

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN:

Welcome to Discovery and the 2017-2018 school year! It is a great time to be a DMS Panther! This student handbook is published so that all students and parents may have a ready reference to information that is necessary for an understanding of the daily operation of our school. It is essential that parents and students read the information contained therein so there may be as few misunderstandings as possible.

At Discovery we are committed to your child's educational excellence. We promote this through diverse curriculum, a dedicated and knowledgeable staff and a school/community partnership. Collaboration, cooperation, and open communication between home and school are keys to building a strong foundation for a successful school year.

We look forward to another great year at Discovery. DMS Panther Pride is at an all-time high. We hope students use their time in middle school to cultivate both learning and friendships that will last a lifetime. Thank you for your cooperation and support! Go Panthers!

NON-DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT

It is the official policy of the Madison City school system that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, disability, sex, religion, national origin or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment. The following person has been designated to handle inquires regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Mr. Robbie Parker, 211 Celtic Dr, Madison, Alabama 35758, (256) 464-8370.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL

The official school day starts at 8:05 A.M. and ends at 3:10 P.M. Students will not be allowed in the school buildings until 7:30 A.M. as no doors will be unlocked until that time. Please adhere to this policy because the safety and supervision of students is one of our greatest concerns. Administrators and teachers officially assume their morning duty beginning at 7:30 A.M. Car

riders will go into the gym and remain there until 7:55 A.M. Likewise, bus riders will go directly from the bus to the cafeteria and remain there until the 7:55 A. M. bell. Bus riders are not to arbitrarily make a decision to go to the gym prior to 7:55 A.M. Neither are car riders allowed to go to the cafeteria before time. Students who normally walk to school will use either the cafeteria or gym depending on which is closer to their arrival point. Students are not allowed in the halls, library, or classrooms until after the 7:55 A.M. bell. At that time, students are allowed access to their lockers, and then may go to the area closest to their homeroom. Students roaming the halls in an arbitrary fashion away from their primary area will be subject to disciplinary action.

TO THE STUDENT

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Discovery Middle School, we would like to welcome you to the school. Academic success and appropriate social skills are the foundation to your future success. Discovery Middle has the reputation of high academic achievement due to the dedication and efforts of our faculty and the diligence and perseverance of the student body. Organization is one of the necessary keys to success, and we want to provide you with every opportunity to succeed. Good luck in the upcoming school term!

STUDENT ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Students, who are absent from school the entire day, must bring either a parent note stating the reason for the absence or a doctor's excuse. Absent notes should be given to the homeroom teacher within **three** days of the absence, or it will be unexcused. Board policy states that work cannot be made up for unexcused absences. Good attendance is encouraged and necessary for successful grade promotion. If a student's absences exceed 5 days in one semester, the student is required to bring a doctor's excuse for any additional days. This process starts over second semester.

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

A parent can write an excuse for a yearly total of 10 days (5 per semester). Requests to attend non-school educational activities must be presented to the principal, in writing, **prior** to the trip. The principal, at his/her discretion, will then decide if the activity will be an excused or unexcused absence based upon the State Department of Education's current School Attendance Manual.

Please see attached document: State of Alabama, Department of Education – Truancy Definition

CHECKING IN/OUT PROCEDURES

Students, who arrive at school after the 8:05 bell, are tardy and must be signed into school **by the parent**. **Students will never be allowed to sign themselves into school.** The student will then receive a pass to class marked either excused or unexcused. An excused tardy includes illness or a doctor's appointment. **No more than three excused tardies per semester will be allowed unless a doctor's note or legal document is produced. All tardies after the third will result in immediate assignment of after school detention. Oversleeping, missing the bus, or traffic problems are not an excused tardy.** A student who is tardy for school (unexcused) or any class period during the school day will be assigned detention. If the student misses detention, he/she will be assigned to ISS. Students missing Saturday school will be assigned to three days of I.S.S. Students may only be checked out during the day by a parent or guardian. Phone calls will **NOT** be accepted for checking out students. The student will be called from class upon the parent's arrival at school. Please arrive early in order to allow ample time for your child to arrive in the office to check out. If at all possible, students should be checked out at the beginning or end of a class block/period.

GRADE POLICY

Nine-week grades are a combination of daily class grades, quiz grades, test scores, assigned reports and projects and are an indication of how a student is doing at certain points during the school year. A student's semester grade will be an accumulation and combination of all grades throughout an eighteen-week period.

HONOR ROLL

An "A" Honor Roll will be published at the end of each nine weeks grading period. It will be an all "A" Honor Roll. Any one grade lower than an "A" will eliminate a student from the "A" Honor Roll. An "A/B" honor Roll will be published at the end of each nine weeks grading period. It will be an all "A" and "B" Honor Roll. Any one grade lower than a "B" will eliminate a student from the "A/B" Honor Roll. Students will be recognized on Awards day for their academic accomplishments.

MAKE-UP WORK

Under normal circumstances, it is expected that students **will submit previously** assigned work upon return to school after an excused absence. All work missed on the day(s) of excused absences must be made up within three school days after returning to school. **It is the responsibility of the student to ensure he or she makes up work following excused absences. Students will not receive credit for and will not be allowed to make up any assignments, tests, work, activities, etc., missed during unexcused absences.**

HALL PASS

Students must have a DMS planner with a pass signed by the teacher to be out of class during the school day. Misuse of their

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

pass will result in the loss of privileges and/or disciplinary measures.

DRESS CODE

The Board believes that good grooming; dress, and personal appearance are essential elements in the learning and teaching process because they contribute to a more favorable learning attitude and environment. Students are expected to dress and to be groomed in a manner that ensures their health and safety. Hair must be styled and colored in a manner that does not cause disruptions/distractions. Hair styled as Mohawks and tall spikes will not be allowed. In addition, symbols, letters, numbers etc. cannot be shaved or cut into the hair. Hair must be of a natural color so as not to cause distractions. Blue, green, purple, red, orange, pink, turquoise, etc. are examples of “not natural” hair color. Hair must also be clean, sanitary and kept out of the eyes so not to impair vision. Grooming, dress, and personal adornment, including considerations of personal hygiene, and general cleanliness, must not constitute a distraction or interfere with the educational opportunity of other students, nor must they present the possibility of injury. **Boys:** Pants may not be oversized, too tight, or allowed to sag. Undergarments must not be exposed. Pant legs must be uniform length and may not drag on the floor. **Girls:** Clothing that is too tight, short, or low cut will not be permitted. **Clothing that is shorter than a credit card length above the knee will not be allowed.**

Boys/Girls: Only piercing of the ears is allowed in school and then they must not disrupt/distract others as determined by school officials. Tattoos are not allowed and must not be visible at school. A student with tattoos must cover them up. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** **If a student does not meet dress code, parents will be contacted to pick up the student in order for him/her to go home and change into appropriate attire. Any missed instructional time as a result of dress code**

violation will be unexcused. {Madison City Schools Policy JA}, Section X}.

FIGHTING

Fighting will not be tolerated at Discovery Middle School. Students involved in fighting either before/after school, during school, or at a school activity will be suspended from school. Disciplinary hearings may be held. In addition, the student may be arrested. A parent conference will be required with an administrator.

DRUGS / MEDICATION

Students are not to have **PRESCRIPTION** or **NON-PRESCRIPTION** medication in their possession on school premises or school buses or at school- sponsored events. Students are not allowed to transport **ANY** type of medication to or from the school. Parents must bring medications to the nurse. All medications will be dispensed in the nurse’s office. Examples of non-prescription medications include but are not limited to Tylenol, Midol, Motrin, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Sudafed, Claritin, Tylenol Sinus, etc. Students who are in possession of these types of items will be in violation of district policy and therefore subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures. Any student who has medication prescribed by a physician must leave it in the nurse’s office and a medication release form must be filled out by the parent and attending physician and kept on file in the main office. Any student in possession of medication, who gives away, sells or attempts to sell medication (prescription or non-prescription) may be subject to suspension or expulsion. {Madison City Schools Policy JAJ, Section XX}

A student who possesses, uses, or is under the influence of any narcotic substance, alcoholic beverage, controlled drug (other than prescribed to student) or intoxicant of any kind while on the school grounds or at any school activity or event shall be referred

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

for disciplinary action and referral made to law enforcement authorities.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Smoking and/or the use of tobacco products are prohibited in all school buildings and on any property owned and/or controlled by the Board of Education. Such prohibition also includes school-sponsored events. Any student found with tobacco or tobacco products will be suspended from school for no less than three days and no more than five days. {Madison City Schools Policy GAN, April 6, 2000}

DETENTION

Early morning detention will begin at 7:10 A.M. each morning Monday – Thursday and will conclude at 7:50 A.M. This detention will be held in Room 533 (North Entrance of 8th grade hall). All students attending early morning detention should use the front entrance. This detention will be assigned as appropriate by the administration or as an alternative to afternoon detention. It is the student's responsibility to inform their parents of the date that this detention is held. All students must sign in NO later than 7:10 A.M. on the assigned day.

After school detention will be held on the designated day that is assigned by the principal from 3:30 P.M. -4:10 P.M. It is the student's responsibility to inform their parent of the date that this detention is held. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be responsible for prompt pick up following detention in the front circle. Students who choose not to show up for an assigned afternoon or morning detention will be assigned to Saturday school. Any absence or problems within Saturday School will result in three days of In-School Suspension.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

In- School Suspension will be held daily during school hours. All students assigned I.S.S. must obey the teacher and rules at all times or will be subject to Out-Of-School Suspension.

PROFANITY

The use of improper or profane language in school and/or at school activities is prohibited. Offenders are immediately subject to disciplinary action. Anyone using profanity toward a staff member of Discovery will be suspended and could be subject to a disciplinary hearing.

CHEATING, PLAGIARISM, MAJOR FORGERY

A student who cheats will be subject to disciplinary consequences in Section XXII of the student code of conduct. Cheating is defined to include, but is not limited to: (a) copying someone else's work in or out of class and identifying and submitting it as your own, (b) failing to quote and/or list appropriate citations for material derived from published sources (including the Internet) and identifying and submitting it as your own, (c) the use of unauthorized notes, other materials, or assistance during the accomplishment of graded work in or out of class, (d) any other situation in which the student attempts to or accepts credit for work not his or her own.

THEFT

The acts of theft, damage of property, assault, possession of weapons and harassment are violations of the law. Such behavior will result in immediate suspension and other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the administrator. Students participating in such types of behavior may be referred to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

CELL PHONES

Students may use cell phones during transitions in the hallway and during lunch. Any cell phone seen or heard by a school official in the classroom will be confiscated and the parent must pick it up. Multiple incidents will result in harsher consequences. Students may use cellphones in the classroom if the teacher allows it for instructional purposes. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of any cell phones.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Matches, lighters, laser devices are prohibited and constitute a Class II offense. Beepers, pagers, dice, or other gambling devices are not allowed at school. **Any misuse of electronic devices will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences. Misuse is behavior such as texting, using phone or other devices to video students, or posting inappropriate pictures or comments to social networking sites which cause disruption at school.** These items will be confiscated and kept in the office until the end of the semester. Parents may pick these up early, but the student will receive one day of I.S.S if devices are picked up early. Multiple incidents will result in harsher consequences. Skateboards and/or roller blades are not allowed on school grounds. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of prohibited items or electronic devices.

BUS RULES

Safety on school buses is essential, and it starts with good behavior from students. Students are to ride their assigned buses on a regular basis. **Drivers will not allow students who are not regular riders to board their buses without the approval of and a signed note from parents and the administration.** Students should bring these requests to the office upon arrival at school to obtain permission from the administrator.

There are consequences for breaking school bus rules. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be taken away if a student disregards rules. Listed below are rules for proper bus conduct:

- Remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Use appropriate tone of voice and language at all times.
- Obey the driver at all times.
- Be respectful of driver and other students.
- Food or beverage is not allowed on the bus.
- Keep hands, feet and all other objects to yourself.
- Throwing objects from the bus will result in an immediate bus suspension.

See the Madison City Board of Education Code of Conduct for additional rules.

LOCKERS

All students (Grades 7-8) can rent a locker. It is the students' responsibility to keep the locker orderly, clean and fresh. No stickers, etc. are to be placed on the lockers. Anyone abusing a locker will be subject to the replacement cost of that locker. Once you have been assigned a locker, you are responsible for the cleanliness and contents of the locker.

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

The use of parent/teacher conferences and communication is encouraged. Parent/teacher conferences should be coordinated by calling or emailing the appropriate teacher. More communication between parents and teachers contributes to the better understanding of the student's needs. If requested, a member of the administrative staff will sit in on a conference.

VISITORS AND/OR PARENTS

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

All parents and visitors must sign in at the main office.

Please use the front entrance of the new wing to enter and exit the building. Picture ID is required to check out a

student. You will be issued a visitor's pass to wear while you are in the building. Any unauthorized person in the building will be considered a trespasser and must go to the main office to sign in or leave the premises.

MESSAGES & FORGOTTEN ITEMS

We try to keep classroom disruptions to a minimum. Students are not permitted to leave class to take phone calls except in an emergency. Please help us by seeing that your child leaves home with his/her lunch money, books, supplies, etc. Messages or forgotten items delivered during the day by parents must go through the main office. Students having a need to use the phone will use the phone at the front desk and sign the phone log.

LUNCH

Students are expected to act appropriately during lunch. Each class is assigned a designated table. Students will be assigned lunch detention for not sitting at their designated area.

Students must remain seated during lunch. There will be **no visitors allowed** in the lunchroom during the lunch period. All students are required to clean up after themselves once lunch is finished.

DRIVING

No student will be allowed to drive an automobile, motorcycle, or any other motorized vehicle on Discovery's campus. Please be aware that this is strictly enforced by the Administration. All unauthorized vehicles will be towed by DMS administration.

GIFTED

Gifted students are those who perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age,

experience, or environment. These students require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Students possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. A student may be referred by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. For each student referred, information is gathered in the areas of Aptitude, Characteristics, and Performance. The information is entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services. For more information contact the Director of Instruction.

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TRUANCY DEFINITION

A parent, guardian, or other person having charge of any child officially enrolled in Alabama public schools (K-12) shall explain in writing the cause of any and every absence of the child no later than three (3) school days following return to school. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant for any absence determined by the principal to be unexcused based upon the State Department of Education's current School Attendance Manual. Seven unexcused absences within a school year constitute a student being truant for the purpose of filing a petition with the Court. The Interagency committee on Youth Truancy Task Force recommendations known as the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program timeline for reporting truancy shall define the truancy status of any student as follows:

1. First truancy/unexcused absence (warning)

DMS 2017-2018 STUDENT HANDBOOK

(i) Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal or his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the truancy.

(ii) Parent/guardian shall also be provided with a copy of Alabama's compulsory school attendance laws and advised of the penalties that can be applied and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.

2. No earlier than the fifth unexcused absence (conference)

(i) The parent, guardian, or person having control with the attendance officer and principal or his/her designee and/or participate in the early warning program provided by the juvenile court.

(ii) Attendance at one of these conferences shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists.

(iii) Failure to appear at the school conference and/or to appear at the early warning program shall result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent under *Code of Alabama (1975), §16-28-12(c) (failure to cooperate)* or truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate. No earlier than seven unexcused absences, but within ten (10) school days (court)

(iv) File complaint/petition against the child and/or parent/guardian, if appropriate.

3. Child under probation

(i) The school attendance officer should be notified by the juvenile probation officer of all children in the school system under probation supervision by the juvenile court as consistent with state statute, *Code of Alabama (1975) §12-15-100 and 105*

(ii) Where a child under probation is truant, the school attendance officer should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

(iii) Where a child under probation is truant, the school attendance officer should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF

1973

“No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his handicap, as defined in section 706 (8) of this title, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.” (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794)