate technology into their subjects with the Activ-Boards, LCD projectors, and wireless access. Gender-separate classes were established for seventh graders, and this initiative was continued in the sixth-grade classrooms. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders were assigned to gender-separate classes for connections and PE. The academic program at HMS has continued to improve throughout the year with the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards in all content areas. Once again, our students were successful in a number of academic contests throughout the year. In fact, HMS has two state Media Festival winners, and we are awaiting news from the International Media Festival. The athletic program at HMS has continued our winning tradition with championships in softball, football, golf, track, and baseball. The basketball team made great strides this year, and the girl went to the championship game. Hephzibah Middle has made significant academic gains this year, and we are looking forward to another great year.

In the 2015-16 school year, Hephzibah Middle School applied to become an International Baccalaureate School with Hephzibah High School. This was a five-year process and HMS became an authorized International Baccalaureate School October 22, 2019.

In the 2021-2022 school year, HMS implemented the Verizon Innovative Learning Program. This program initiative equipped every student and teacher at HMS with a device and a four-year data plan and provided all students without reliable home internet access with a mobile hotspot. In addition to free technology and access, HMS received extensive teacher training, support, and the opportunity to engage in a unique, immersive curriculum to leverage technology in their classrooms. During the 2021-2022 school year HMS received notable recognition in the area of sports, HMS Girls Track Team and Baseball won the middle school county championship.

The 2022-2023 school year, HMS was approved with an extension for the Verizon Innovation Learning Program. This extension was awarded HMS with an additional 2 years on our VILS Grant. Because of the positive impact of the VILS Program, our students learned the meaning of teamwork and technical support through the hard work of our student-led HMS Tech Team. During the 2022-2023 school year, our student athletes set new records. The HMS Softball team was runner-up after an undefeated regular season. Boys Basketball competed in the final four. Boys Track was runner-up in the county and Girls Track placed 3rd for the county. HMS Baseball Team won Back 2 Back Championships with an undefeated season 22-0.

Outlined below are the characteristics of Hephzibah Middle School:

- Hephzibah Middle School will be student-centered where all decisions are made in the **BEST** interest of what will impact student achievement and development. That would be evident in all decision-making. In a student-centered environment, students are the priority from which all decisions are made. Our school will have a viable and fully functioning teacher-mentoring program where students are valued for who they are and what they want to become.
- Hephzibah Middle School will be parent-friendly where parents know that they are welcome and are a vital part of the school's life. They are active and visible in the school, and they work collaboratively with teachers for the betterment of all children.
- Faculty and staff will maintain positive relationships and avoid any adversarial relationships with parents or other staff members. Faculty and staff members' attitudes reflect a sense of pride and belonging. Staff members should be comfortable enough to redirect any negative comments about the school from students, parents, and other staff members.
- Teachers will know the students well. The school environment will be personalized and individualized as much as possible; teachers would use data to keep track of student progress and address deficits with Corrective Teaching immediately. The teachers will be keenly aware of students' developmental and social needs as well as their academic needs and understand how all those needs are related.
- All Hephzibah Middle School stakeholders will be celebrated, and parents, community, students, teachers, and district personnel will all work together, and their contributions will be purposefully recognized and celebrated.
- Hephzibah Middle School will exemplify a culture of collaboration. It will be the expectation that all stakeholders work together and support one another; all are held accountable and understand the role they play in promoting and enhancing student achievement.
- Quality instruction will always take place. Teachers are always prepared, and knowledgeable, and create and implement engaging instruction differentiated to meet individual needs while utilizing effective classroom management strategies.

HMS Teachers' Duties and Responsibility

- reporting to work on time (TKES-9)
- carrying out duty assignment(s) such as before or after school, bus, and/or special duty (TKES-9)
- attending staff meetings, committee meetings, PTO meetings, and required RTI Meetings(TKES-9)
- attending professional learning/collaborative planning sessions (TKES-1,3,9)
- supervising students on/off campus (TKES-9)
- receiving approval prior to leaving campus (Write It, Don't Say It) (TKES-9,10)
- creating, communicating, and enforcing a classroom discipline plan/adhering to HMS School-Wide Behavior Plan (TKES-7)
- follow all procedures/protocols (TKES-7)
- making parental contact(s) and documenting in Infinite Campus (TKES-9,10)
- supervising students in the hall during class change (TKES-7,9)
- reporting to class on time after lunch or planning period (TKES-9)
- contacting the principal when going to be absent and calling for a substitute (TKES-9,10)
- preparing and making accessible necessary materials for a substitute (TKES-2,9,10)
- creating an emergency lesson plan packet to turn in to the front office secretary (TKES2,9,10)
- following a professional dress code (TKES-9)

RCSS Teacher Job Description

Under the direction of the school principal and his/her designee, plans, and provides for appropriate learning experiences for students. Provides an atmosphere and environment conducive to the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of individuals to ensure Success for Every Student. Supervises students in a variety of school-related settings. Monitors and evaluates student outcomes. Communicates and interacts with students, parents, staff, and the community. Develops, selects, and modifies instructional plans and materials to meet the needs of all students. Maintains appropriate records and follows required procedures and practices. Monitors appropriate use and care of equipment, materials, and facilities.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES: (Asterisk for essential job duties.)

1. Plans a program of study that meets the needs, interests, and abilities of individuals to ensure success for every student (*)
2. Reports to work on time and is prepared for all classes and duty assignments (*)
3. Creates a classroom environment that provides student involvement in the learning process and enables each student to achieve learning objectives
4. Provides an instructional program to meet the needs of all students including students with

disabilities (*)

5. Prepares lesson plans as outlined by school and other documentation as required by principal or his/her designee and submit on time.
6. Guides the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals and in harmony with the goals, establishes clear objectives for all lessons, units, projects and the like to communicate these objectives to students (*)
7. Establishes learning objectives consistent with appraisal of student needs, requirements of RCSS curriculum framework, and knowledge of human growth and development (*)
8. Plans for and utilizes instructional methods, resources and evaluation techniques which motivate and enable each student to achieve learning objectives (*)
9. Assesses the learning and behavioral needs of students on a regular basis. Provides input as needed to IEP's of students with disabilities ensuring the implementation of modifications including co-teaching as needed.
10. Takes all necessary and safety precautions to protect students, equipment, materials and facilities (*)
11. Maintains accurate and complete records as required by law and per RCSS policy and administrative regulation (*)
12. Assists the administration in implementing all policies and rules governing student life and conduct and, for the classroom, develops reasonable rules of classroom behavior and procedure, and maintains order in the classroom in a fair and just manner
13. Makes provision for being available to students and parents for education-related purposes outside the instructional day when required or requested to do so under reasonable terms
14. Establishes relationships with colleagues, students, parents and community which reflect recognition of and respect for every individual
15. Plans and supervises purposeful assignments for instructional assistants, teacher assistants, and volunteers (*)
16. May evaluate paraprofessional's job performance with department heads and/or administrators
17. Maintains fair and accurate grading policies and procedures, attendance, email and web pages as required through the technology system provided by the RCSS
18. The employee shall carry out such other and further duties, whether specifically listed above or not, as are assigned or required by such employee's supervisor, other appropriate school personnel, law board policy administrative regulation, department handbook, as are reasonably necessary to the efficient operation of the school system and its mission.

KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES, AND SKILLS:

Knowledge of RCSS curriculum, techniques for integrating curriculum, RCSS policies, and effective instructional practices. Understanding of the teaching/learning process. Ability to provide instruction that reflects multiple perspectives and multicultural education. Ability to infuse technology into curriculum. Ability to work effectively with administrators, colleagues, central office, and school-based staff, students, parents and community. Excellent oral and written communication and human relations skills.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Required to attend school meetings, programs and activities outside the instructional day as mandated by RCBOE contract. Some work beyond the school day may be required.

EVALUATION:

Conducted annually based on the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education.

Georgia Department of Education
Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards Reference Sheet
TKES Performance Standards and Rubrics

1. Professional Knowledge: <i>The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.</i>
1.1 Addresses appropriate curriculum standards and integrates key content elements.
1.2 Facilitates students' use of higher-level thinking skills in instruction.
1.3 Demonstrates ability to link present content with past and future learning experiences, other subject areas, and real-world experiences and applications.
1.4 Demonstrates accurate, deep, and current knowledge of subject matter.
1.5 Exhibits pedagogical skills relevant to the subject area(s) taught and best practice based on current research.
1.6 Bases instruction on goals that reflect high expectations for all students and a clear understanding of the curriculum.
1.7 Displays an understanding of the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of the age group.
2. Instructional Planning: <i>The teacher plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.</i>
2.1 Analyzes and uses student learning data to inform planning.
2.2 Develops plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum (e.g., long-term goals, lesson plans, and syllabi).
2.3 Plans instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.
2.4 Plans for instruction to meet the needs of all students.
2.5 Aligns and connects lesson objectives to state and local school district curricula and standards, and student learning needs.
2.6 Develops appropriate course, unit, and daily plans, and is able to adapt plans when needed.
3. Instructional Strategies: <i>The teacher promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key knowledge and skills.</i>
3.1 Engages students in active learning and maintains interest.
3.2 Builds upon students' existing knowledge and skills.
3.3 Reinforces learning goals consistently throughout the lesson.
3.4 Uses a variety of research-based instructional strategies and resources.
3.5 Effectively uses appropriate instructional technology to enhance student learning.
3.6 Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.
3.7 Develops higher-order thinking through questioning and problem-solving activities.
3.8 Engages students in authentic learning by providing real-life examples and interdisciplinary connections.
4. Differentiated Instruction: <i>The teacher challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences.</i>
4.1 Differentiates the instructional content, process, product, and learning environment to meet individual developmental needs.
4.2 Provides remediation, enrichment, and acceleration to further student understanding of material.
4.3 Uses flexible grouping strategies to encourage appropriate peer interaction and to accommodate learning needs/goals.
4.4 Uses diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment data to inform instructional modifications for individual students.
4.5 Develops critical and creative thinking by providing activities at the appropriate level of challenge for students.
4.6 Demonstrates high learning expectations for all students commensurate with their developmental levels.
5. Assessment Strategies: <i>The teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population.</i>
5.1 Aligns student assessment with the established curriculum and benchmarks.
5.2 Involves students in setting learning goals and monitoring their own progress.
5.3 Varies and modifies assessments to determine individual student needs and progress.
5.4 Uses formal and informal assessments for diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes.
5.5 Uses grading practices that report final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives.
5.6 Uses assessment techniques that are appropriate for the developmental level of students.
5.7 Collaborates with others to develop common assessments, when appropriate.
6. Assessment Uses: <i>The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents.</i>
6.1 Uses diagnostic assessment data to develop learning goals for students, to differentiate instruction, and to document learning.
6.2 Plans a variety of formal and informal assessments aligned with instructional results to measure student mastery of learning objectives.
6.3 Uses assessment tools for both formative and summative purposes to inform, guide, and adjust instruction.
6.4 Systematically analyzes and uses data to measure student progress, to design appropriate interventions, and to inform long- and short-term instructional decisions.
6.5 Shares accurate results of student progress with students, parents, and key school personnel.
6.6 Provides constructive and frequent feedback to students on their progress toward their learning goals.
6.7 Teaches students how to self-assess and to use metacognitive strategies in support of lifelong learning.

<p>7. Positive Learning Environment: <i>The teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.</i></p> <p>7.1 Responds to disruptions in a timely, appropriate manner.</p> <p>7.2 Establishes clear expectations for classroom rules, routines, and procedures and enforces them consistently and appropriately.</p> <p>7.3 Models caring, fairness, respect, and enthusiasm for learning.</p> <p>7.4 Promotes a climate of trust and teamwork within the classroom.</p> <p>7.5 Promotes respect for and understanding of students' diversity, including – but not limited to – race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.</p> <p>7.6 Actively listens and pays attention to students' needs and responses.</p> <p>7.7 Creates a warm, attractive, inviting, and supportive classroom environment.</p> <p>7.8 Arranges the classroom materials and resources to facilitate group and individual activities.</p>
<p>8. Academically Challenging Environment: <i>The teacher creates a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels and students are self-directed learners.</i></p> <p>8.1 Maximizes instructional time.</p> <p>8.2 Conveys the message that mistakes should be embraced as a valuable part of learning.</p> <p>8.3 Encourages productivity by providing students with appropriately challenging and relevant material and assignments.</p> <p>8.4 Provides transitions that minimize loss of instructional time.</p> <p>8.5 Communicates high, but reasonable, expectations for student learning.</p> <p>8.6 Provides academic rigor, encourages critical and creative thinking, and pushes students to achieve goals.</p> <p>8.7 Encourages students to explore new ideas and take academic risks.</p>
<p>9. Professionalism: <i>The teacher exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school's mission, participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning, and contributes to the profession.</i></p> <p>9.1 Carries out duties in accordance with federal and state laws, Code of Ethics, and established state and local school board policies, regulations, and practices.</p> <p>9.2 Maintains professional demeanor and behavior (e.g., appearance, punctuality and attendance).</p> <p>9.3 Respects and maintains confidentiality.</p> <p>9.4 Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strengths and weaknesses related to professional skills and their impact on student learning and sets goals for improvement.</p> <p>9.5 Participates in ongoing professional growth activities based on identified areas for improvement (e.g., mentoring, peer coaching, course work, conferences) and incorporates learning into classroom activities.</p> <p>9.6 Demonstrates flexibility in adapting to school change.</p> <p>9.7 Engages in activities outside the classroom intended for school and student enhancement.</p>
<p>10. Communication: <i>The teacher communicates effectively with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.</i></p> <p>10.1 Uses verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to foster positive interactions and promote learning in the classroom and school environment.</p> <p>10.2 Engages in ongoing communication and shares instructional goals, expectations, and student progress with families in a timely and constructive manner.</p> <p>10.3 Collaborates and networks with colleagues and community to reach educational decisions that enhance and promote student learning.</p> <p>10.4 Uses precise language, correct vocabulary and grammar, and appropriate forms of oral and written communication.</p> <p>10.5 Explains directions, concepts, and lesson content to students in a logical, sequential, and age-appropriate manner.</p> <p>10.6 Adheres to school and district policies regarding communication of student information.</p> <p>10.7 Creates a climate of accessibility for parents and students by demonstrating a collaborative and approachable style.</p> <p>10.8 Listens and responds with cultural awareness, empathy, and understanding to the voice and opinions of stakeholders (parents, community, students, and colleagues).</p> <p>10.9 Uses modes of communication that are appropriate for a given situation.</p>

PROFESSIONALISM

Each teacher and staff member are responsible for carrying out the policies of the Richmond County School System (RCSS) that apply to the functions of the school, the classroom, contact with students, and the public. It is the responsibility of all teachers and staff members to cooperate in a professional manner with their colleagues and with the administration. This professional cooperation includes the extension of courtesy, respect, and consideration for the feelings and rights of colleagues, other employees, students, parents, and the public. Every teacher and staff member has the right to discuss any matter with anyone without interference; however, it is a breach of professional ethics to discuss professional problems with nonprofessionals without first attempting to resolve them within the teaching profession. Problems between adults are not to be discussed in the presence of students.

TEACHERS' WORK DAY

The workday for certified personnel begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. All school-level **certified personnel** are on-site for an 8-hour day. Each teacher and staff member are to sign in upon arrival at school. Please understand that the failure to sign in and out could result in you being counted absent for a day of work. Each employee is to sign in and out daily on a daily basis in the front office. Employees should check their mailboxes daily upon arrival, during their planning time, and at the end of the day.

LATE TO WORK

It is vital that teachers report to work on time each day and be prepared to greet students. Any teacher who is late reporting to work for 15 or more minutes total per week will receive a verbal warning on the **first offense**. On the **second offense**, a teacher will receive documentation on TKES (Standard 9: Professionalism) and a conference with the principal. On the **third offense**, documentation will be submitted to the Accounting Department for deduction in pay and documentation on TKES (Standard 9: Professionalism)

LEAVING CAMPUS

Teachers who need to leave the campus during their planning period or for an emergency or other reason must obtain permission from the **principal, speak with the bookkeeper, and sign out**. This should not become a pattern. If you are given permission to leave, you must report to the Bookkeeper for documentation purposes and sign out.

EMPLOYEE ABSENCE

These guidelines apply to all faculty and staff:

Pre-Planned Absences:

- Notify Mr. Jones at least three days prior to an absence in person and follow up with an email.
- Complete the Certificate of Absence from the Bookkeeper on the day of your return.

Emergency Absences:

- Call Mr. Jones
- Login to Subby System and record absence including date and reason for absence. Note whether a substitute is required to fill this absence. Also, include information for the substitute to pick up the folder from the front office at the time they enter the building.

SICK LEAVE/MEDICAL EXCUSES

Each staff member is required to bring in a medical/doctor excuse after the 3rd consecutive day of a sick/medical absence. The excuse should be provided to the bookkeeper within 48 hours (about 2 days) of the absences. If an excuse is not provided, the staff member will have that time deducted from payroll. Staff members are strongly encouraged NOT to schedule appointments during school hours. If this must occur please notify Mr. Jones about your absence in advance.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Staff members are allotted three personal days each school year with the following stipulations:

- Three-day advance notice provided to administration (can be denied if the directive is not followed)
- Must not extend a school vacation/holiday unless approved by the **central office**.
- After using three personal days, the fourth personal day will be docked from pay.

Personal leave is not generally granted in May unless an emergency arises. Please discuss individual cases with the principal. No personal leave will be approved for the last week of school.

EMPLOYEE PAYCHECKS

If for some reason you feel that there is a problem with your pay, **DO NOT** call the central office. Notify Ms. Gilmore, the school bookkeeper and allow her time to resolve the issue.

ID BADGES

All employees are expected to wear their board issued ID Badge while in the building. The system will provide the first badge for free, but a replacement will require a cost to the employee. If you need a badge, contact the bookkeeper in the front office.

ACCIDENTS, INJURIES, and ILLNESS

Students

In the event of an emergency, illness, or accident, school office personnel may administer first aid **ONLY**. **Do not make a diagnosis or give any medication of any kind—not even ASPIRIN.**

If a student is on prescribed medicine, a copy of the directions for giving the medicine should be given to the nurse in the clinic. The medicine must be left in the clinic and the student sent to the clinic to take it.

All accidents, injuries, etc. that take place at school or on school premises must be reported to the school nurse. An accident report form should be completed and filed in the office.

Faculty and Staff--Worker's Compensation

All employees should report all accidents to their immediate supervisor immediately. Failure to report an accident within 30 days may result in loss of coverage. Worker's Compensation accident reports should be filed on an employee whether or not the employee received medical treatment. Our insurance carriers are requiring that we determine the cause of the accident and what corrective action will be taken to prevent similar accidents.

All reports must reach the Department of Worker's Compensation within two working days of the accident. Failure to file this on time could subject the Board to a penalty of up to \$1,000.00.

Employees must visit one of the approved physicians. If the employee needs emergency treatment, he/she may report to the emergency room of one of the public hospitals. The hospital should contact one of the approved physicians.

If any employee is required to stay away from his/her job due to any injury received on the job, be sure to notify the Worker's Compensation office at the Central Office. **THIS IS IMPORTANT!** This information must be reported to the worker's compensation board immediately. If the injured employee should return to work the next day and work one or more days before being required to remain off the job, report each incidence of this. The Worker's Compensation office should be notified when an employee returns to work. **If an employee cannot return to FULL DUTY, he/she must contact the Worker's Compensation department before returning to work.**

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is prohibited on Richmond County Board of Education property and/or while on duty.

PERSONAL PHONE CALLS DURING CLASS TIME

1. All telephone messages will be placed in your mailbox or via email except in case of an emergency.
2. Teachers and paraprofessionals are to refrain from using the telephone during regular class time except in case of an emergency.
3. Long distance calls for school purposes are made from the phone in the principal's office. Please do not utilize the principal's office unless, you have been given permission by the principal.
4. Teachers are not to send students to the teacher's workroom areas to use the phones.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

The Richmond County Board of Education recognizes that teachers and other professional educators are role models for the students who come in contact with them during and after school hours. As role models, teachers and other staff members should be conscious of their dress and grooming and its effect on students and parents.

Teachers and staff members are expected to dress in a professional and appropriate manner that will be most conducive to the educational environment. Employees shall be clean, neat, well-groomed, and dressed in an appropriate manner for their individual work assignments.

A wide variety of teaching styles and activities occur between age and grade levels. Therefore, activities and/or assignments planned for the day will dictate, to a degree, the style of dress considered appropriate.

Blue jeans, shorts, sweats, wind suits, and warm-up suits are not appropriate dress and should not be worn at school. Exceptions would be physical education, field trips, field days, and spirit days when special attire is required.

Minimum Dress and Grooming Standard

The minimum dress and grooming standard for employees shall meet or exceed the standard required for students in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline Policy.

The following items are considered appropriate attire:

Men

Ties
Short/long sleeve collared shirts
Sports jackets/suits
Crew/mock/turtleneck shirts
Polo/golf shirts

Women

Skirts/dresses (*appropriate length)
Slacks
Suits
Sweaters
Denim dresses/skirts
Coordinated Capri pant suits (mid-calf)
Shirts/blouses

The following is NOT considered appropriate attire:

Jogging/sweat suits (permitted for physical education ONLY)
Miniskirts/dresses
Leggings/leotards as an over garment
Shorts (men/women)
Revealing garments
Flip-flops and other thong-type shoes/Crocs
Tight fitting clothing

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are regulated in accordance with RCSS Field Trip policy. Please see the RCSS Field Trip policy on the board website for the policy and proper field trip forms.

- All field trips must be aligned to academic standards or instructional units.
- Grade levels that are planning a field trip must obtain and complete all required forms.
- The Field Trip Request Document must be presented to the principal **at least 45 days before the trip.** Only certified staff members may request field trips.
- After receiving the written approval from the principal, the grade levels field trip point of conduct will have the responsibility of submitting the completed document to BOE (at least 30 days before the trip) for approval. Field trip sites that are on the “approved field trip list” do not have to be approved by BOE. Please see the school bookkeeper for this list.
- The teacher(s) will be required to wait for the written approval of BOE **BEFORE collecting any funds for a trip.** As always, money must be turned in to the bookkeeper on a daily basis. Teachers must turn in all field trip money at planning times only (not before school and not after school). The bookkeeper and the teacher **MUST** count the money together.
- Teachers preparing for a field trip must inform the cafeteria manager of plans for the trip at least 2 weeks before the trip. Bagged lunches must be requested at least 2 weeks in advance.
- The standard RCSS fieldtrip Permission Form must be used for each field trip.
- The requesting team/teacher must make arrangements with the transportation department if a bus is needed. Please see bookkeeper for help with this step.
- Teachers who plan to transport student in personal cars must complete the appropriate document. See the bookkeeper for his document. This document must be submitted to the transportation department 1 week before transporting the children.
- The names of students who will not attend the field trip must be submitted to the school secretary the day before the fieldtrip.
- **If a check is needed, it must be requested at least 3 days before the trip.**

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills will be held each month. The building must be vacated entirely.

Each room will have posted by the inside door, the fire evacuation chart showing the route to be taken by each class to exit the building.

PROCEDURES:

- At the sound of the fire alarm, talking and working will cease.
- Teachers and students will line up and walk in a single file line from the room to their assigned exit.
- Classes **MUST** have a system for lining up and walking out in order to avoid confusion.
- Students should be instructed to walk NOT run.

- Teachers will guide the students to a safe distance from the building – AT LEAST 50 YARDS. Please report to your designated areas.
- Teachers will account for each student and submit the required information into Navigate system. The Navigate App must be downloaded prior to the first fire drill of the school year. Please see the office staff for assistance.

TEACHING/CLASSROOM AREAS

An attractive, orderly, educationally inspiring teaching area will stimulate a similar response.

- A. Keep all bulletin boards attractive, current and relevant.
- B. Keep your rooms neat and free of litter. Students should be required to pick-up all trash around their workstation before leaving
- C. In case of a spill, notify the office or a custodian.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

To meet the divergent needs of the emerging adolescent, the middle school provides an instructional program that is flexible in scope and sequence. The instructional program is a continuation of the teaching of the basic skills taught in elementary school and is designed to enhance a smooth transition from elementary school to high school. The instructional program has two major components: the core and the connections program. Rather than the subject-centered curriculum characteristics of junior high and high school, the middle school employs the concept of a core curriculum that includes instruction in language arts (including listening, speaking, reading, and writing), mathematics, science (including health and physical education), and social studies.

The core curriculum:

- *emphasizes the learning of fundamental concepts and skills needed by all students.
- *places increased emphasis on the classroom teacher in the role of personal counseling and guidance.
- *is normally associated with a block of time rather than a conventional six-period daily class schedule.
- *personalizes instruction by utilizing student problems and concerns as tools of instruction.
- *facilitates the utilization of an interdisciplinary subject approach.
- *facilitates closer relationships between teachers and students.

The connections program includes the areas of explorations in technology, music, art, physical education and reading.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

All instructional materials are cataloged through the media center. The media specialist is available to assist with material selection. Teachers are expected to become familiar with available materials and are expected to use these materials as often as the need arises or as indicated by a learning activity. Materials must be checked out through the media specialist and may be kept in the classroom as needed and when available.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING/COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Every Wednesday is reserved for Professional Learning. Thursday is set aside for Collaborative Planning. This will occur in the professional learning room. All teachers are expected to attend. Please do not schedule parent conferences or other grade-level meetings on these days.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

All teams are expected to meet each week during Collaborative Planning. The purposes of these sessions are to analyze student work, discuss professional learning opportunities, monitor student progress, discuss and plan curriculum units, analyze data, coordinate subject matter, discuss discipline concerns, and discuss other items as they arise. The administrative staff will visit collaborative planning meetings regularly. Minutes must be taken and submitted to Instructional Specialist on Friday.

LESSON PLANNING

A teacher's teaching begins before he or she steps into the classroom. Prior to each lesson, unit, semester, or school year, teachers plan the content of instruction, select teaching materials, design learning activities and grouping methods, decide on the pacing and allocation of instructional time, and identify learning opportunities for students. Teachers use state or district curriculum standards, school district curriculum goals and objectives, and learning outcomes developed by professional organizations to plot the scope and sequence of subject topics (**Refer to Richmond Ready**).

Teachers are required to upload their lesson plans for the coming week on Mondays to Canvas no later than 9:00AM to be credited for submitting plans on time. Instructional Specialist and/or Admin will be checking the platform to determine if the lesson plans are posted. Failure to comply, will reflect on your Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES).

SUBSTITUTES PLANS FOR ABSENCE

SUBSTITUTE FOLDER

Teachers should keep a Substitute Folder, which should include seating charts, special needs instructions/modifications, and other information deemed necessary for a Substitute to be effective in his or her absence. Each teacher will prepare a substitute folder. The folder should contain a syllabus, daily schedule, class rosters, seating charts, discipline referral forms (2), and any other information required by a substitute. **This folder is to be kept in a designated location and location shared with TEAM members for access in case of an emergency.**

EMERGENCY SUBSTITUTE PACKET

Each teacher must compile an emergency packet consisting of lessons for **3-5 days**. These plans are for **emergency purposes only**. Include class rosters, duty assignments, daily schedules, etc. with this packet as well as purposeful work for students. This packet is to be given to the front office by the specified due date given during preplanning. Emergency substitute packet must be updated as often as needed.

SYLLABUS

All teachers should prepare a course syllabus with the following: units outline, topics, grading policy, classroom expectations (discipline). A syllabus is both a document about the course content, goals, and elements and a guide for students to the kind of teaching and learning they can expect in your class. A well-structured syllabus invites students to take responsibility for their own learning. **Your syllabus should be posted in Canvas and on your teacher's webpage. A copy of your course syllabus must be prepared to review and go home with students during the first week of school.**

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Teachers are required to implement Canvas, the county learning management system. This should not take the place of classroom instruction. HMS is not an E-SCHOOL and students should be provided with face to face engaging instruction.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROMOTION INFORMATION

Following is the middle school promotion information for the 2023-2024 school year as adopted by the Richmond County Board of Education. A student shall be promoted when, in the professional judgment of the teacher(s) and the principal, and other professional school staff, he/she has successfully met the identified instructional standards based on the Georgia Performance Standards and the local curriculum.

Subject Requirements

To meet promotion requirements, students in grades 6-8 must:

- Obtain a passing grade in mathematics and language arts.
- Obtain a passing grade in either social studies or science.
- Obtain a passing average for four of the eight connections grading periods.

AND

No eighth-grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not meet Grade Level Criteria on the Georgia Milestones test in Math or Reading/ELA.

COMMUNICATION

At HMS, we pride ourselves on building positive relationships with our students and parents. These relationships are start with continuous communication. This communication must be both “good and bad”. All communication must be documented in Infinite Campus.

Non-negotiables for Parent/Teacher Communication:

Fall Progress Reports (1&2)/Report Card: During the first progress report, parent conferences should be held for each student to discuss strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for student improvement. Conferences must be scheduled at this time for students with prior evidence of difficulties (Fall Parent Conference Window September 18-October 6,. The second progress report will indicate if a student is in danger of not meeting the promotion requirements. **RTI meetings should also be scheduled for students showing difficulty in successfully completing work at their assigned grade level. Appendix B should be sent home in the Report Card folder as well.**

Spring Progress Report (3&4)/Report Card: At the end of the 1st semester, the report card will indicate if a student is in danger of not meeting the promotion requirements. The report card envelope will also indicate promotion difficulties. A parent-teacher conference **must** be held at this time (Spring Conference Window February 20-March 8). A student's difficulty should be documented with appendix B, and sent home with the Report Card. **RTI meetings should be scheduled at this time for those in danger of being retained.**

End of the School Year: Parents of students who will be retained **must** be invited to a conference concerning the placement decision made by the school for the following year.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC WORK

GRADES

It is important that all teachers adhere to the policy established by the Student Privacy Act and the Richmond County School System Grading Policy. In relation to the grades of individual students, the following guidelines must be followed:

Student grades may be viewed by:

- the student in question and his/her parent/guardian.
- school officials on a need-to-know basis.
- court officials (approved by the principal).

Student grades cannot be viewed by:

- other students.
- other parents.

Teachers must post two grades per weekly in Infinite Campus

In a conference setting with the parent/guardian, the teacher may present the child's grades in a manner that blocks the names and grades of other students. A teacher should never let students assist in the distribution of Report Cards or Progress Reports.

Students should not be allowed to grade tests or record scores in the teacher's grade book.

The determination of grades is the responsibility of the teacher. Teachers should consider the following items when determining a student's grade. All teachers are required to follow the RCSS Grading Policy.

- Assessments should be based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Teachers should enter grades a minimum of **TWO** Grades per week in Infinite Campus.
- Teachers must meet grade deadlines as communicated by Admin. (TKES Standard 9)
- Teachers should maintain a portfolio containing several examples of the student's work to support grades if challenged. It is unacceptable and bad practice to assign a semester grade based on only one assessment.
- **Do not reduce academic grades because of misconduct.**
- Teachers should follow the guidelines on make-up work as stated in RCSS Grading Policy.
- No grades over 100 will be accepted in Infinite Campus.
- Grade assignments are the responsibility of the teacher and must adhere to RCSS Grading Policy.
- RCSS Grading Policy Professional Learning will be covered during preplanning. All teachers are required to attend.

GRADEBOOK/INFINITE CAMPUS

The grade book is used to record grades for all work assigned and completed. It is the legal document to be used to justify grades on report cards and permanent records. Do not rely on Infinite Campus for long-term documentation of grades and attendance. **After grades for each grading period are finalized and posted, print a copy to keep in your gradebook/notebook.** At the end of the year, the final grade book should be printed and secured inside your gradebook. Your syllabus and an explanation of your grading procedures should be the first page of your gradebook/notebook. Accuracy and adherence to due dates are expected. Lists of names, records, etc. should always be kept in alphabetical order. **Although grades are entered in Infinite Campus, a copy should be attached to your grade book at the end of each grading period.**

GRADES FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS (Out of County)

A letter grade of A, B, etc. must be converted to a numerical grade to determine the semester and yearly averages. Use the numerical grade on the transfer documents or the grading scale shown on the transfer records. If no grading code is available, use the Richmond County grading scale. Consult the guidance department for assistance.

REPORT CARDS

Each teacher must follow the county guidelines when completing report cards. Report Cards must be sent home on the dates scheduled by the county. All grades must be entered in Infinite Campus on time in order for report cards and progress reports to be printed on time. Anyone who does not adhere to these guidelines will be documented on Standard 9 TKES Professionalism.

CONFIDENTIAL MATERIALS

No information that may be considered as confidential is to be given to anyone without permission from the principal. No information from a permanent record is to be disseminated without approval from the

administrative staff. Information contained in the permanent record should be accessed only on a need-to-know basis.

STUDENT CUMULATIVE RECORDS

The school (system) shall not permit access to or release of educational records of personally identifiable information to parties other than:

- school officials, including teachers who have been determined by the school (system) to have legitimate educational interests;
- officials of other schools or school systems in which the student seeks to enroll, upon conditions that the student's parents or eligible students be notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the record at actual cost of reproduction, and have an opportunity to challenge the content of the record; authorized officials of federal and state governmental agencies;
- organizations or educational institutions conducting research to improve education, provided that such studies are conducted in such a manner representative of such organization or institutions, and provided further that such information will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purpose for which the information was used. Parent permission should be obtained (when necessary);

Permanent records may be signed out from the guidance office, **BUT MAY NOT BE CARRIED OUT OF THE BUILDING**. All records must be returned the same day by 2:00pm and checked out again the next school day if needed.

Prior to entering data on the cumulative record, please be familiar with the established guidelines as provided by the county and the guidance department. All cumulative records are stored in the office in the vault and must be signed out and returned daily. If you need any assistance with cumulative records, please see Mrs. Jeffcoat.

VISTORS TO SCHOOL

All visitors must show an ID and state their purpose before entering the building. Once the ID has been presented, the visitor will be allowed to enter the building and report to the office. Faculty nor staff are allowed to hold the front door open for an incoming visitor. The visitor must follow the previously stated procedures before entrance.

HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Any student with a medically diagnosed, physical condition that is non-communicable and restricts him/her to his/her home or to a hospital for a period of time and which significantly interferes with his/her education, may be eligible for the service of a hospital/homebound instructor. In order for a student to receive this service, a physician must declare the child physically able to profit from the instruction. Other criteria must also be met for service. The counseling department will provide assistance with this area should there be a need. **Once a student has been approved for homebound services, he/she should not be marked absent.**

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent conferences should be arranged during the team's planning time or before/after school, but should not conflict with collaborative planning, professional learning, or grade level meetings. Parents are encouraged to call in order to arrange a conference time. Conference requests should be honored in a timely manner. Phone calls must be returned as soon as possible. Discuss only the parent's child and his/her progress and behavior. Should you feel that an administrator or counselor needs to be present during a conference, please let them know in advance, if possible. No parent conferences should be scheduled to conflict with faculty meetings, collaborative planning, or professional learning.

TEACHER EVALUATION

The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) consists of multiple components, including the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS), Student Growth, and Academic Achievement. The overarching goal of TKES is to support the continuous growth and development of each teacher. All teachers will receive an orientation on the evaluation process at the beginning of the school year.

NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION AND SUPPORT

New teacher orientation and support will continue throughout the year. Regularly scheduled meetings will be held to review procedures and to provide professional development and support for new teachers. All teachers new to HMS will be assigned a buddy teacher for assistance and support.

GRADE/DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

A teacher from each grade/department will be selected to serve as the grade/department chairperson. The duty of the grade/department chairperson is to serve as a liaison between the administration and the faculty. Grade/department chairpersons meet with grade/department teachers to discuss and implement administrative requirements. Grade/department chairpersons meet with the administration and coordinate various activities for the grade/department.

TEACHERS-IN-RESIDENCE

Teachers-in-Residence are assigned by the principal to assist with the organization of instructional areas. It is the responsibility of this individual to coordinate the agenda for monthly subject area meetings and to disseminate information from the county curriculum department.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE

This teacher, appointed by the principal, is charged with the responsibility of providing updates and information for the improvement of language arts/writing.

TECHNOLOGY TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE

This teacher, appointed by the principal, works closely with faculty members to provide guidance and support in the implementation of instructional technology specifically related to the classroom.

SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE

This teacher, appointed by the principal, is charged with the responsibility of providing updates and information for the improvement of social studies.

MATH TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE

This teacher, appointed by the principal, is charged with the responsibility of providing updates and information for the improvement of math.

SCIENCE TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE

This teacher, appointed by the principal, is charged with the responsibility of providing updates and information for the improvement of science.

STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The data entry clerk is **Ms. Wright**. She is responsible for computer-related data as it relates to student enrollment, grades, attendance, tardies, etc. Teachers are expected to appreciate the time pressure placed on Ms. Wright prior to grade reports. With the use of computer-generated grade reports, teachers must meet all grade report deadlines established by the administration.

STUDENT DAILY ATTENDANCE

It is of imperative that accurate attendance be kept. All attendance data is entered via Infinite Campus. **Do not** allow students to take daily attendance. **Attendance should be entered in Infinite Campus by 10:00 AM each day** by all homeroom teachers and the first few minutes of a class period by all teachers. **It is the responsibility of the homeroom teacher to mark absences as excused/unexcused.** All teachers are required to follow the RCSS Attendance policy and implement all steps to the policy in accordance to the county requirements.

When entering an excuse code, the **only** codes that are to be used are:

Unexcused - this code should be entered for all unexcused absences. This code should also be used on the sixth and consecutive absences that are covered by a **parent** note. Parent notes are **only** accepted for **five days**. **Excused Parent** – this code should be entered for five days of parent notes (**not 5 parent notes**) **Excused** – this code should be entered for notes such as doctor, dentist, etc.

MAKE UP WORK

A student must bring a written excuse from a parent/guardian upon returning to school from an absence. Students are expected to make-up assignments and assessments that were missed due to absence from school. Students are responsible for asking teachers for the make-up work upon returning to class. Make-up work should be completed by the student within the time specified by the teacher. Teachers should provide reasonable timelines for completing make-up work. Generally, such work should be completed within 5 days of returning to school. A student should not be required to take a quiz or test on their first day back to school if the assessment was first-announced during their absence. Graded assignments should be scored to accurately reflect the level of mastery of standards.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

Students are not to be withdrawn from class rolls until the office officially notifies staff members. A proper withdrawal form must be presented to all teachers of the student, so that records may be completed before the student is cleared to withdraw. Please assign a grade for the time that the student was in your class and complete within 24 hours.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Students needing to be excused early from school must bring a written note from the parent/guardian. This note must indicate the student's homeroom teacher's name, date, time to be dismissed, parent/guardian's telephone number, and the name of the individual picking up the child if not the parent/guardian. All excused students must sign out in the office before leaving the school.

STUDENT ILLNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

Students becoming ill while at school should be sent to the clinic **with a pass**. The nurse will assess the situation and handle student needs. Inform students that when they are ill, they are not to stay in the restroom.

TEXTBOOKS

TEXTBOOK COORDINATOR

The textbook coordinators – Mr. Roper and Mrs. Clanton will assist to coordinate the implementation of the textbook policy, direct distribution of all student textbooks, maintain a school wide textbook inventory, and facilitate the operation of the bookroom.

ISSUING TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks will be issued through the media center by homeroom.

LOST AND MISSING TEXTBOOKS

- Loaner textbooks are not available.
- Conduct a book check **each semester** to confirm that students have the books that were issued to them.
- If a student is unable to locate a lost textbook within 2-3 days, charge the student the replacement cost of the missing book.
- No student can be issued a replacement text until the lost or damaged book has been paid.
- Students must see the bookkeeper to pay for lost textbooks. If the book is located later, a refund will be given.
- Upon verifying with the bookkeeper that the correct charges have been paid, issue the student a new textbook.
- During the school year, lost books that are turned in to the office will be forwarded to the media center.

COLLECTING TEXTBOOKS

Information regarding the end of the year collection and storage of textbooks will be provided in May.

DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

In all discipline, use good judgment and do not act hastily or in anger. The teacher should make every effort to establish good discipline and respect from the very first day. It is easy to become more lenient if necessary, but almost impossible to establish respect and discipline once the students have gotten away from you. You will not be an effective instructor until proper respect, discipline, and organization have been established.

Good discipline is the establishment of a working relationship with each other. The student must respect the teacher as the instructional leader in the classroom – the person who is in charge of leading and directing the activities in the room. The student does not need to fear the teacher, but must respect the teacher. The student needs to respect his/her peers, the building, other adults, and the equipment and materials that have been provided for use. You can work toward establishing this respect by providing leadership, careful planning of activities, promptness at all times and continuity from day to day so the students know what is expected at all times. Please adopt the **Q-TIP Method (Quit Taking It Personal)**

The principal and assistant principals are ready to help with any discipline problem. **Do not threaten students with “sending them to the office” as a means of controlling a class or individual student.** This soon loses its effectiveness. So far as possible, every teacher is expected to handle the discipline of the students under his/her supervision. However, if conditions get beyond the control of the teacher, he/she should not hesitate to call on an administrator for assistance.

Teachers must follow and adhere to HMS School-Wide Behavior Plan. Each step of the plan must be followed and implemented with fidelity.

DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

A discipline referral **must be completed** for each student who is referred to the office for inappropriate behavior. The forms may be obtained from the office. Remember, this form is a school document and will be sent home. Write legibly and document only what was seen and/or heard.

The following discipline violations should be referred to an administrator as soon as possible:

- Fighting or attempting to fight.
- Damage, destruction or theft of school or private property.
- Excessively rude/disrespectful or overtly refusing to obey.
- Any violation of board policy relating to drugs, tobacco, alcohol or weapons.
- Illicit or immoral activities.

This list is not an absolute but does offer guidelines.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROGRAM

The In-School Suspension Program (ISS) operates on a five (5) day schedule. Classroom teachers are to provide the ISS teacher and students with lessons for the number of days that a student is assigned to ISS. Completed assignments are to be graded by the regular classroom teacher. The same credit will be given to the ISS student as is given to any other student for the same assignment.

The regular classroom teacher may, at times, be asked to go to the ISS classroom during his/her planning time to assist in coordinating student assignments with the ISS teacher.

The ISS teacher will administer any test(s) that a student needs to take while he/she is in ISS. Tests, along with other assigned work, will be returned to the student's regular classroom teacher for grading.

Classroom teachers are to provide the ISS teacher with enough classwork for the student's length of stay in ISS. All work must be on the student's level of learning. If outside references or resources are needed to complete assignments, the regular classroom teacher must make these available to the student and the ISS teacher.

Only the school's administrators will assign students to ISS. The school administrators and/or the ISS teacher can assign additional days to a student's stay in ISS, if deemed necessary. A school administrator/ISS teacher will notify classroom teachers of a student's placement in ISS. Work assignment forms are to be completed and returned to the office secretary for the ISS teacher.

HALL CONDUCT

Students at HMS are expected to conduct themselves appropriately. They are expected to be considerate of the rights of others and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning. Before school, during class changes, and immediately after school, teachers are to station themselves in the halls in order to supervise the conduct of students in the halls.

ASSEMBLY CONDUCT

Students attend assemblies with their homeroom and/or connections teacher. The class will move quietly and remain together as a class. Students will sit with their assigned teacher during all assemblies. Proper conduct is expected at all assemblies. Review the expected behaviors with students prior to assemblies.

MEDIA CENTER

The media specialist is ready to assist teachers and students in the use of the media center during the school day. Teachers are urged to visit the media center and become familiar with books, resources, equipment, and procedures. Teachers may check out materials from the media center for use with classes and for personal use.

Teachers must accompany their classes when visiting the media center. Reservations for a class should be made ahead of time. Teachers are responsible for maintaining discipline and assisting students when using the media center. The media specialist will be able to provide better assistance to classes coming to the media center if teachers indicate ahead of time the type of activities that will be completed by the students and the material needed. The function of the media center is to serve the faculty as well as the students. The media center is not a study hall or time-out area.

PROCEDURES FOR USE OF THE MEDIA CENTER

The media specialist is always available and ready to serve the needs of the students, faculty, and, staff. In order to do this in the most efficient and pleasant manner, the following procedures should be adhered to:

- The media center has flexible, open scheduling, and the hours of operation are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each school day.
- Books are checked out for a two-week period. Periodicals, encyclopedias, and other reference materials may be checked out overnight.
- The borrower must make payment for the replacement of lost or damaged books.
- Requests for purchases of books and instructional materials may be submitted throughout the year. State orders are prepared in October and periodical orders in April.
- **Students must have a pass to visit the media center.**

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

The guidance services at Hephzibah Middle School are an extended and important aspect of the whole school program. Teachers should consult with the counselors for assistance with student needs. The counselors are responsible for:

- Individual guidance.
- Small group and classroom guidance.
- Advisement program.
- In school suspension guidance program.
- Registration.
- Permanent records.
- Test coordination.
- Student support team.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

The school counselors and the administrators serve as the school contact persons for the school social work services. Teachers should familiarize themselves (through the counseling department) with the services provided by the school social worker assigned to Hephzibah Middle School.

ORIENTATION

The guidance department coordinates an orientation for fifth graders who will attend Hephzibah Middle School the following school year and for eighth graders who will attend Hephzibah High. Teachers and students will be asked to participate in the activities.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)/RTI/SST

What is MTSS?

Georgia operates within a three-tiered, multi-level prevention system. Students receive services at all levels, depending on their needs. When all components are implemented, research shows results include strengthened Tier 1 instruction with 80% of students responding to core curriculum.

Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students represents a cross-divisional effort among Teaching and Learning, School and District Effectiveness, Federal Programs, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and Special Education.

The essential components of Georgia's framework are aligned with the nationally vetted Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) including: , Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention System, and Data-Based Decision Making. Georgia added Infrastructure as a fifth component to ensure schools can develop a systemic and preventive educational system that can easily be personalized for every child. The following are critical elements of Infrastructure: Leadership, Effective Teaming, Professional Learning, and Family & Community Engagement.

Response to Intervention(RTI) & Student Support Teams(SST)

In Richmond County, we have been implementing SST, as required by state law, and Response to Intervention (since July 2007). Support Services worked in collaboration with Teaching and Learning to develop effective processes and procedures for the district to address the areas of student growth at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels. Information about RtI and SST can be found on our website! Additional training continues as we are rolling out training and resources for a more comprehensive and preventative Multi-Tiered System of Supports.

The Georgia Department of Special Education provides information about SST and the state law regarding SST on the DOE website.

INTERVENTION/ENRICHMENT TIME

Intervention Time is set aside each morning to allow teachers to work with students with the use of differentiation. This is a perfect time to work with students who are not performing on grade level and to accelerate high performing students in ELA and Math using various instructional resources. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that this time is implemented with fidelity. Intervention time will be monitored and observed by administration.

GIFTED PROGRAM

New regulations are established by the Georgia Board of education now require multiple criteria for the identification of students for the gifted program. Point of Contact Mrs. Clanton, Assistant Principal.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Georgia Law requires all persons who suspect child abuse/neglect to report it to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS). As the law relates to school institutions, it requires the observer to report it directly or cause it to be reported via the building supervisor. Any person or official required to report a suspected case that knowingly and willfully fails to do so should be guilty of a misdemeanor. The procedure to be followed is as follows: The staff member suspecting child abuse/neglect must:

1. Report (immediately) the suspected child abuse/neglect to the guidance counselor, or the assistant principal in the absence of the principal. The employee will then make the report to the Intake Worker at the Department of Family and Children Services. This will be done in the privacy of an administrator's office or a counselor's office.
2. Complete the Suspected Child Abuse Referral Form available in the guidance office prior to calling DFCS since the intake worker will need this information. A copy of this referral goes to the Board attorney, Public Safety Department, the principal, and one to the person making the referral.
 - A. Allow the nurse or counselor to make a preliminary observation of any suspected abused child, if applicable.
 - B. Expect a follow-up report from personnel at DFCS.
3. ***You are not the investigator.*** If you suspect it, then you must report it. If you do not report it, then you can be held legally liable.

GEORGIA LAW PERTAINING TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT Georgia Code Section 19-7-5

“(a) Reports by Physicians, Treating Personnel, Institutions, and Others. Any physician, including any doctor of medicine licensed to practice under Chapter 84-9 of the Code of Georgia of 1933, as amended, licensed osteopathic physician, intern, resident, all other hospital or medical personnel, dentist, psychologist, podiatrist, nursing personnel, social work personnel, school teachers and administrators, school guidance counselors, child care personnel, day care personnel or law enforcement personnel having reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen has had physical injuries inflicted upon him other than by accidental means by a parent or caretaker, or has been neglected or exploited by a parent or caretaker, or has been sexually assaulted or sexually exploited, shall report or cause reports to be made in accordance with the provisions of this section, provided, however, that when the attendance of the reporting person with respect to a child is pursuant to the performance of services as a member of the staff of a hospital, school, social agency or similar facility, he shall notify the person in charge of the facility or his designated delegate who shall report or cause reports to be made in accordance with the provisions of this section.”

“Any Other Person who believes that a child has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him other than by accidental means by a parent or caretaker, or has been neglected or exploited by a parent or caretaker, or has been sexually assaulted, may report or cause reports to be made in accordance with the provisions of the Code Section.”

“For Purposes of This Subsection (a) A child is sexually exploited, when the child's parent or caretaker allows, permits, encourages, or requires such child to engage in prostitution, as defined in Code Section 26-2012, as now or hereafter amended, or allows, or permits, encourages, or requires such child to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct, as defined in an Act approved April 10, 1978 (GA Laws 1978, p. 2193), as now or hereafter amended.”

“(b) Nature and Content of Report, to whom made. An oral report shall be made as soon as possible by telephone or otherwise, and followed by a report in writing, if, requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or District Attorney. If a report of child abuse, sexual assault, or sexual exploitation is made to a said child welfare agency or independently discovered by the said agency and said the agency has reasonable cause to believe such report is true, then said agency shall immediately notify the appropriate police authority or District Attorney. Such reports shall contain the name and address of the said child and his parents or caretakers, if known, the child’s age, the nature and extent of the child’s injuries, including any evidence or previous injuries, and any other information that the reporting person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator. Photographs of the child’s injuries to be used as documentation in support of allegations by hospital staff, physicians, law enforcement personnel, school official, or staff of legally mandated public or private child protective agencies may be taken without the permission of the child’s parent or guardian. Provided, however, that any photograph taken pursuant to this Code Section shall be taken in a manner which shall not reveal the identity of the subject and such photograph shall be made available as soon as possible to the child welfare agency providing protective services and to the appropriate police authority.”

“(c) Immunity from Liability. Any person or persons, partnership, firm, corporation, association, hospital, or other entity participating in the making of a said report or causing said report to be made to a child welfare agency providing protective services or an appropriate police authority pursuant to the provisions of this section or any other law, or participating in any judicial proceeding or any other proceeding resulting therefrom, shall in so doing be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, providing such participating pursuant to this Section or any other law shall be made in good faith. Any person making a report, whether required by this Section or not, shall be immune from liability as herein provided.”

“(d) Sanctions for Failure to Report. Any person or official required by this Code Section to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be punished as for a misdemeanor.

“(e) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to provide for the protection of children whose health and welfare are adversely affected and further threatened by the conduct of those responsible for their care and protection. This is often manifest by the infliction, other than by accidental means, of physical injury requiring the attention of a physician. It is intended that the mandatory reporting of such cases will cause the protective services of the state to be brought to bear on the situation in an effort to prevent further abuses, protect and enhance the welfare of these children, and preserve family life wherever possible. This section shall be liberally construed so as to carry out the purpose thereof.”

This Code as amended was signed into law on April 8, 1981.

Chapter 49-5-40. Confidentiality of Records Concerning Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

49-5-40 Records Declared to be Confidential.

Each and every record concerning reports of child abuse and neglect, which is in the custody of the Department of Human Resources or other state or local agency, is hereby declared to be confidential and access thereto is hereby prohibited except as provided in Section 49-5-41. (Acts 1975, pp. 1135, 1136)

49-5-41 Certain Persons and Agencies to Have Reasonable Access to Records.

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 49-5-40, the following persons or agencies shall have reasonable access to such records concerning reports of child abuse and neglect:

- 1) A legally mandated, public-private, child protective agency investigating a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect or treating a child or family that is the subject of a report or record;
- 2) A court, by subpoena, upon its finding that access to such records may be necessary for determination of an issue before such court: Provided, however, that the court will examine such record in camera unless the court determines that public disclosure of the information contained therein is necessary for the resolution of an issue then before it, and the record is otherwise admissible under the rules of evidence; or,
- 3) A grand jury by subpoena upon its determination that accesses to such records is necessary for the conduct of its official business;

4) A district attorney of any judicial circuit in this State, or an assistant district attorney, who may seek such access in connection with official duty.

(b) The Department of Human Resources or a county or state or local agency may permit access to such records concerning reports of child abuse and neglect to the following persons or agencies when deemed appropriate by such department:

- 1) A physician who has before him a child whom he reasonably suspects may be abused or neglected;
- 2) Police or other law enforcement agency investigating a report of known or suspected abuse or neglect;
- 3) A person legally authorized to place a child in protective custody when such person has before him a child he reasonably suspects may be abused or neglected and such person requires the information in the record or report in order to determine whether to place the child in protective custody; and

4) An agency or person other than a child's parent or guardian has the legal custody, responsibility, or authorization to care for, treat or supervise the child who is the subject of a report or record. (Acts 1975, pp. 1135, 1136)

Georgia law requires all persons who suspect child abuse to report it to the proper authorities, which is the Department of Family and Children Services. More specifically, as it relates to school institutions, it requires the observer to report it directly or to report it to the building supervisor who shall report or cause to be reported, cases of child abuse. The school system has tried several ways of reporting child abuse, which, from the vantage point of the system, have met with mixed results. Accordingly, members of the Richmond County School System guidance department, special education department, central office and the board attorney met with representatives from DFACS. Working together, it was decided to follow these steps:

- It is best if child abuse is reported from the source (school). That way, the intake workers will have less lost time and will be able to get a better description of the injuries.
- The persons reporting from the school, whether it is the principal or a teacher directly, will get an intake worker. There are two working at all times. In the report, the teacher or reporting person needs to describe specifically the injuries they have seen. The severity of the injury is very important in setting the priority response time.
- DFACS will send a letter to the reporting school person to inform them that an investigation is underway. By law, and with the limited personnel at DFACS, they must prioritize investigations of abuse.
- Educators are mandated reporters.

ATHLETICS

ELIGIBILITY

Students who participate in after school activities (not just athletics) must be declared "eligible." This process is facilitated by an eligibility list see Mr. Bierly. One factor determines eligibility: students must take and pass at least 5 subjects during the previous semester.

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

Students are offered the opportunity to participate in a number of athletic programs at Hephzibah Middle School. Tryouts for specific sports are scheduled throughout the year with physicals being offered for students opting to participate in the athletic programs. Sports currently available include: cheerleading, softball (girls), baseball, football, basketball (girls and boys), and track (girls and boys).

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The athletic director is charged with the responsibility of the overall coordination of our interscholastic athletic program. Questions relating to the athletic program should be directed to Mr. Bierly, Athletic Director.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETICS:

- Coaches should create behavior contracts and expectations for all players. A copy should be given to Mr. Jones for approval.
- Coaches should observe all weather directives to cease practice or play due to heat or other inclement weather conditions.
- Coaches cannot require players to participate in fundraisers or money-generating activities.
- All fundraisers must be approved through Mr. Jones and run through the HMS bookkeeping system.
- All practices must end at 8 pm sharp. All summer practices shall comport to RCSS policy.
- Coaches must clearly communicate with their players' practice times.
- All coaches should get CPR/First Aid trained and attend Coaching Course or clinic provided by the District.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

FACULTY & STAFF PARKING

Faculty and staff should park in an orderly fashion in the designated parking area. Entry and exit driveways should be used correctly. Please respect reserved and visitor parking spots. Do not park in the Bus Depot in the back of the school. All employees must park in the front of the building with the exception of Nutrition Staff.

MAINTENANCE REPORTS

Maintenance reports should be given to **Mrs. Fulcher** in the front office. Emergency repairs and/or safety problems should be reported immediately. Safety problems should be supervised until emergency repairs can be made. Please indicate your name and room number on maintenance reports. Be specific in the description of the maintenance problem(s).

CUSTODIAL SERVICE

It is our aim to have a well-maintained building at all times. Requests for custodial services should be made to **Mrs. Fulcher**. A strong custodial staff is one of the important links to school atmosphere, organization, and public relations.

ORDERING/PURCHASING SUPPLIES

Teachers may order supplies provided they have received prior approval from the principal. Each grade level is budgeted money for supplies. The principal will review all requisitions and book orders. Teachers must receive written approval prior to the purchase of any supplies not furnished by the school. Submit any requests to the principal. **Any purchases by teachers not following this procedure will result in the teacher being responsible for payment.**

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Meeting requirements for certification and renewal of certificates is the **responsibility of the teacher.** This includes obtaining information, completing all requirements, and providing the school with a copy of your current certificate at the beginning of the school year to Dr. Fulton. A copy of the professional learning completion forms should be submitted to the front office for placement in your professional file.

STUDENT HALL PASSES

All teachers will be given copies of the HMS Hall Pass. Please make sure you keep a copy for your file in order to copy and replenish it throughout the school year. Do not allow a student to leave the classroom without a pass and this should only for emergencies. Students should not be sent to the office to call home unless it is an emergency. Complete all information in ink. **DO NOT SEND A STUDENT OFF CAMPUS OR TO YOUR PERSONAL VEHICLE FOR ANY REASON.**

LUNCHROOM

The lunchroom provides lunches at a nominal cost to teachers. Please avoid having large bills. Teachers are expected to supervise their students while in the lunchroom and remain with their classroom during the lunch period. Please be in the serving line on time. Have students clean up their area.

END OF THE YEAR ACTIVITIES

Special end-of-the-year activities, field trips, assemblies, talent shows, or other outside activities will be kept to a minimum. The principal must approve all special activities. **NO** parties are allowed.

RESTROOMS

Teachers are responsible for the conduct of their students while they are in the restrooms. Students should be carefully supervised during restroom breaks. It is left to the teacher's judgment as to the method to be used in monitoring their students while they are in the restrooms. As a rule students must be taken to the restroom as a class and only allowed to go individually for emergencies only. In case of doubt or emergency, notify the office immediately.

SUNSHINE FUND

The Sunshine Fund is maintained for the purpose of remembering faculty and staff during times of illness, death, and other occasions. Funds are collected one time each year. The cost for the Sunshine Fund is \$30.00 for certified and classified staff. All faculty and staff are encouraged to join.

HONORS DAY

The following are the awards that will be awarded to Hephzibah Middle School students who qualify:

Most Improved-Students that have demonstrated overall improvement as a HMS student in academics

Perfect Attendance-No absences from school; a maximum of 9 tardies including early release

A Honor Roll-All As in all courses including connections courses

A/B Honor Roll-All A/Bs in all courses including connections courses

Highest Averages: ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies- Highest average in the course

Student Council Citizenship-Students that demonstrate outstanding character.

Connections Awards-Students that demonstrate outstanding work ethic and behavior in connections

REP Reading Most Improved

P.E. Best All-Around

Band Best All-Around

Spanish Best All-Around

Computer Technology Best All-Around

Art Best All-Around