

Blytheville Middle School

Student Handbook



Engage» Respect» Integrity» Self Control
"Rise Up"

Handbook Committee

Dettris Poole.....Principal

TBACounselor

Nicole Eskin..... Parent

Team Possible: Behavioral Team

Lucretia Cooper

LaToya Riley

Sarah Harden-Emerson

Greetings BMS Students, Parents, and Guardians:

To My Students: It is with the utmost honor that I serve as your Blytheville Middle School Principal for the 2023-2024 School Year. I am so grateful for the beautiful students who attend our school and their wonderful families and supportive community! I TOO am a Chickasaw for Life! I grew up in Blytheville and graduated from Blytheville High School, just like each of you will one day.

This year we will work hard and play harder! Learning is a lifelong journey and yours has just begun and will continue at Blytheville Middle School! Each of us has a role and responsibilities to fulfill and I want you to know that each of us matters. I will be the captain of our ship but each passenger matters! You matter! This year will be innovative and life-changing for each of us and we have only just begun!

To our Parents: The children with whom you have entrusted both myself and our entire staff are brilliant, gifted, and chosen to attend our school. Your child's safety, academic and social-emotional growth means the world to us. As educators, we plan to show up each day and create a better today and tomorrow for each student in our school.

A primary goal for the upcoming year is to create and sustain a learning environment that is welcoming and pleasant for students as well as staff. I want our school to be a place that we all look forward to attending. This can be done by building good relationships with students, parents, staff, and administrators.

Another of our goals is to improve the effectiveness of writing. We will begin implementing effective informative writing. Informative writing will help students gain clarity in their writing and improve their reading skills.

I will be soliciting support from various organizations that may be willing to provide resources and mentorships to our youth. We'll also, be seeking the expertise of health care and counseling services in order to meet the various needs of our students. I believe that having support from stakeholders will bring the community together and build stronger relationships within the community.

My mission is to support the learning and well-being of all students and help improve the quality of life for children and their communities.

Let's Learn!

Educationally yours,

Dettris Poole

Dettris Poole

Dear Students and Parents,

Our world is changing and Blytheville Middle School is working diligently to help our students meet that changing world and conquer it. An important part of being successful after graduation is being a great citizen. This handbook is our guideline for school citizenship and it is our hope that you will help your child see the importance of engaging in his or her school day in a positive way.

This parent/ student handbook is a summary of the policies and regulations that allow our students to learn and work with one another. It is through respectful and safe school environments that our students are able to thrive and achieve academic and personal success. This is our goal for every student; that we help each one become tomorrow's leaders!

We recognize that this handbook has a lot of information. It is so important that you review this handbook. Revisions and updates to this handbook will continue throughout the school year and we will do our best to ensure that you are updated about changes that apply to our students and families as directed by the Blytheville Public School Board of Education.

On behalf of the administration, faculty and staff,

WELCOME to Blytheville Middle School

Table Of Contents

Welcome Center	5
Closed Campus	5
School Attendance	6
Dress Code	8
Cell Phone Policy	9
Fighting	12
Conduct	13
Detention	15
Extracurricular and Co-curricular Activities	16
Fireworks	17
Safety Drill Procedures	17
NO Pass Day	17
Transportation	18

Student Internet Agreement	18
Other Behaviors (Elastic Clause)	19

WELCOME CENTER

The safety of our staff and students is our primary concern. Participation is important to helping us take precautionary measures to protect you and everyone in the building. All parents and other visitors are asked to check in at the Welcome Center. Prior notification is appreciated if you need assistance in meeting with a teacher concerning your child. Parents and other family members will not be allowed to eat lunch with their children in the cafeteria.

CLOSED CAMPUS

BMS operates as a closed campus according to district policy 4.10. Students are required to stay on campus from their arrival until dismissal at the end of the regular school day unless given permission to leave the campus by a school official. Students must sign out in the Welcome Center upon their departure. Students are expected to eat lunch on campus. **Lunch (food) deliveries are prohibited.**

School Attendance

Checking In and Checking out of School

A student who arrives at school after 8:00 am is considered tardy and must check in at the Welcome Center. A student who becomes ill at school must see the nurse to receive treatment and/or permission to leave campus. **If a student leaves without permission from the nurse, it will be an unexcused absence.** A student who needs to leave campus for any reason must check out at the office Welcome Center with an authorized adult (see next paragraph).

At the time of registration, parents/guardians must provide a list of authorized adults to pick up their child from school. If they are not listed, they will not be allowed to check the student out. Any person checking out a student must have a form of identification with them. Phone calls and notes are not sufficient to give a student permission to check out of school. Any name changes on the registration form must be made in person. **A student who leaves school without following the check-out procedure will be considered truant.**

Attendance

Attendance - Absences: A student is absent if the student is not:

- present for onsite instruction provided by the district,
- participating in a planned district-approved activity, or
- engaged in scheduled instruction at an off-site location, including remote learning.

(Definition set by DESE in Commissioner's Memo COM-20-128)

Absences due to COVID-19 Mandated Quarantine: If a student is under mandatory quarantine orders due to COVID-19 through the Arkansas Department of Health, the Mississippi County Health Department, or the primary care physician, the student shall not be counted absent as long as they are completing course work. If the student is not completing coursework or fails to turn in assigned course work, he/she shall be counted absent. Students arriving after 11:30 a.m. or checking out prior to 11:30 a.m. will be considered absent for a half-day. Students who are absent can turn in up to six parent notes a semester to count the absence as excused. After six parent notes, absences will be counted as unexcused unless a doctor's note is turned in for that absence.

In addition to Blytheville School District Board Policy, the following steps will be taken for students with excessive absenteeism:

- For each day a student is absent, the parent/guardian will be notified by an automated phone call.
- Day 3 will result in an official letter sent home to the parent/guardian from the school.
- Day 5 will result in an official letter sent home to the parent/guardian from the school and a conference will be held with the principal/designee. At this time, you must report to the school and view the truancy video.
- Day 7 or more will result in your child being turned over to the Blytheville School District Truancy Officer and a Family In Need of Service (FINS) petition may be filed with the Juvenile Court System. The Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline may also be contacted at this time.
- Our attendance policy states that if a student has unexcused absences for 10 or more consecutive days they are dropped from enrollment and an attendance fins may be filed. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the BMS attendance office or Blytheville Public Schools District Policy handbook section 4.7.

Tardies

The first bell of the day rings at 7:54 AM. **The tardy bell for the first period will ring at 8:00 AM.** Students arriving late to school must report to the attendance office for an admission slip to class. It will be at the office staff discretion as to whether the tardy is excused or unexcused. Teachers, in accordance with the following guidelines, will administer the following penalties for tardiness (offenses counted per class period):

- 1st offense – warning
- 2nd offense – warning/student conference
- 3rd offense –parent contacted by teacher

****Steps 4-7 will require a disciplinary office referral. Implementation of tardy procedures will be left to the discretion of the building principal or his designee.**

- 4th offense – Office Referral for Success Connections
- 5th offense – Office Referral for 1-hour detention
- Subsequent offenses – Office Referral to be handled by Building Administrators

****Tardies start over each nine-week period.**

Dress Code

The Blytheville Middle School has a responsibility to promote an environment conducive to student learning. This requires limitations to students and grooming that could be disruptive to the educational process because they are immodest, disruptive, unsanitary, unsafe, could cause damage or is offensive, or implies offensiveness to common standards of decency. (Refer to school district handbook 4.25)

1. Holes or cutting of pants are not allowed to be worn in any pants and **NO SAGGING** is allowed and **NO SHORTS (No skin may be shown through holes or rips in clothing)**
2. Shoes may be either lace-up style or strap on the back. Those with laces must be laced up and tied. They may be either sneakers or hard sole style. Flip-flops, sliders, house shoes, and steel-toed boots are not allowed. Crocs must be worn in sports mode at all times while on campus. **(Refer to school district handbook 4.25)
3. Students shall not wear headgear that blocks your face in any way. No hats, hoods, or bandanas. Failure to follow this policy will result in loss of headgear privileges. No bandanas **(Refer to school district handbook 4.25)
4. Students are not permitted to wear crop tops or short shirts that display their midriff. Shirts should be long enough to cover your midriff when your hands are raised above your head.
5. No sunglasses are allowed in the building.
6. Students are not allowed to wear pajamas or any sleepwear to school.

7. Students are not allowed to wear blankets as jackets or allowed to have blankets during school hours.
8. Jackets/outerwear (or any other clothing) will not promote hate, violence, mock, ridicule, or otherwise demean, and will not promote drugs, alcohol, gang activity, sex or any type of offensive slogans or language.

We reserve the right to ask any person to leave if you are not dressed appropriately while on the school campus. Student clothing must not disrupt the educational process. Please refer to Blytheville School District Handbook section 4.25 for further questions about the dress code.

Cell Phone Policy

4.47— POSSESSION AND USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The Blytheville School District expects the appropriate use of cell phones. Cell phones may be used when specifically directed by the teacher for instructional purposes.

Students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that respects the rights of others. Possession and use of any electronic device, whether district or student-owned, that interferes with a positive, orderly classroom environment does not respect the rights of others and is expressly forbidden.

To protect the security of statewide assessments, no electronic device, as defined in this policy, shall be accessible by a student at any time during assessment administration unless specifically permitted by a student's individualized education program (IEP) or individual health plan; this means that when a student is taking an AESAA assessment, the student shall not have his/her electronic device in his/her possession. Any student violating this provision shall be subject to this policy's disciplinary provisions. The prohibition in this policy does not extend to the electronic device the District provides the student for the student's use during assessment administration to the extent the student is using the District-provided device to complete the assessment.

As used in this policy, “electronic devices” means anything that can be used to transmit or capture images, sound, or data.

Misuse of electronic devices includes, but is not limited to:

1. Using electronic devices during class time in any manner other than specifically permitted by the classroom instructor;
2. Permitting any audible sound to come from the device when not being used for reason #1 above;
3. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination, or wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores;
4. Using the device to record audio or video or to take photographs in areas where a general expectation of personal privacy exists, including but not limited to locker rooms and bathrooms;
5. Creating, sending, sharing, viewing, receiving, or possessing an indecent visual depiction of oneself or another person.

Use of an electronic device is permitted to the extent it is approved in a student’s IEP or it is needed in an emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff, or other individuals.

Before and after normal school hours, possession of electronic devices is permitted on the school campus. The use of such devices at school-sponsored functions outside the regular school day is permitted to the extent and within the limitations allowed by the event or activity the student is attending.

A parent shall obtain approval from the student’s building principal before operating a student-tracking safety device at school or at a school-sponsored event if the device has recording or listen-in capability. The District requires the device’s recording and listen-in technology to be disabled while the device is on campus or at the school-sponsored event because of student privacy concerns. The District prohibits unauthorized audio or visual recordings or transmission of audio or images of other students. The student’s parent shall agree in writing to the requirement for the device’s recording and listening-in technology to be disabled and that the District may prohibit future use of the device on campus or at a school-sponsored activity if it is determined that the device’s recording or listening-in capabilities were used in violation of this policy before the student safety tracking device may be on campus or at a school-sponsored event.

The student and/or the student’s parents or guardians expressly assume any risk associated with students owning or possessing electronic devices. Students misusing electronic devices shall have them confiscated. Confiscated devices may be picked up at the school’s administration office by the student’s parents or guardians. Students have no right to privacy as to the content contained on any electronic devices that have been confiscated. A search of a confiscated device shall meet the reasonable individualized suspicion requirements of Policy 4.32—SEARCH, SEIZURE, AND INTERROGATIONS.

Students who use school-issued cell phones and/or computers for non-school purposes, except as permitted by the district's Internet/computer use policy, shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Students are forbidden from using school-issued cell phones while driving any vehicle at any time. Violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

No student shall use any wireless communication device for the purposes of browsing the internet; composing or reading emails and text messages; or making or answering phone calls while driving a motor vehicle that is in motion and on school property. Violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The District will implement progressive discipline to include:

Offense 1 Confiscation of cell phone for one (1) day. The phone will be placed in a locked box designated by the principal or designee.

Offense 2 Confiscation of cell phone for three (3) days. The phone will be placed in a locked box designated by the principal or designee. The parent or guardian must retrieve the phone.

Offense 3 Cell phones are banned for the duration of the semester. Conference required for parents and/or guardians. Phone retrieved by parent or guardian. The student will complete a restorative assignment on the appropriate use of technology.

Legal References:

A.C.A. § 6-15-2907

A.C.A. § 6-18-515

A.C.A. § 27-51-1602

A.C.A. § 27-51-1603A.C.A. § 27-51-1609

DESE Test Administration Manual

Date Adopted: 07/18/2005

Last Revised: 06/27/2022

FIGHTING

Fighting is neither permitted nor tolerated on the Blytheville Middle School campus. The consequences of fighting are as follows:

First offense: Three (3) days of out-of-school suspension (OSS) with the possible recommendation of AE placement or expulsion to the Superintendent of Schools.

Second offense: Five (5) days of out-of-school suspension (OSS) with the possible recommendation of AE placement or expulsion to the Superintendent of Schools.

Third offense: Seven (7) days of out-of-school suspension (OSS) with the possible recommendation of AE placement or expulsion to the Superintendent of Schools.

All subsequent offenses: Ten (10) days of out-of-school suspension (OSS) with the recommendation of ALE placement or expulsion to the Superintendent of Schools. We strive to provide a safe and orderly environment on campus so the following consequence will be in place:

- Students who run to or block access to a fight receive ISS
- Students who video the fight receive ISS
- Students are told/reminded from the beginning of the year, throughout the year, and during class assemblies.

CONDUCT

Student Conduct Expectations

We are committed to empowering students while holding them accountable and strengthening the culture and climate at BMS. We know that positive school culture, healthy academic learning climate, and focus on increased student engagement lead to meaningful school experiences, positive behavior, improved morale, and greater achievement for our students.

1. During passing periods, Students must go directly to class without loitering. Do not block hallways or exits.
2. Students must be at their assigned place in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. Students must report to class with all necessary educational material including laptops.
3. Students must remain in place until the teacher (not the bell) dismisses the class. Students must complete all assigned work properly and on time.
4. Students must refrain from horseplay and physical contact, including public display of affection (PDA). Students must not throw objects while on campus. Any projectiles are dangerous and can cause safety issues.
5. Students should not run while in the school building.
6. Students must not be disrespectful (backtalk, refusing to follow instructions, etc.). Disrespect in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
7. Students must have a written pass from their teacher when it is deemed necessary to be out of class.

8. **Students are not permitted to leave class during the first ten or last ten minutes of class.**

Conduct while in Transit to and from School

Students are subject to the on-campus code of conduct while in transit to and from school. Appropriate disciplinary actions may be taken against commuting students who violate code of conduct rules.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

The Board of Education recognizes that there are some students attending the Blytheville School District who have observable and/or diagnosed disabilities that require special considerations that are not necessary for students without disabilities.

The Board of Education accepts the definition of “student with disabilities” as any student in the district between kindergarten and twelfth grade who possesses at least one disability that has an adverse effect on his/her educational performance, programming, and/or placement procedures.

Disabilities include but are not limited to hearing impairment, vision impairment, speech/language impairments, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, autism, traumatic brain injury, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments, intellectual disability, and emotional disturbance.

The Board also recognizes that there are times that a child with a disability will need to be disciplined as a result of undesirable and/or unpredictable behavior which hinders his/her educational welfare and/or the welfare of others. The Board has provided the following procedures for determining the discipline of students with disabilities

A child with a disability who engages in misbehavior and disciplinary infractions is subject to normal school disciplinary rules and procedures so long as such treatment does not abridge the right to a free appropriate education (FAPE).

The IEP Team for the child with a disability will consider the educational setting of the child, determine if a behavior intervention plan is needed, and decide if the behavior is a manifestation of the child’s disability. Children with disabilities may be placed in an interim alternative education setting in the case of a dangerous weapon or drug violation. During the interim alternative placement, the student’s IEP team will determine if the current IEP and placement were appropriate and if supplementary aids and services were provided (if applicable).

Parents of students with a disability are to be informed of the district’s policy and procedures regarding the discipline of students with a disability through the student handbook. For further explanation contact the Director of Special Education. In disciplining a child with a disability, the Blytheville School District due process staff will ensure that all state and federal laws mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will be followed.

Behavior on Other School Campuses

Students receiving disciplinary referral infractions while on another school campus or at an evening school activity or event are subject to the same code of conduct rules in place on the middle school campus.

Disrespect and Profanity

Blytheville Middle School students will be respectful to all school personnel. The use of vulgar, obscene, or profane language is not permitted on the middle school campus. Students failing to follow this rule may be subject to any of the following disciplinary actions:

- Parent Contact/Conference
- Corporal punishment
- Before/After school Detention
- R.I.S.E. Academy (In-school suspension ISS)
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS)

Detention

Blytheville Middle School will have 30-minute before-school detention and 1 -hour after-school detention. The detention will be given based on the behavior that the student is sent to the office for. Detentions will be assigned by an administrator or designee.

Extra-curricular and Co-curricular Activities

Blytheville Middle School offers the following activities: Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Track, Cheerleading, Baseball, Softball, Band, Choir, Quiz Bowl, Odyssey of the Mind, Student Voice, FBLA, Target, TRIO, National Junior Honor Society, Chess Club, and Student Mentoring Program Participation can be subject to change based on a student's grades and behavior in these activities.



Fireworks

Any student found in possession of or in the act of using fireworks at school, on school grounds, or at any school-sponsored event during or after school hours shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the principal. Disciplinary actions may include any of the following:

- R.I.S.E Academy (ISS)
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS)

Safety Drill Procedure

All Arkansas Public Schools are required to conduct safety drills throughout the school year to ensure students and staff are well-prepared in the event of an emergency. Safety drills will occur at times established by the administration. Students are required to be silent and shall comply with the directives of officials during emergency drills. A warning to the students may not precede drills.

****During any drills or Lockdowns, no students may be checked out of school unless you have a note from the doctor that you are attending an appointment.**

NO Pass Day

NO Pass means “**NO PASS, DON’T ASK**” is a day when students are not allowed to leave the classroom except in a medical emergency situation or someone from the office has called for

them. The only exceptions are students with 504 that specifically state they may go to the restroom frequently or a doctor's note is on file with the nurse. **NO Pass** day may be implemented at the discretion of the administration.



Transportation

Bus Changes

Bus changes can only be done in person and in writing with the following information: the address the student is going to, how long changes will be in effect (permanent or temporary) and the contact number of the parent/guardian making the request. Transportation changes must be turned in before 2:00 p.m. ***NO PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR BUS TRAVEL CHANGES!***

Student Internet Use Agreement

The Blytheville School District agrees to allow the students to use its existing technology to access the Internet under the terms and conditions outlined in District Policy 4.29. The terms and conditions apply to both a district and a student-owned technology device.

A separate technology "user agreement form" will require a parent and student signature that indicates the policy has been read and agreed to be bound by the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Other Behaviors Not Listed in this Handbook (Elastic Clause) (Please **refer** to the school district handbook for more detailed policies and procedures for the district expectations set forth by state/federal and district policies)

The school and administration reserve the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations for circumstances not included in this handbook that may arise requiring disciplinary action. In all cases, rules, regulations, and possible consequences shall be as consistent as possible with previously established rules, regulations, and consequences for similar incidents and instances. The omission of a matter from this handbook should not be interpreted as a limitation to the scope of the school's responsibility and, by extension, its authority in dealing with any type of infraction in a manner that prioritizes the best interest of the safety and welfare of the student body.

These rules and policies apply to any student on school property, in attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school, students, and staff. Students who jeopardize the safe and stable environment of the middle school campus may be subject to any of the following disciplinary actions:

- Corporal Punishment
- Responsibility Center (previously in-school suspension)
- Out-of-school Suspension
- Before/Afterschool Detentions
- Family in Need of Services Petition (FINS)
- Alternative Environment
- Expulsion

It is important to note that an administrator may determine that an incident of student misconduct is so detrimental to the learning environment that disciplinary action of

Responsibility Center, Out-of-school Suspension, a recommendation for Alternative Learning Environment, or a recommendation of expulsion may be given on the first offense.