

ADMINISTRATION'S MESSAGE

DEAR STUDENTS:

WELCOME TO THE 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR. WE ARE PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO ATTEND VETERANS MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, "HOME OF THE GENERALS". YOUR TALENTS AND SKILLS WILL HELP US CONTINUE A WINNING TRADITION . . . BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO STUDY DILIGENTLY AND LEARN AS MUCH ABOUT EVERY ACADEMIC SUBJECT AS YOU CAN. SET GOALS THAT WILL HELP YOU AVOID MEDIOCRITY. BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE! GOOD GRADES ARE IMPORTANT, BUT WHAT YOU LEARN IS MORE IMPORTANT. BILL GATES, THE BILLIONAIRE MICROSOFT COMPUTER GENIUS DOES NOT HAVE A COLLEGE EDUCATION, BUT HE USES WHAT HE HAS LEARNED.

BE A COMMITTED GENERAL- GET INVOLVED! ACTIVITIES ARE EXCITING AND WILL HELP YOU DISCOVER INFORMATION NOT TAUGHT IN THE CLASSROOM. ACTIVE, INVOLVED STUDENTS LEARN VALUABLE LESSONS THAT TEACH ABOUT LIFE AS WELL AS SCHOOL. **REMEMBER: EXCELLENCE IS A JOURNEY NOT A DESTINATION!**

YOUR AGENDA CONTAINS IMPORTANT SCHOOL AND DISTRICT POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION. IT WILL ASSIST YOU GREATLY IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES.

WE EXTEND OUR BEST WISHES FOR SUCCESS IN ALL OF YOUR EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS HERE AT VETERANS MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL.

ERIC ARENA

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.

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, whenever 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 channeling of and most effective way to resolve complaints involving instruction, discipline, transportation, or learning materials is as follows:

| 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 | |

ANY ISSUE OUTSIDE OF THIS CHART SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE PRINCIPAL.

The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration. Matters referred to the Board must be in writing, must include address, contact phone numbers, signatures of the complainant, and should be specific in terms of the action desired. After reading such complaints, and if more information which might challenge or question the good name or character of an individual is needed, the Board shall consider such matters in Executive Session. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level first or if the appropriate chain of command has not been followed.

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 Veterans Memorial 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 classes, he/she will be considered for retention. This is based upon the Newton County promotion policy. Summer school is available for students who are retained. Students can earn only two academic credits during summer school. 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 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 | Chicken Pox (Varicella) |
| Poliomyelitis | Scarlet Fever | Pink Eye (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

Veterans Memorial encourages its students to strive for academic excellence. In order to recognize students who excel, the following honor rolls are submitted to the Covington News and the Newton Citizen at the end of each semester:

Principal's Honor Roll: An A for each course taken (90 or above for each course).

Merit Honor roll: A semester average of 80 or above

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.

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.** Veterans Memorial 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 Price

| | |
|---------|------|
| 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. Veterans Memorial 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. 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 Veterans Memorial 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 Veterans Memorial. 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 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 quarter.

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.

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 eligible for promotion 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.