

ADMINISTRATION'S MESSAGE

Every student is valued at Liberty Middle School, with his/her own special needs, abilities and interests. This recognition of uniqueness and immense variability of the middle grade learner is the foundation upon which our program is built. Providing activities and experiences that help foster the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, cultural and aesthetic growth in all students is vital if Liberty is to fulfill its purpose.

Our program encourages students to develop cooperative work habits and stresses the development of a sense of self-respect and personal responsibility within individual students. Liberty is a microcosm of society, where individual differences are recognized and appreciated. Since our school is a vital part of the community at large, creating an atmosphere that promotes the highest ideals and principles of democracy is a constant focus. Students are encouraged to strive to perform to the best of their abilities and to take pride in their accomplishments. The framework of our educational program emphasizes the individual, with all faculty members working to ensure that each student experiences opportunities for success.

Liberty Middle School is charged with educating young people at a crucial time in their lives. We consider it a team effort---one that is to be shared among our stakeholders; students, parents, faculty, administration, community and staff. Establishing and maintaining open lines of communication is key in this collaborative effort. We look forward to working with each of you and encourage your support in making this a great school year.

Victor Lee
Principal

Karen Gibbs
Assistant Principal

Lacy Miller
Assistant Principal

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board of Education whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to complete their tasks more effectively.

Members of the Newton County Board of Education have confidence in the professional staff and desire to support their actions in order that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaints. These statements do not supersede any employee's or citizen's rights to contact Board members directly. However, when a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will be referred to the administration first for study and possible resolution.

The Board advises the public that the proper channels of and most effective way to resolve complaints involving discipline, curriculum/instruction, or transportation is to contact the individual at your student's school who is designated by position in the chart below to deal with such concerns. Any issue outside of this chart's listing should be addressed to the principal. The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved through the use of the channels below.

Discipline	Curriculum	Transportation
Teacher	Teacher	Appropriate Assistant Principal
Appropriate Assistant Principal	Appropriate Assistant Principal	Principal
Principal	Principal	Transportation Director
Appropriate Director	Appropriate Director	Associate Superintendent
Associate Superintendent	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent
Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board Member
School Board Member	School Board Member	State Dept. of Education
State Dept. of Education	State Dept. of Education	

ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

Please carefully read the attendance section found on pages 4 & 5 in the Newton County School System portion of this agenda. It is extremely important that your child attend school in order to succeed academically. Five tardies or five checkouts will equal one absence. After the third absence the parent will receive a call, after the fifth absence a letter and the seventh absence will result in a referral to the social worker. The NCSS Social Worker will contact parents and/or submit a truancy complaint to juvenile court.

CHECK-IN, CHECK-OUT PROCEDURE

When a student checks in or out of school, they must first report to the front office. During the school day, a student will be released from school only to a parent, legal guardian or other authorized person. **Such persons should be properly identified with a picture I.D.** The parent or authorized person who will pick-up the student must come inside the school and sign the check-out record. **Students may not be checked out after 3 :00 PM.**

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

The Counseling Department at Liberty Middle School provides a large number of services which include classroom guidance, group and individual counseling. Counselors are ready to assist students in any way that will make their school experience more rewarding. Counselors are always available to consult with parents regarding special concerns they may have about their child. Teachers are also encouraged to use the services of counselors regarding the special needs of their students.

FALSIFYING REPORTS

Falsifying reports regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher or other school personnel is prohibited (08 House Bill 1321). An investigation will be held with the penalty at the discretion of the administrator which may include ISS, suspension or suspension to a formal hearing.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are to be held regularly throughout the year. The signal will be one continuous sound on the horn until the building is cleared. All students will move in a quiet and orderly fashion with their teachers to a designated area and remain there until the clearance signal has been given by the office. All driveway areas must be kept clear during fire drills.

GRADING

If a student fails two or more academic and/or connection classes, he/she will be considered for retention. This is based upon the Newton County promotion policy. Grades are based on class participation, class work, homework, examinations, and any special project that the classroom teacher may assign. It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of his/her academic standing and confer with the teacher before difficulties arise. When work is missed because of excused absences, it is the students' responsibility to make it up. The student will have an equal amount of time as the number of absences to complete missed assignments. For example, if a student misses 2 days the student will have 2 days to complete assignments.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to notify parents in the event a student is in danger of not passing a course.

The grading scale is as follows:

90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

Below 70 F (no credit)

HALLWAYS

A student must have a signed agenda or hall pass form a teacher in order to move in the hall during class. It is the students' responsibility to get a pass. Running in the hall is not allowed. Students should move quietly in the building.

HEALTH RECORDS

Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school have an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization on file. Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school. Students entering middle school must have completed their 2nd MMR immunization and the chicken pox (Varicella) immunization. Students entering the 6th grade from a Newton County school will not be placed on a homeroom roster until documentation of the 2nd MMR and Varicella has been received.

Transfer students have 30 days to furnish the school with the appropriate Certificate of Immunization, although the school prefers this information at the time of registration. Vaccinations and vaccination records may be obtained from the Newton County Health Department or from a private physician. Please note that the vaccination record must be on an official form provided by the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

A waiver may be granted by the responsible official of the school or facility for up to 90 calendar days if the student is a transfer student who moves from an out-of-state school system to a Georgia school system or is a student entering kindergarten or first grade from out-of-state. However, documentation must be on file from the health department or a physician stating that an immunization sequence has been started and can be completed within the 90-day waiver period. The waiver may not be extended, and the child shall not be permitted to attend any school or facility unless the child submits a completed Certificate of Immunization. In addition, those students entering Georgia public schools for the first time must provide an eye, ear, and dental certificate at the time of registration.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Newton County School Nurse may make contact with parents regarding any health issues. The nurse will not take responsibility for evaluating signs of illness or injury that have occurred at home. These should be referred to your family doctor or an emergency room.

CLINIC SERVICES FOR ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

Parents will be contacted immediately, should a situation warrant, if their child becomes ill or has an accident at school. In serious situations when a parent cannot be contacted, the principal or principal's designee will request the assistance of local emergency medical personnel. Services will be provided if a medical release has been signed. Judgment in such cases is at the discretion of school authorities, and parents assume financial responsibility.

Please keep your current telephone number, the name of a contact person for emergencies and their current number on file in the office. Please be sure to return to the teacher the emergency authorization form at the beginning of the year. Also, make sure that your student has the phone numbers of all authorized contacts written in their agenda. This will expedite the process of contacting someone when necessary.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Children having any contagious or infectious disease should not return to school unless cleared by the family physician or Health Department. The following conditions should be considered communicable. Parents should notify the school if their child has been affected by any of these for advice on readmission to school.

Lice (pediculosis)	Meningitis	ChickenPox (Varicella)
Poliomyelitis	Scarlet Fever	PinkEye (Conjunctivitis)
Strep Throat	Hepatitis	Ringworm
Mononucleosis	Scabies	Worms or Parasites
Measles (Rubella)	German Measles	Impetigo/Staph Infection
T.B. (Tuberculosis)	Mumps	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

HEAD LICE

Students who have head lice (pediculosis) are to be sent home from school. Before re-entering school, it will be necessary for parents to obtain a statement from a physician or the Newton County Health Department stating that the student is free of ALL infestation and any remnants, including dead nits.

If the student's head is still suspect, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter school. However, if your child has not been cleared to re-enter on or before the third (3rd) school day from the date he/she was sent home, the matter will be referred to the School Social Work Department. Referrals will be made to the School Social Work Department for repeated cases of head lice.

HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND STUDENTS

A student who has a medically diagnosed, non-communicable condition which restricts him or her to home or a hospital for five or more school days may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction. Please contact the school principal or assistant principal for further information regarding this program.

HOMEWORK

All students will receive homework from their different teachers. Homework is a part of course requirements and the student is expected to have the assignments completed on time. Homework is a way to review and reinforce what has been taught. Failure to complete assignments will be detrimental to grades. Teachers must be given 24 hours notice to gather missed assignments for absent students.

HONOR ROLLS

Liberty Middle School encourages its students to strive for academic excellence. In order to recognize students who excel, the list of students who make the honor roll is submitted to the Covington News and the Newton Citizen at the end of each semester. There are two honor rolls – the Principal's Honor Roll and the Merit Honor Roll. For the Principal's Honor Roll, the student must receive all As. For the Merit Honor Roll, the student must receive all As and Bs. To be recognized at Honors Night in May, a student must have all As and Bs for the first three 9-week grading periods.

INJURIES

Anytime a student is hurt at school he/she should report the injury immediately to the teacher or person in charge of supervision. The teacher will then notify the nurse/main office and fill out an accident report. Attempts to contact parent/guardian to notify them of the injury will be made. If deemed appropriate emergency services will be contacted by school administrators or their designees.

INSURANCE

Accident insurance may be purchased on an optional basis. The insurance covers the student en route to and from school and while attending school. Insurance is mandatory for each student participating in athletics, certain trades and industry courses, and work study courses. Information about insurance will be provided by the homeroom teacher.

LOCKERS

Lockers are an option made available for student use for the school year as a privilege. Students accepting usage of the lockers must also accept the related responsibilities, including the assigned locker clean both inside and out, and to pay for any damage to the locker. **Lockers are school property and under the control of the Newton County School System.** Liberty Middle School assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen property or money kept in lockers and reserves the right, consistent with state law, to search lockers when necessary to ensure safety and enforce school and district policies.

LOST AND FOUND

There will be a designated lost and found area in the building. Clothing not claimed after one week will be removed and donated to charity.

LUNCHROOM PROCEDURES

The assistance of both parents and students is required to provide a pleasant lunchroom experience for everyone. We encourage parents/students to purchase ten days worth of lunches at one time to speed the movement of the lunch line on a daily basis.

Breakfast Prices

Reduced	.30
Student	1.25
Adult	1.50

Lunch Prices

Reduced	.40
Student	1.75
Adult	2.50

MEDIA CENTER

The media center is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Students are required to have a signed agenda or pass from their teacher in order to come to the media center. Students are also required to have passes during lunch. All school rules apply in the media center. Students are responsible for all materials checked out to them and must pay for replacement of all lost or damaged items. In addition, \$.05 per day is charged for overdue materials. All media center fines must be cleared before report cards are issued.

MEDICATION

Newton County Board of Education policy does **NOT** permit middle school students to be in possession of medication of any kind. Medication will be maintained by school personnel **ONLY** in special long-term situations. Parents will be required to administer any short-term medications. Parents are requested to contact the nurse/front office concerning special medical situations. Liberty Middle School employees will **NOT** dispense aspirin or Tylenol.

MESSAGES AND GIFTS

Only **EMERGENCY** messages will be delivered. An emergency is an accident, illness or serious family problem. Parents should provide written or faxed notification to the school concerning transportation changes for that day prior to 2:00 p.m.

We cannot accept deliveries for students. Items such as flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, cookie bouquets, etc. should be sent to the student's home, not the school. The main office staff will not sign for or accept these items.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to stay in close communication with the school. Please check your son's/daughter's agenda daily. With this form of open communication difficulties may be avoided. Conferences with teachers are scheduled through the main office and in some situations the counseling office. All teacher conferences will be scheduled during teacher planning, and before or after school. **Teachers are unavailable for conferences during their instructional time.** If an administrative conference is needed, it is suggested that you call to schedule an appointment so that you do not have to wait for an available time. Administrators are unavailable for conferences during morning and afternoon supervisory duties.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students must be present for one-half of the school day in order to participate in any extra-curricular activities that day. Students suspended from school will not participate in any school-sponsored activity during the suspension. Suspension does not end until the student physically returns to school. Students cannot participate in any extra-curricular activities while in in-school suspension (ISS). (Refer to county policy). Students can only fail one class the previous semester prior to participation.

The administration of Liberty Middle School may withhold a student's participation from any activity based on the students' placement in academic or behavior probation.

PEER MEDIATION

Mediation is an approach to resolve conflicts. People who disagree have the chance to sit face to face and talk uninterrupted so each side of the dispute is heard. After the problem is defined, solutions are created and then evaluated. When an agreement is reached, it is written and signed. Trained peer mediators are neutral third and fourth persons who lead the mediation process. They help the students communicate and come to a solution. Mediators keep all information confidential. Peer mediators are the peacemakers at Liberty Middle School. They have been trained to listen objectively and respect all points of view. Students may request peer mediation through the Counseling Department.

PROGRESS REPORTS

In order to communicate the progress of students to parents, weekly progress reports are available. Weekly progress reports for students are available upon written request from a parent/guardian. Each Friday, by 9:30 a.m., a student can pick up a progress report from his/her assigned team leader. Parents are asked to sign the progress report and return it to the team leader by the following Tuesday. Progress reports are to be returned to the assigned team leader by the following Tuesday. Progress reports are to be returned to the assigned team leader before another progress report can be given to the student.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued on the fourth day after the nine week ends. See the school calendar for exact dates. Students are expected to take their report cards home. Parents need to sign and return the report card to school the next day. At the end of the school year, students will be required to provide money to purchase stamp and envelope to mail the report cards.

SCHOOL HOURS

School begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. Supervision will be provided from 7:45 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. This is forty-five minutes before and 30 minutes after school. Parents, please make the necessary arrangements to adhere to this schedule. **Students must not be dropped off prior to 7:45 a.m. by car or bus, and must be picked up by 4:00 p.m.**

SCHOOL RULES

1. Follow directions given by school personnel.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
3. Be where you're supposed to be, doing what you are supposed to be doing.
4. Walk quietly inside the building, staying to the right.
5. Respect the rights, ideas, and property of other students and adults.
6. Don't do anything to embarrass yourself, your family, or your school.

SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The Science/Health curriculum follows the objectives of the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum and local objective approved by the Board of Education. Parents who do not wish to have their child participate in class while these objectives are being covered should notify the teacher in writing at the beginning of the semester.

TELEPHONE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

In emergency situations, students may come to the office, with a pass from their teacher, and have the adult in charge place an emergency phone call. Social planning and changes of transportation **are not** emergency situations. Parents, when calling the school with a message for a student, try to call before 12:00 p.m. to allow time for distributions of those messages. **During school hours (8:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.) student cellular phone use is prohibited and is required to be turned off.**

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are the property of the State of Georgia and the local school system. They are issued to each student and are the students' responsibility. The student has the responsibility to take care of these books at all times. If a book is lost or damaged beyond the usual wear, the student is required to pay for the book. **Lost texts will not be replaced until payment has been received.**

TRANSPORTATION

Students may ride assigned buses or walk to and from school. Any student who wishes to ride a different bus to or from school must have a permission note from home that has been approved by an administrator. All students transported to or from school by parent/guardian should be dropped off or picked up at the front of the school only. Students will not be allowed to ride another bus home without Transportation Directors approval.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

All students, parents and staff are advised that as a public school facility, students, staff, parents and building visitors do not have a right to expect privacy in connection with their actions and activities while in, on or about the school facilities. In an effort to increase school district security, provide greater safety for student, staff and building visitors, and to reduce vandalism and theft, many areas of the middle school campus, both internal and external, shall be subject to observation and monitoring by video cameras. The tapes of such observations shall be available for use by the school district and its administrative staff, if necessary, to enforce the law and the provisions of school district policy. Any questions should be addressed directly to the building administration.

VISITORS

All visitors upon entering the building **MUST** first come to the front office to sign the Guest Register and obtain a visitor pass. Students are not allowed to bring visitors to school unless prior written permission has been granted. All visitors on campus must have written permission to visit. Parents wishing to visit a class must have prior written permission.

PROMOTION POLICY

In accordance with State Board of Education Policy the Newton County Board of Education enacted Policy IHE-Promotion-Retention effective for the 2003-2004 school year. The policy states that the promotion, placement or retention of a student will be based on standards and criteria outlined in the policy and the regulations designed for its implementation. Statewide standards, criteria, and appeal process specific to grade three were implemented beginning with the 2003-2004 school year. For grade five the statewide standards, criteria and appeal process were implemented beginning in the 2004-2005 school year. For grade eight the statewide standards, criteria and appeal process will be implemented beginning in the 2005-2006 school year. Each eighth grade student must meet or exceed the minimum score on the **C**urriculum **R**eferenced **C**ompetency **T**est in Reading **and** Mathematics in order to be promoted to the ninth grade. The school principal or designee will notify parents/guardians of the specifics of the policy and its regulations for individual student promotion, placement, or retention.

CLUBS

Our school has clubs (excluding clubs involved in competitive interscholastic activities) under the direction and control of the school which are organized and meet based on common goals, objectives, and activities. The school sponsored clubs that are or have been in operation at our school are listed below and provide you pertinent club information. State law requires that the parent/guardian has the right to withhold permission for their student to join or participate in any school sponsored club or organization to which they object. For your convenience a form is included on page 47 of this student handbook for your completion for this purpose. If, in the future, a club is

added, you will be sent information on the club and will be required to complete a form giving your permission for your student's participation in the club.

BETA

Purpose: The purpose of the Liberty Middle School BETA Club shall be to promote the ideals of character, service and leadership among secondary students, to reward meritorious achievement and to encourage and assist student in continuing their education after high school.

Peer Helpers

Purpose: Peer Helpers are a group of students in sixth, seventh and eighth grade who have been recommended by their teachers to be student mediators. Peer Helpers go through training each year to learn how to successfully resolve conflicts between their peers. Peer Helpers are also involved in several school and community projects.

Step Team

Purpose: The purpose of the Liberty Step Team is to provide guidance and direction to some of the female & male students in our school through weekly practices during which various step routines are taught.

Band

This group is open to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders by audition and/or invitation. These students rehearse as a class with several after-school rehearsals and performances.

Chorus

Purpose: The chorus is a non-auditioned group that is open to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The students rehearse and perform in concerts, community events and school events.

4-H

Purpose: The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. The mission is accomplished through "hands on" learning experience, focused on agricultural and environmental issues, agriculture awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship. This and more information can be found at

Builders ClubBuilders

Club is open to any middle school student who wishes to perform community service. Each Builders Club is co-sponsored by a Kiwanis club and the middle school. The members learn by doing, and they learn organization, teamwork, and leadership. Builders Clubs can sponsor a "Teacher of the Year" program, provide a recycling collection point, organize canned food and clothing drives to support local shelters, adopt a resident at a local senior citizens home, adopt a highway, tutor, etc.

MSMSA (Middle School version of the Multicultural Student Association)

The Middle School Multicultural Student Association (MSMSA) provides a nurturing environment in which students can discuss issues of social justice while they explore their own identities. They will seek to celebrate diversity of experience and to educate our community as we work to create a safe environment for students of all backgrounds. MSMSA is open to all students.

Middle School Writing Club

The Middle School Writing Club is a student-run group that meets weekly to brainstorm story ideas, then to assign stories, copy edit and proofread all stories that are submitted, and publish to the web for the Middle School community. The Writing Club hosts write-a-thons and writing contests throughout the year. This would take care of the school paper. Eighth grader will be Chief editor.

Middle School a capella

MS *a cappella* is a select *a cappella* vocal group comprised of members of the Middle School. There will be tryouts because not everyone will qualify. The group rehearses weekly and performs at events and Concerts. They also give occasional performances outside of school.

Liberty Book Club (Middle School book club)

The MS Book Club meets every other week. The club promotes to its teen members reading for pleasure as well as developing both a good taste in reading selections and a lifelong interest in literature. We will also strive to broaden our members' reading interests and erudition through a discussion of literary classics and works by international authors in translation. Through active listening, tactful response and constructive expression of opinions we aim to cultivate the art and skills of meaningful conversation. In addition to discussing what we read, we try teas and chocolates from around the world.

Computer Club

The computer club meets in the computer lab. They do many things, such as research, surfing on the net, and playing games. The computer club consists of about 20 students. While attending the computer club, students learn much about the computer and about The Net. They will focus on using the Internet safely. Along with the Internet, kids also have the opportunity to play games, which are already networked on the computer. Remember the Computer Club is open to all students!!

Art Club

Create beautiful pieces of art to share with others. Club members will have several art options such as creating mosaic tables, painting murals, painting ceiling tiles, making gifts, and working on art for community fundraisers and auctions. While in the artistic mode, students will be able to listen to their favorite tunes and chat with their friends.

Drama Club

Student Council

The student council is the governing body in the Middle School. Due to its activity to influence school policy, address the concerns of the student body, work with the administration, and plan school events, it is among the most important student organizations at the school. The Council will discuss and plan policies and events. The officers of the Council are elected the first week of September. Their term of office extends for the school year. All candidates must submit a statement of candidacy and must deliver a speech on a selected topic to their classmates before the election. Representatives from each class are elected in the October.

Science Club

The [Science Club](#) provides an avenue through which members may explore facets of science beyond the classroom. The club seeks to encourage participation in science related activities and to instill values that reflect appreciation and understanding of science as it relates to life. The goal of the club is to develop leadership, responsibility, and scientific awareness.

Math Club

The Middle School [Math Club](#) features the MATHCOUNTS material. MATHCOUNTS is the only mathematics program of its kind for middle school students. MATHCOUNTS emphasizes teamwork and practical problem-solving, both skills important to each child's future. They also play a variety of math games—some familiar and some, perhaps, that are new.

Sign Language

A beginning/continuing [Sign Language class](#) for middle school students. Students will learn ASL signs, many will be pigeon English signs. This after school activity is designed as an introductory experience for students. Songs and games as well as interactions will be used to learn vocabulary.

CAST News: (Before School/Mr. Williams)

Yearbook Club:

The purpose of this club is for the Middle School to have more input into the yearbook. The theme and page layout for next year's book will be decided. Also, you will learn all about the layout and design of a yearbook and the technical side of a publication. They will cover layout, design, theme development, photography, headline and caption writing, and publication procedures. A very important club for those 8th graders who are planning on taking Yearbook as a class next year, but open to ALL middle school students!!

Debate Club**Liberty Middle School Flagette Squad**

The purpose of the LMS Flagette Squad is to give young ladies grades seven through eight the opportunity to participate in a school based performing organization that focuses on team work, leadership, and interpersonal skills.

**Christian Youth Fellowship
Garden Club-Beautification****Health Club****Liberty Top Model****Chess Club**

Middle school academic clubs offer students a niche or a place to explore interests or talents. The clubs they join in middle school can help guide choices in high school and beyond.