

Dear Parents and Students,

The faculty and staff welcome you to Opelika Middle School. We encourage you to make the most of your educational opportunities. This handbook is designed to aid you in understanding our school. The handbook is not intended to be a complete listing of student and administrative policies. It is merely a guide to the environment and expected student behavior that is traditional at OMS.

Please take the time to discuss this handbook with your child. We want all our students to have the most successful education they can.

Sincerely,  
Farrell Seymore  
Principal

**Parents can expect:**

Caring and supportive teachers  
A safe, structured environment  
Teachers with high expectations of students  
Quality academic programs  
A school that your child would enjoy

**OMS expectations of parents:**

Participating with their child's education  
Ensuring that their child follows our expectations of work  
Ensuring that their child follows our school's rules  
Students should be at school on time  
Support at home with academics

**OMS expectations of students:**

To come to school ready to learn  
To be an example of gentlemanly and lady-like behavior  
To work hard and diligently in their school work

**OMS TRANSITION GOALS**

Middle schools are organized with the acknowledgement that students change during adolescence. Research has confirmed that adolescent students must move from a very protective, structured, dependent, elementary environment to the more independent, self disciplined environment found in high school. The mission of OMS is to provide not only the academic portion of the students' education, but also to encourage and develop independence in discipline, study, work ethic and a responsibility for one's self. As you can imagine, this is a difficult task, especially when you add adolescence into the equation. All assignments, rules, and procedures are established to achieve our mission.

The staff at OMS certainly understands that as students enter OMS they must have a supporting start to the transition that will occur over three years. You will notice a difference from the beginning to the end of the year, and between various grade levels in areas such as amount, frequency, and checking of homework. Other differences also occur as we expect more of students as their independence and responsibility grow. Obviously we have different expectations of eighth graders than we do of sixth graders. Our mission is to have your sixth grader ready for the challenges of Opelika High School in three short years.

**SPECIFIC TRANSITION GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED WHILE AT OMS:**

Increased independence in the areas of:

- Academic performance
- Student guided study
- Homework completion without rewards
- Self-governance of behavior
- Student acceptance of the responsibility for following OMS policies and procedures
- Students actively engaged in their education

**Homework Hotline      745-9897      #5031 for General Announcements**

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT SHEETS**

One of the most important goals we have is to teach students to become organized and responsible for their studies and assignments. Each student will be given a Student Planner at the beginning of the school year. This planner will contain the student handbook along with enough homework assignment sheets for the year. In the event that the student loses the planner, copies of an assignment sheet will be available.

**GRADE LEVEL AND ADVANCED INFORMATION**

Every effort is made by the faculty at Opelika Middle School to provide challenging instruction in every class offered to students during their middle school experience. We affirm the founding principle of education that all students should be given an equal opportunity to learn. We recognize that there are students who need to be challenged at a faster pace and at higher levels. It is within those two beliefs that we at OMS offer grade level and advanced classes. Students may be assigned to a mixture of classes when scheduling allows. Except for Algebra and Pre-Algebra, the course content for grade level classes compared to advanced classes is approximately the same. Students in both classes are exposed to higher level thinking skills and problem solving content. The difference between grade level and advanced classes usually involves the pace and time spent on basic concepts and skill development. Advanced classes usually have to spend less time on concept development and can spend more time applying and problem solving with the newly learned concepts.

Students are placed in advanced classes through teacher recommendations based on several guidelines:

- Previous grades
- Current classroom performance
- Self-motivation and work ethic
- Objective teacher judgment based on potential SAT and/or other test data.

If the team of teachers is not sure that a student should be placed in advanced classes, they place him/her into grade level classes and evaluate the student for one to three weeks. After an evaluation period, they then move the student (if the team thinks the student should be moved to the advanced class). We would rather move a child after an evaluation period than to place a child into a frustrating situation and then reassign him/her. This procedure has proven to be consistently accurate in the placement of our students.

Parents may also request that a student be placed in advanced classes with the understanding that he/she will be removed if expectations are not met.

Students in advanced classes are expected to maintain a 70 or better grade in that class. If a student's grade falls below a 70 at progress report time or the end of the quarter in an advanced class, the parents will be notified (conference if requested) by that teacher. The student will then be placed on academic probation for four and one half weeks. If the grade has not improved to at least a 70 by the next report card or progress report, the team and principal will have the final recommendation as to class placement. If removed from advanced classes, a student can earn his/her way back into advanced classes. We do not wish to remove any students from our advanced classes, but we do want them to take the program seriously and be earnest students.

Successful students in the advanced courses generally have the following common characteristics:

- Maturity
- Independent learning ability
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Willingness to accept challenges with minimum prompting
- Ability to apply skills and knowledge
- Completes tasks without much prompting
- High reading skills
- Good organizational skills

All students are exposed to the learning experiences listed below; however, advanced students are expected to work at a higher level sooner and produce more work and projects at a higher cognitive level.

Parents may expect the following from advanced classes:

- Research projects, group and individual papers
- Working in various classroom settings
- Integrating all classes with written assignments
- Entering local, state, and other competitions
- Demonstrating writing skills in all subjects
- Demonstrating a cumulative knowledge of course work.

#### **HONOR ROLL BANQUET**

Eighth grade students are eligible to attend the Honor Roll Banquet by making the A or A/B Honor Roll for the first, second, and third quarters. The eighth grade Honor Roll Banquet is held in the spring every year.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS HOME**

Many types of communications are sent home via the student. We expect students to deliver letters and other communications to their parents. Parents should explain to their children that they expect to receive all papers.

Please be sure before your student leaves home in the morning that he/she knows what to do after school that day. We cannot guarantee that a message taken in the office toward the end of the day will be delivered to your child. Messages can only be taken from the parent or guardian of a student.

#### **PHONE USE**

OMS places a high priority on maximizing instructional time for students. We request that teachers minimize the time students are out of their classes. Therefore, teachers are instructed to send students to the office to use the phone only for sickness or other circumstances that may adversely impact the student's school day.

**The phone is available for student use in an emergency only. We cannot get a student out of class to come to the telephone to take a call.**

**SCHOOL HOURS**

The first bell will ring at 7:50 AM and tardy bell at 7:55 AM. Walkers and riders who arrive prior to 7:50 should enter the front door by the office and be seated in the auditorium. Bus students may either go to breakfast in the cafeteria or report to the gym through the gym entrance doors. No students are to be in the halls or classrooms before 7:50 unless they are under direct supervision of a teacher and have a pass from the teacher. ALL students are to enter the school only through the front doors or the bus area if they ride a bus.

School will be dismissed at 3:05 PM. All students who have finished their work for the day are asked to leave the campus at that time. No students will be allowed in the building after 3:15 PM unless they are under the supervision of a teacher or principal.

**SCHOOL CALENDAR**

**First Day of School.....August 6, 2008**  
Labor Day.....September 1, 2008  
Fall Break.....October 13-14, 2008  
Professional Day-no students.....October 15, 2008  
Veterans Day.....November 11, 2008  
Thanksgiving.....November 26-28, 2008  
Christmas & New Year.....December 22-January 5, 2009  
Professional Day-no students.....January 5, 2009  
Martin Luther King's Birthday.....January 19, 2009  
Professional Day-no students.....February 16, 2009  
Spring Break.....March 16-Mar. 20, 2009  
Professional Day-no students.....April 10, 2009  
**Last Day of School.....May 21, 2009** (If no days are missed due to bad weather)

**REPORT CARDS**

All students will receive regular report cards regarding their progress in each class. A progress report will tell you of your child's grade at mid-quarter. Report cards are issued at the end of each nine-week grading period. **The dates for progress reports and report cards are listed below:**

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Progress Report</b> | <b>September 8, 2007</b> |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report Card</b>     | <b>October 17, 2007</b>  |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Progress Report</b> | <b>November 14, 2007</b> |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report Card</b>     | <b>January 9, 2008</b>   |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Progress Report</b> | <b>February 6, 2008</b>  |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report Card</b>     | <b>March 25, 2008</b>    |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Progress Report</b> | <b>April 21, 2008</b>    |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report Card*</b>    | <b>May 22, 2008</b>      |

\*Report cards will be mailed to all students. Please be sure that the school has a correct address.

## **BELL SCHEDULE**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 7:50  | CALL IN BELL  |
| 7:55  | TARDY BELL  |
| 7:58  | 7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADERS REPORT TO 1 <sup>ST</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS |
| 8:01  | EXPLORATORY TARDY BELL – 7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE EXP. I               |
| 8:51  | END OF 7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE 1 <sup>ST</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS      |
| 8:55  | EXPLORATORY TARDY BELL – 7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE EXP. II              |
| 9:45  | END OF 7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE 2 <sup>ND</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS      |
| 9:49  | TARDY BELL FOR 7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE TO RETURN TO TEAMS             |
| 10:12 | BELL FOR 8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE TO GO TO EXPLORATORY                 |
| 10:17 | EXPLORATORY TARDY BELL – 8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE EXP. I               |
| 11:07 | END OF 8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE 1 <sup>ST</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS      |
| 11:11 | EXPLORATORY TARDY BELL – 8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE EXP. II              |
| 12:01 | END OF 8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE 2 <sup>ND</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS      |
| 12:06 | TARDY BELL FOR 8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE TO RETURN TO TEAMS             |
| 1:07  | BELL FOR 6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE TO GO TO EXPLORATORY                 |
| 1:11  | EXPLORATORY TARDY BELL – 6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE EXP. I               |
| 2:01  | END OF 6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE 1 <sup>ST</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS      |
| 2:05  | EXPLORATORY TARDY BELL – 6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE EXP. II              |
| 2:55  | END OF 6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE 2 <sup>ND</sup> EXPLORATORY CLASS      |
| 3:05  | END OF SCHOOL BELL  |
| 3:10  | TARDY BELL FOR DETENTION  |

## **STUDENT TEXTBOOKS**

Free textbooks will be furnished. Students will be expected to take good care of these books. Lost books, damaged books and books that are worn excessively through rough treatment will be paid for by the parent. Damage charges will be based on the condition of the book at the time it is issued. Lost textbook charges will be the full replacement cost of the book. Refunds will be given upon return of the book and presentation of receipt.

### **STUDENT LOCKERS**

During the first week of school homeroom teachers will assign each student a corridor locker. Each student will be responsible for the contents of his locker. Each student should keep his locker locked at all times. The lockers are owned by the school. The principal reserves the right to open any locker at his discretion. Students should leave all valuables in their book locker, not in the P.E. locker. **Students should never share their locker or give their combination to anyone.**

### **STUDENT BOOKBAGS/BACKPACKS**

All students are allowed to bring book bags or backpacks to school. All book bags and backpacks must be "see through" in that they must be clear, webbed, or mesh. Items in the book bags or backpacks must be visible from the outside.

### **STUDENT REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

It is the responsibility of each student's parent or guardian to ensure regular attendance.

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE, EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Within two days following an absence, the student must present a written excuse explaining his/her absence. The note must be signed by a parent or guardian and must be presented to his/her homeroom teacher. The student will then be given an admission slip to be signed by his teachers during the day. If a student fails to bring an excuse the first day back, a temporary admission slip will be written. If he fails to bring an excuse the second day, he will be given an unexcused admission slip. The State of Alabama only recognizes the following reasons for excused absences.

- Illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Inclement weather as determined by the principal
- Legal quarantine

### **READMISSION REQUIREMENTS AFTER ABSENCE**

#### **REASON FOR ABSENCE**

Personal Illness or death in the family--When the student returns to school he/she must have a signed explanation from his/her parent or guardian. The school may require the student's parents or legal guardians to furnish statements from a physician to verify an absence due to illness.

Legal Reasons--When the student returns to school, he/she must have a signed explanation from his/her parent or guardian.

#### **NECESSARY ABSENCES**

**Arrangements should be made with the school administration in advance for a student to be absent from school for any reason other than the ones listed above. Written request must be presented to the Principal's Office during homeroom period. This note must contain a reason for the absence and a specific date.**

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE, UNEXCUSED**

Students with unexcused absences may be given a zero for the day and will not be permitted to make up work for credit. Students who are truant from school are also subject to disciplinary action and/or referral to juvenile court.

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE, CHECKING OUT**

Early dismissals are decided at the discretion of the administration. If a student becomes ill at school, the parents will be contacted. No student will be allowed to leave school unless the **parents or guardians** have been contacted and permission has been given for the student to leave. The parent or guardian must sign the student out in the main office.

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE, EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

In order to receive course credit toward promotion, the student shall not be absent in excess of 20 days per academic year from each course. This requirement may be waived in the event of serious illness, accident, or verifiable circumstances at the discretion of the principal and/or attendance committee.

**PROCEDURE TO NOTIFY PARENTS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:**

**1<sup>st</sup> absence:** parent notified

**6<sup>th</sup> absence:** parent may be required to attend conference with attendance officer or principal, or participate in an early warning conference as required by court

**7<sup>th</sup> absence:** formal truancy complaint may be filed

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE, MAKE-UP WORK MISSED WHILE ABSENT**

All work missed may be made up if the absence is excused. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to make up missed work. Arrangements should be made within three days after returning to school. All make-up work must be completed within three days after each absence unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the teacher. All work must be made up.

**TARDIES**

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of each student in Opelika City Schools to ensure that his/her child arrives at the school on time every day. Students should arrive at OMS no later than 7:50 AM.

Students at Opelika Middle School are responsible for attending all of their classes daily. No more than one tardy will be permitted per class period, and any subsequent tardies will result in disciplinary action.

Students arriving after 7:55 AM must report to the OFFICE for an admission slip. These tardies will be unexcused. Repeated tardies will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

**TARDY PROCEDURE:**

1-4 tardies—teacher warns student

5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> tardy—detention note sent home by student

10<sup>th</sup> tardy—referred to office, administrator will call parent

11 or more—the administrator will determine the appropriate disciplinary action

**TARDY TO CLASS**

Teams will determine their own times for class change. This time will be consistent for the most part unless special events or programs dictate otherwise.

**PERFECT ATTENDANCE**

Only students who have been neither absent, tardy or without a check out will be considered as having perfect attendance. In other words, to attain perfect attendance, the student must be on time every day and must be present the entire school day.

### **FLOWER, GIFTS, AND BALLOONS POLICY**

It is the consensus of all elementary and middle school staff and parent advisory committees, that **NO** flowers, gifts or balloons are to be sent or delivered to students at school. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated concerning this policy for Opelika City Schools.

### **MEDICATION**

All medicine, prescription and non-prescription, has to be kept in the main office along with a parent signed medication form on file. All prescription medicine must be in the prescription bottle.

### **OMS DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

Philosophy: It is the purpose of Opelika Middle School to provide a safe, nurturing environment for students in order to maximize their educational opportunity. Providing an inclusive school environment that gives students a welcome and respectful atmosphere will enhance the relationship of the school and its students and parents. Providing positive rewards for proper behavior will be stressed in the TEAMS as well as in the total school. The school is here to not only academically educate our students but also to provide the democratic values that are supported throughout our community. These values include **honesty, fairness, thoughtfulness, cooperation, and diligence**. As a staff, exhibiting these values will not only show the importance of the values but also reinforce the behaviors in the students. It is our purpose to not only produce an intelligent student but also a student who will be an asset to our community and state.

### **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

The Opelika City Board of Education and administration recognize the effect that student dress and grooming have upon student behavior and commitment to learning. The Board and administration further recognize the role of parents in assisting their children in making appropriate choices regarding clothing, accessories, and personal appearance. In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, it is required that all students exercise good taste with regard to their personal appearance. Attire considered disruptive or that could present a health or safety problem is not appropriate.

Any clothing, appearance, or personal hygiene and grooming practices that draw an inordinate amount of attention to the individual student are considered inappropriate for school. The dress and/or grooming style of any student must not interfere with the educational process of other students.

**Students must be neat and clean at all times.** An unkempt or sloppy appearance is not appropriate in the learning environment of school.

**Shirts must be tucked in at all times (Male Students).** Belts must be visible at all times. **Grades K-2:** Our goal is to train these students to follow the dress code; however, being non-compliant will not result in disciplinary action.

**Pants, shorts, and skirts that have belt loops must be worn at the waist and with a BELT.** Pants, shorts, and skirts without belt loops must be worn at the waist and should fit properly. **Grades K-2:** Our goal is to train these students to follow the dress code; however, being non-compliant will not result in disciplinary action.

**Pants worn too low, too long, too large, or too loose are not permitted.** Pajama style pants, snap-aways, and sweatpants are prohibited.

**Athletic type pants may be worn only during physical education classes.** Athletic type pants include but are not limited to wind suit pants, nylon gym/athletic shorts, "Soffes", "Umbros", spandex, sweat pants, soccer shorts, and nylon warm-up suits.

**Students are to wear clothing in the manner it is designed to be worn,** i.e., clothing worn backward or inside out, and unfastened suspenders are not allowed.

**Students are not to wear clothing that reveal the body in an inappropriate manner.** (Examples: clothing which is too tight, too short, bare at the midriff, bare at the sides, sundresses, "spaghetti strap" type tops, tank tops, off-the-shoulder tops, low-cut front or back tops, sheer or see-through clothing, etc.). **Undergarments should be worn in an appropriate manner and should not be visible.** Clothes with holes that reveal the body in an inappropriate manner are not allowed.

**Students may wear shorts to school under the following stipulations:** Shorts must be hemmed. Old worn/torn, or other type cut-offs, athletic (gym), "Umbro" "Soffes", other nylon type, spandex, sweat type, tennis, or swimsuit type shorts are not allowed.

**Student athletes may wear required game day attire previously approved by the sponsor and principal. (Cheerleaders, majorettes, band members, etc.)**

**Skirts, shorts, and dresses must be mid-thigh or longer in front and back. No slits or leg openings may be above mid-thigh.** Whether the student is standing or sitting, the length of skirts and dresses must be appropriate. Spandex pants, leggings, leotards, etc., may be worn only when the article of clothing worn with them meets the mid-thigh requirement. **(Long T-shirts are not allowed.) *These items will have variances that are appropriate to students in this age range for grades K-5.***

**Facial and/or tongue jewelry is not allowed for males or females.** Students are not to wear jewelry, ornaments, or accessories, i.e., excessively noisy jewelry and/or belts, that distract from the educational process or interfere with proper speech communication.

**T-shirts or any other type clothing or personal item bearing a reference to firearms, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, drugs, drug-related slogans, and/or any other wording, drawings, pictures, etc.,** which in any way can be interpreted as being "off-color," suggestive, obscene, offensive, or relating to violence, etc., are not permitted. "Gang" related slogans, names, apparel, etc., are not permitted in school or at any school-related activities. Gang related items include, but are not limited to, bandanas, washrags, doo rags, etc. These items are not to be worn or to hang from a pants pocket.

**Caps, hats, bandanas, doo rags, sunglasses, or other headwear are not to be worn during the regular school day.** Headbands, designed to maintain hair placement, will be allowed.

**Outerwear (coats, sunglasses, gloves, etc.) is not to be worn in the building during normal school time** unless temperature or individual medical problems dictate this to be appropriate. Sweatshirts and lightweight jackets are permitted.

**All students are required to wear their hair in such a manner that is not considered unkempt, unclean, or impairing vision** (spiked hair, clown like hair colors, etc.) Students should not wear excessive or distracting make-up, i.e., face paint.

**Students are required to wear appropriate shoes to school at all times--no bare feet.** House slippers, boots with chains, steel toes, or other metal reinforcements or decorations are not allowed.

**Students in violation of the dress code will be required to change immediately. If this requires checking out, the absence is unexcused.**

**The administration of Opelika Middle School maintains the absolute authority in making subjective judgments concerning student dress and personal appearance.**

If any aspect of the Dress Code becomes a consistent problem, appropriate adjustments will be made by the administration to address the situation.

#### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR, CLASSROOM**

1. Be in your seat and ready to work when the teacher closes the door or the tardy bell rings.
2. Bring all supplies and assignments as required by the teacher everyday.
3. Raise your hand and receive permission before talking or leaving your seat, unless otherwise instructed by your teacher.
4. Respect your teacher, visitors, and fellow classmates. (This especially includes being honest, courteous, and keeping your hands, feet, objects, and ugly remarks to yourself.)

#### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR, FIGHTING**

Fighting will not be tolerated at OMS for any reason. The punishment for being involved in a fight at OMS will be a 3-day out of school suspension unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the school administrator. The second fight will result in a 5-day suspension. If there is a third fight, it will result in a suspension for an administrative hearing. Students are to tell teachers or other staff members if anyone is harming or threatening to harm them. Students should always attempt to get to a teacher or staff member if confronted by a person. We are here to see that all problems are handled in a mature and reasonable manner. We expect that students will likewise handle problems in a mature and fair manner. If a conflict occurs and appears to be getting out of hand both students are expected to seek advice and counsel of teachers or other staff members.

**Students who are fighting and do not stop when the teacher intervenes will be suspended pending a hearing with the superintendent. After a full investigation and if warranted, a petition may be filed with the police department.**

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, GUM AND CANDY**

Students are not allowed to chew gum on the campus of OMS. Students are not allowed to eat candy or any other food on the campus except in the cafeteria and only then if it is a part of their sack lunch. It will be left to the discretion of the teachers and the administration to determine if the presence of candy and other food creates a problem that would necessitate confiscation. No items may be sold at OMS unless approved by the principal. Any unapproved items sold at OMS are subject to confiscation and may not be returned.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO**

Students are not allowed to possess or use any form of tobacco at school or on the bus. Students are not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs or alcohol on school grounds or while under the supervision of the school. Severe disciplinary action will result. Students may also be referred to the proper authorities. Consequences are listed in the Opelika City Schools Code of Student Conduct.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, CONFISCATED ITEMS**

A student who has had an item confiscated during the school year has until July 1 at the end of that school year to collect that item. All confiscated items not claimed by July 1 will be donated to a charity.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, SKIPPING SCHOOL**

A student who is absent from school without the parents' permission is considered truant and is subject to disciplinary action. Students who show a truant pattern will be referred to juvenile court.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, IN THE HALLWAY**

Students should move quickly and quietly in the halls during class changing. There should be no loitering in the halls or restrooms during class changing. Running, shoving, loud talking or unnecessary noise will not be allowed. A student should have a hall pass signed by a teacher whenever he is in the halls except at class-changing time. Extreme care should be taken on the stairs. Students should stay to the right and not stop to talk when on the stairs.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, BUS**

It is a privilege to ride the bus. To earn that privilege you must obey the bus driver and follow these rules. If you do not do this, you will lose the privilege of riding the bus permanently.

1. You may ride only your bus to and from school.
2. To ride a different bus you will need a note from your parent requesting that you ride a different bus. Please write the address where the student will be dropped off and a current phone number so the parent can be contacted to confirm the bus change. This note has to be signed by the principal or assistant principal during **homeroom**.
3. In good weather you will either board your bus immediately or wait on the sidewalk until your bus arrives. If the weather is bad, you may be dismissed from your classroom by bus numbers. An announcement will be made from the front office giving you permission to leave the classroom.
4. Students who leave the bus area will not be allowed to ride a bus.
5. You may not play, run, throw, or cut in line in the bus area.
6. Eating is not allowed on any bus.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR, GENERAL POLICIES**

1. STUDENTS ARE NOT TO BRING POCKETKNIVES, CHINESE STARS, BRASS KNUCKLE RINGS, SHARP OBJECTS, OR ANY OTHER WEAPONS TO SCHOOL. POSSESSION OF ANY WEAPON CAN RESULT IN A SUSPENSION FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING AND/OR LEGAL ACTIONS. IF A WEAPON IS USED TO HARM OR THREATEN ANYONE, SEVERE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND PROBABLE LEGAL ACTION WILL RESULT. **ABSOLUTELY NO WEAPON OR ITEMS THAT COULD BE USED AS A WEAPON ARE ALLOWED.**
2. Any student found gambling, stealing, using profane or indecent language, or defacing school property is subject to disciplinary action. Depending upon the circumstances, students and the investigation may be turned over to the police.
3. Cameras, radios, tape players, and all electrical devices should not be brought to school unless permission has been given for special occasions. Toys are not appropriate at school. These items are subject to being confiscated. The person taking up the item will give you a receipt for the item. The item will be returned at the teacher's discretion.
4. All advertisements, posters, bulletins, etc. must be approved by the administration before being placed in the school or on the school campus.
5. A student must have prior permission from the administration or that teacher before missing any assigned classes.
6. Students may not bring food or drink onto the campus of OMS or the school bus unless it is a part of a sack lunch. Lunches brought to school may be eaten in the school cafeteria only. Lunches must be kept in lockers until time for lunch. The only food allowed in rooms will be fresh fruit or raw vegetables for fruit break.
7. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their children at any time. However, we discourage the consumption of commercially purchased food items in the presence of the student body. If you choose to have lunch with your child, purchase a lunch prepared by our child nutrition program.
8. Anything not covered in this student handbook will be decided on an individual basis by the school administration.
9. Interpretations of all policies in this handbook are reserved by the administration.
10. Where this manual and Opelika Board Policy conflict, Board policy governs.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

In keeping with our TEAM philosophy and for students to best benefit from TEAMING, we are allowing more autonomy within the teams in dealing with student management. TEAMS will prepare student management plans that are approved by the principal and that follow OMS and BOARD policies. Most of the consequences that students will receive will come from the TEAM. Teachers within the TEAM will work together to monitor student behavior and will establish behavioral standards and will administer consequences in a fair and reasonable manner. Teachers cannot suspend students, only the principal and assistant principals have the authority to suspend students or place students in In-School Suspension. All efforts will be made to correct misbehavior of students prior to suspending students. Only in cases of fighting or other severe infractions will students be suspended prior to the TEAM having a parent conference. The key to student success is TEAM/PARENT involvement. I would like to remind you that not all parent conferences are due to misbehavior. Please make all efforts to attend conferences with your student's TEAM and other TEACHERS.

### **TEAM/TEACHER CONSEQUENCES**

The following is a list of consequences available to teachers to use in trying to correct misbehavior. This list is not all-inclusive. All consequences shall be fair and appropriate for the misbehavior.

Assertive discipline

- Losing incentives
- Isolation from class
- Letters home
- Parent conferences
- Team/Teachers detention
- Referral to office

#### **TEACHER/TEAM DETENTION**

A team/teacher or administrative designee may keep a student after school for misconduct. Students must observe the teacher's request and stay the time required (3:10-3:40) by the teacher. Students will stay after school the next day. When a student is assigned to team/teacher detention, a notice will be sent home, by way of the student, informing the parents. The student will bring the note back to the teacher signed by the parent the following day. We consider it a serious conduct infraction if the student willfully fails to notify his/her parents and fails to bring back the note. We consider failing to stay for a team/teacher a very serious infraction and it will be dealt with seriously. We know the most important relationship for the correction of misbehavior is teacher/parent. Students must be responsible to both teachers and parents. Students kept after school will be under the supervision of a teacher until dismissed.

#### **OFFICE CONSEQUENCES**

This is a list of consequences that may be used by the principal or assistant principals for misbehavior. This is not an all-inclusive list. All punishment will be dispensed fairly and appropriately for the infraction.

- In-school suspension
- Parent conference with team/teacher
- Suspension
- Suspension for administrative hearing
- Referral to Juvenile Court
- Petitions signed in court of jurisdiction

#### **REFERRALS TO THE OFFICE**

When a student is sent to the office, it is a serious matter. We are expecting the TEAM/TEACHER process to have a great impact on student behavior. When the team or teacher sends a student to the office, they are saying that other methods have not been successful and the problem needs more attention. Every student sent to the office will have a referral from the team or teacher explaining the incident or problem. The administrator will investigate the incident and will take the appropriate actions. The administrator will write their actions on the referral form and will give a copy to the student to take home to his/her parents. One copy will be sent back to the teacher and another kept in the office.

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION, SUSPENSION**

If a student is suspended from OMS, all reasonable efforts will be made by the school to contact parents by phone as soon as possible. Students will be given a letter with a copy of the referral with administrative comments when the administration talks with the student.

The letter will have the information needed by the parents explaining the referral and suspension date(s). A student suspended from school will not be allowed to participate in special school activities for the next five school days following his return to school. If a student is in a leadership role, like Honor Society or Student Council, and has been suspended from school, the Faculty Advisory Committee should review the case with the principal and the assistant principals. They will decide if the student should stay in or be

removed from the leadership role. The student will be provided proper due process and appeals process.

#### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

The Opelika City Schools policy on cellular telephones is designed to ensure that the use of cell phones does not interfere with teaching and learning during the school day.

1. Students are permitted to use cell phones before entering the building on a school day and after exiting the building at the end of a school day.
2. The use of cell phones for any purpose – including phone calls, text messaging, games, and other functions – is not permitted during the school day or in the school building at any time.
3. Cell phones must not be visible during the school day. They should be stored in a secure location (vehicle, pocket, purse, locker, athletic bag, etc.).
4. Cell phones must be turned completely off (not simply on silent or vibrate mode) during the school day.
5. Students participating in field trips, extracurricular activities, and athletic events must get permission from their coach or sponsor for using a cell phone after school hours or on after-school bus trips.
6. At all times, the use of camera phones is strictly forbidden in private areas, such as locker rooms, washrooms, dressing areas, classrooms, and offices. When necessary, camera phone violations may be treated as Level II or Level III offenses. Such use may also be in violation of the criminal code of Alabama.
7. Any phone communication during the instructional day will take place on school telephones with permission from office personnel with the exception of emergency situations deemed by the principal. Parents should continue to call the school for any emergency situation.
8. Students are not to bring cell phones into a classroom where standardized testing is taking place. Teachers will collect any student cell phones in classrooms where standardized testing (AHSGE, Stanford 10/ARMT, Writing Assessment, etc.) is occurring. Phones will be returned in accordance with school policy.
9. Possession of a cell phone by a student is a privilege, which may be forfeited by any student not abiding by the terms of this policy. Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of their cell phones. The Opelika City School System shall not assume any responsibility for theft, loss, or damage to a cell phone, or unauthorized calls made on a cell phone.

#### **OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:**

Other electronic devices such as, but not limited to, digital cameras, camcorders, PDA's, MP3 players, and headphones, may be used as part of the instructional process, with prior administrative and teacher authorization. Otherwise, these devices may not be visible during the instructional day.

#### **VIOLATIONS OF CELL PHONE POLICY:**

**First Offense** Cell phone confiscated and returned to parent.

**Second Offense** Cell phone confiscated and returned to parent. The principal shall determine appropriate discipline response in consideration of the circumstance of the violation.

**Third Offense** Cell phone confiscated and returned to parent. The principal shall determine appropriate discipline response in the consideration of the circumstance of the violation. Loss of cell phone privilege for the remainder of the school year.

### **GUIDANCE**

The guidance and counseling program at Opelika Middle School is a very active and important part of our total child-centered educational program. We have on staff two full-time counselors and one half-time counselor. Each of the academic teams in our school has an assigned counselor who helps serve students in many ways.

Our counselors help students in four main areas:

Academic – The counselors coordinate: tutoring programs; programs for academically gifted students; the statewide testing program (achievement tests and aptitude tests); and the special educational services needed at OMS. The counselors help students deal with frustration about schoolwork by helping students, parents and teachers communicate. The counselors also assist in teaching study skills and test taking skills.

Personal and Social – The counselors work with students individually, in small groups, and in the classroom. Some of the topics addressed are decision making, goal setting, getting along with others and forming positive relationships, dealing with peer pressure, and managing anger and other negative emotions.

Vocational/Career – The counselors work with all students in the area of career development. This is done through classroom guidance lessons helping students: to explore different careers; to relate their strengths and interests to career choices; and to develop a career center in the OMS Media Center which is designed for small groups of students to participate in career exploration activities using computer and video technology.

Discipline Intervention - Students assigned to ISS will participate in a counseling intervention program. Topics covered will be goal setting, anger management, problem solving, and study skills in an effort to help these students improve their academic achievement and behavior management skills.

The counselors are here to help all students receive the best education possible at OMS, and are available to parents for information and support concerning their children.

### **OFFICE AIDES**

Office aides (main office, APO, and data) will be chosen and scheduled by the counselors and administration. Media center aides will be chosen and scheduled by the media center specialist. All aides must be responsible, respectful, and trustworthy students, who are willing to work and follow directions. Students who want to be office aides must have a recommendation from their teachers and must have PE in their schedule. Office aides can only serve if they can come out of PE. Team aides are chosen by their teachers. Team teachers should consider whether or not students have already served as aides.

### **GRADES AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURES RETENTION POLICY**

Students can be retained in their present grade if any of the following criteria exists:

1. A student has 20 or more absences from school per academic year.
2. A student has a failing grade for the year in English and math or in a total of three subjects.

#### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

If summer school is required to be promoted to the next grade, fees will be charged.

#### **HONOR ROLL**

A Principal's Honor Roll will be published each nine weeks. A student making A's in every subject and having satisfactory conduct will be placed on the "A" Honor Roll. Students making A's and B's in every subject and having satisfactory conduct will be placed on the "A-B" Honor Roll.

#### **CHEATING**

In order to promote good study habits, it is necessary for all students to do their own work. Any student found cheating or helping others to cheat will be given a "0" and their parents will be notified. Further disciplinary action will be left up to the principal or assistant principal.

#### **VISITORS**

Visitors are **WELCOME** at OMS. Please check into the school through the office and get a visitor's badge. Parents of students and others interested in OMS curriculum and activities are encouraged to visit the school and faculty. It is preferred for academic reasons that parents schedule with teachers prior to visits. Students from other schools will not be allowed to visit unless there is a legitimate need for the visit.

#### **SCHOOL FUNCTIONS**

All social functions are planned for Opelika Middle School students only. Students from other schools will not be allowed to attend these functions. The school will have the same authority at school social functions as during the regular school day.

#### **LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER**

The Library Media staff will give students rules concerning the media center.

#### **FIRE DRILLS**

A series of three short rings of the bell will be the signal for a fire drill. Fire drills will be held periodically and students should follow this procedure:

1. Stop all work immediately
2. Remain silent for instructions from the classroom teacher.
3. Follow the direction plan given by your teacher.
4. Move quietly and promptly in single file out of the classroom.
5. Proceed far enough from the building to be safe.
6. Remain in line until an all-clear signal is given to return.
7. Return to the classroom in the same manner and through the same exit as in departure.
8. **Students are expected to follow instructions without delay!**

#### **SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS**

A continuous ring will be the signal for a severe weather drill. The teacher will give students instructions when this drill occurs.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Textbooks found in and around the school should be brought to the office. Any other article found should be turned into the teacher in the copy room. Students losing articles should check in the copy room. All articles turned in to the copy room will be kept for 30 days. After this time, these articles will be turned over to a charitable organization.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION REGULATIONS**

Every child must participate in the physical education program unless a medical excuse is filed in the Principal's Office. If a child is to be excused for a brief period, a written excuse from the doctor is required. The doctor's excuse must be signed by the principal or assistant principal before the student goes to P.E. Physical education is important to the health and physical development of the student and is required by the State of Alabama.

1. Dress for boys and girls in 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grades, is as follows:
  - T-shirt (preferably white)
  - Shorts (preferably red)
  - White socks
  - Tennis shoes (6<sup>th</sup> graders also need tennis shoes for P.E.)
2. As a safety precaution, it is recommended that your child not wear jewelry.
3. All students will be furnished lockers, if numbers allow. Students must furnish their own combination locks. The combination must be given to their P.E. teacher. Each student is responsible for his/her own valuables in the dressing room. Items of unusual value should not be brought to school. Other valuables, such as money, jewelry, purses and wallets should never be taken to P.E. These items should be locked in your hall locker.

### **ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

OMS follows the guidelines set forth by the Alabama High School Athletic Association. Any middle school student who has reached his/her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1 is ineligible. Students entering the 8<sup>th</sup> grade must have passed during the last two semesters in attendance at least five new subjects with a minimum numerical average of 70 in those five subjects. Students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time are eligible. Any other questions about eligibility should be directed to the athletic director or the sponsor.

### **SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS PROCEDURE**

Our cafeteria prepares nutritious meals at school that are in compliance with the dietary guidelines recommended by USDA. If your child has a special diet or needs due to a physical or medical condition, please contact the Opelika City Schools Child Nutrition Supervisor at 745-9700 for information. A diet prescription and instructions will be required from your child's physician.

### **WELLNESS POLICY: FOOD GUIDELINES AT SCHOOL**

In order to meet State and Federal health requirements, Opelika City Schools has developed a wellness policy that promotes good student health and fitness. A significant change that will require parents and teachers to work cooperatively will be the elimination of food and beverage items of minimum nutritional value. Generally, food items and beverages that have sugar or corn syrup as the first, or main ingredient, and/or high calorie foods (high fat) with low nutritional value, cannot be given to students during the school day. We are asking parents to refer to the approved food list when they send food items to school for the various activities. We encourage parents

who provide their child's lunch to use these guidelines as they plan menus. Particularly the sending of carbonated beverages, candies, and large servings of potato chips, etc... to the school. We are asking our faculties and staff members to model good nutritional habits, as your support will greatly impact our success in changing the eating habits of our students. Hopefully, the changes will have positive life long impacts on our children.

#### **ENRICHMENT SERVICES**

According to the state definition, gifted children and youth are those who perform at high levels in academic and creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. Any individual with knowledge concerning a student's abilities may refer a student to be considered for an evaluation to determine if the student qualifies according to the state criteria. A referral to the Gifted Referral Screening Team (GRST) may be made by contacting the Special Education Coordinator. The GRST will review information related to the student's aptitude, performance, and characteristics to determine if an evaluation for gifted eligibility is warranted.

**Building Based Student Support Team:** Each school in the Opelika City School System has a school-based team composed of teachers and administrators who provide assistance for students who exhibit a chronic pattern of failure. To receive further information on how to access the services provided by the Building Based Student Support Team contact a counselor or the principal at the school the student attends.

#### **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

The City of Opelika Board of Education is an equal educational opportunity agency and prohibits discrimination in any of its educational programs, including employment on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, color, age, disability or reprisal. The Board of Education complies fully with the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the appropriate department of education regulations.

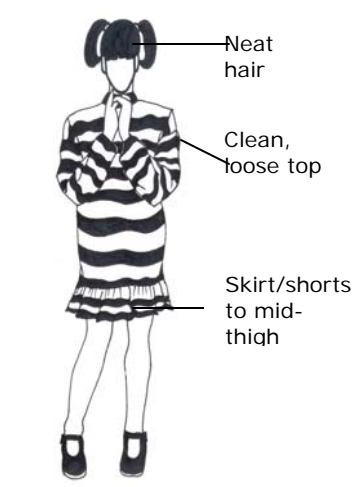
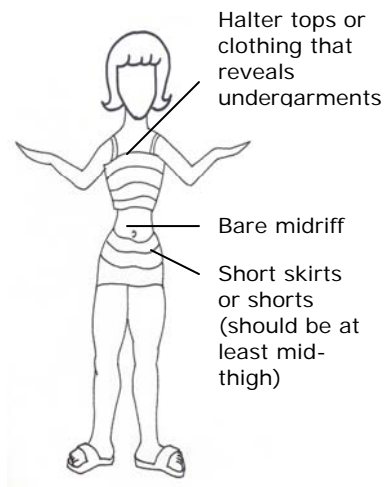
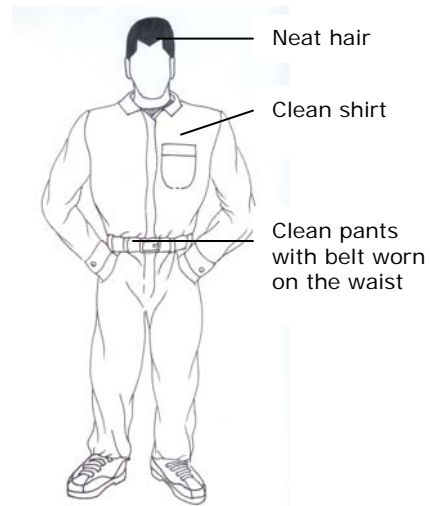
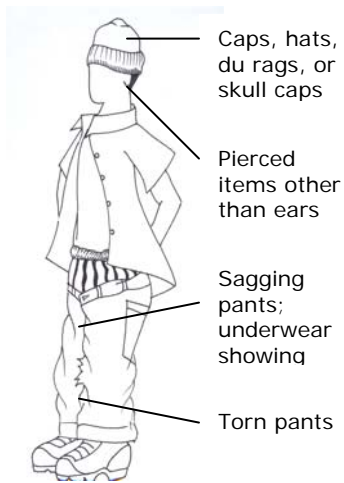
Any person having inquiries concerning Opelika City School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI is directed to contact: the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Title VI Coordinator, P. O. Box 2469, Opelika, Alabama 36803-2469, (334) 745-9700.

Any person having inquiries concerning Opelika City School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title IX, the American Disability Act (ADA) or Section 504 is directed to contact: Mr. Kenneth Burton, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Section 504 and Title IX Coordinator, P. O. Box 2469, Opelika, Alabama 36803-2469, (334) 745-9700.

# Opelika Middle School Sample Dress for Students

**NO**

**YES**



prevent  
**SCHOOL**  
**Violence**

**it's cool to  
make the call.**  
(YOU WON'T HAVE TO GIVE YOUR NAME)

**1-888-SAV-KIDS**  
(1-888-728-5437)

**THE ALABAMA SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE**  
Message provided by the offices of the Governor and the Attorney General of Alabama