

Mason Creek Middle School Student Handbook



MASON CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

2017-2018 STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

7777 Mason Creek Road
Winston, GA 30187

Phone: 770-651-2500

Fax: 770-920-4278

Website: <http://masoncreek.dcm.schoolinsites.com/>

Student Name _____

Homeroom _____

Douglas County School System Adopted 2017-2018 Calendar

Please visit:

<http://images.pcmac.org/Websites/DouglasCounty/DouglasCounty/Images/2017-2018TextCalendar.pdf>

Douglas County School System Middle School Handbook

Please visit the MCMS website at

<http://masoncreek.dcm.schoolinsites.com/>.

The DCSS handbook can also be found at www.douglas.k12.ga.us.

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Dear Families and Friends,

We invite each of you to become a part of something very special at Mason Creek Middle school. Parent involvement is a key component to your child's academic, social, and emotional success. At Mason Creek Middle School, it is a fundamental element for each child's well-being. The middle school years can be especially challenging. Our faculty and staff share in the belief of nurturing and developing children to their highest potential. Together we can achieve these goals. Challenge is important for all children, but should not be so difficult that they feel lost, or so easy they become bored. We will work with our parents to attain a balance for each child.

During your time at Mason Creek Middle School you may encounter situations regarding your child's learning that are of concern. If you feel that any part of your child's education is not worthy of a five star rating, please give us the opportunity to make it right by sharing your concern.

The pages of this handbook are filled with important information regarding school policy and procedures. It is of vast importance that all parents, guardians, students, and staff understand the contents of this handbook so there is no mistake as to what the policy and procedures dictate in any given situation.

Thank you for sharing your child with our family of administrators, faculty, and staff at Mason Creek Middle School. If you have any questions or concerns, please call or come for a visit. It will be our pleasure to serve you.

Eric Collins, Principal

Angela Richardson, Assistant Principal

Douglass C English, Assistant Principal

The Faculty and Staff of Mason Creek Middle School

Office Hours:	7:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Office Phone:	770-651-2500
Office Fax:	770-920-4278
Faculty Hours:	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Student Hours:	Homeroom begins - 8:10 a.m.
First Period begins:	8:25 a.m.
Dismissal:	3:40 p.m.
1 st Century After School Program:	3:55 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Absences

When a student returns to school after an absence, a written explanation of the absence must be sent to the attendance clerk. Students should turn in the written excuse to the main office. The absence will be unexcused if a note is not received within three days of the return to school. Please refer to the Douglas County Policy Handbook for more information regarding attendance. Parents may also call the attendance clerk to report an absence, but a written excuse still must be sent in to the school. Please include the following information in either the written explanation or phone message: student name, date of absence, reason for absence, parent/guardian's name and relationship to the student.

Academic Awards Program

We strive to recognize students who have achieved perfect attendance, all A's, and all A's and B's throughout the school year. Students who have earned only A's and B's during the entire school year will be invited to attend an MCMS Awards Program at the end of the school year.

After School Activities

Students are not to remain after school unless they are participating in a school activity supervised by a teacher, staff member, or coach. Students who stay after school are to be out of the hallways and with their adult sponsor. Students waiting for rides after tutoring, practices, games, detention, or a meeting are to wait in the area designated by their adult sponsor. Many of these activities will take place immediately at the end of the school day, and end at 5:00 p.m. unless otherwise notified. Students are expected to make transportation arrangements prior to the event. Students are to be picked up no later than fifteen minutes after the event ends. Students who are not picked up in a timely manner after activities may not be allowed to attend additional after school events.

Agenda

All students will use the student agenda to assist with organizing daily, weekly, and long-term assignments. It is a requirement that all students have an agenda, and the agenda should be in their possession at all times. The agenda is purchased by the school and considered a textbook. Students should not damage or alter the agenda book by drawing on the cover or removing pages. The agenda is the property of Mason Creek Middle School and must be replaced at a cost of \$10.00 if the book is lost or defaced. Agendas will be collected at the end of the school year or upon withdrawal if the student leaves during the school year. Parents are asked to review and sign the agenda nightly. Teachers will sign the agenda each class period. Students should NOT color, mark out information, or alter written communication between the teachers and the parent. Forging a teacher or parent signature will result in disciplinary action. Marking out a teacher or parent note will result in disciplinary action. The agenda is the primary form of communication between school and home. We encourage all parents to communicate with the teachers via the agenda. Teacher access to phones and/or email is very limited during instructional time. Consequences are given when a student does not write the agenda message for each class. The agenda serves as a hall pass. Students may not leave their classrooms without their agenda.

Arrival

Homeroom begins at 8:10 a.m. Students not present in the homeroom classroom at 8:27 a.m. will be marked absent for the school day. If a student arrives after 8:27 a.m., the student must sign

in at the main office. The student will be given a tardy pass to present to the teacher to enter class, and the absence in the computer will be changed to "tardy."

Assembly Programs

During assembly programs, student conduct is an expression of personal and school pride. Therefore, loud talking, whistling, booing, and general inappropriate behavior shows a lack of respect for the speaker or performer. Students demonstrating inappropriate behavior will face appropriate consequences.

Attendance Policy

Please read the School Board Policy on attendance rules and procedures included in this handbook under Douglas County Guidelines.

Balloons /Flowers/Gifts

Special occasions for a student may not be celebrated at breakfast or lunch. Please plan your celebration so it doesn't interfere with the business of the school. Balloons, flowers, and special messages will not be allowed at school or accepted in the main office. Students may not take glass containers on the school bus.

Band

Parents may request a change to Band during the first two weeks of the school year. The request must be in writing and submitted to the band teacher for consideration.

Book Bags

Due to limited space in the classroom and safety concerns, students may not bring book bags into the classrooms. Following homeroom, students must place their book bags and purses in their locker and carry to class the materials that they will need. When purchasing book bags, keep in mind the limited space students will have in their lockers. Rolling book bags pose a safety concern/tripping hazard for students and adults traveling in the hallways and will not fit into student lockers.

Bus

Douglas County School Bus Rules apply to students from the time they arrive at the bus stop in the morning to the time they are dropped off at the bus stop in the afternoon. Riding the bus is a privilege, and students are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and proper manner at all times. Students who violate safety or behavioral rules on the bus will lose bus riding privileges either temporarily or permanently. See the Douglas County School System Ride Guide for Bus Transportation Policies and Procedures.

To go home with another student: Students wanting to ride the bus home with another student must have a pink slip from the office. The written request from the parent/guardian must be turned in to the main office before 9:30 a.m. The request should include accurate telephone contact information for the parent or guardian making the request. If the requested bus is at full capacity, permission will be denied and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

To go to a sitter's house: Students riding a bus to a sitter's house must have a permanent request and pink slip on file in the main office as well as the bus the student is riding. A parent or guardian must make the request and the sitter's name must be part of the student's emergency information. The sitter must live in the MCMS school district.

Cafeteria

A monthly menu will be posted in the cafeteria as well as on the Mason Creek Middle School and the Douglas County webpages. Parents/guardians may set up a lunch account in which money can be deposited by sending a check to the cafeteria or paying online. A link is posted on the Douglas County School System webpage. Each student has a personal identification number to access his/her lunch account. This number must be given to the cashier each time a student purchases a meal.

Car Riders

Students who are brought to school in a car should be dropped off at the center walkway (main entrance) on the north side of the building after 7:45 a.m. Students are to proceed to their designated area for morning supervision. After school, car-riders will be picked up at the front of the school. Parents are asked to use the outside loop in the main parking lot and follow the flow of traffic as well as car rider procedures as outlined in the letter that will be sent home on the first day of school.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices brought into the school building must be turned off and left in lockers unless required for class. Any misuse or inappropriate use of an electronic device will be dealt with through the Law of the Pack discipline card. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen electronic items and is not required to investigate cases involving these items.

Checking Out

A parent, guardian, or other adult designated on the office registration card may check out a student from school. The ensuing absence will be documented depending on the amount of time out of school. Checkout prior to 11:30 a.m. counts as an absence. Parents should not request checkouts after 3:15 p.m.

Chorus

Parents may request a change to Chorus during the first two weeks of the school year. The request must be in writing and submitted to the chorus teacher for consideration.

Class Schedules

The student's class schedule is created and assigned for the entire school year based on required classes and prior achievement levels. Any requested schedule changes must be made in writing by the parent/guardian. Schedule change requests must be approved by the appropriate administrator before taking effect. Schedule changes are made on an individual basis, and requests may not be honored. Band and chorus are yearlong classes. Spanish or French is available to eligible seventh and eighth grade students.

Clinic

We have a small health clinic located in the main office supervised by our health monitor. Unless it is an emergency, students who are ill or injured should get a pass from their teachers and report to the main office for assistance. The clinic is designed to handle minor health problems and to dispense medications. Medications must be brought to school by the parent/guardian and must have the appropriate form completed. See the Medication section below.

Clubs

Middle school affords many opportunities for students to explore different interests. Students are strongly encouraged to find a club, sport, organization, or other school sponsored activity to join. A club

may not be offered if an adult sponsor is not available. Club sponsors will publicize enrollment, meeting dates and times, and any other important information.

Complaint or Concern

If a student or parent has a complaint or concern about a school policy or an employee, the following procedure should be followed in order to resolve the problem as quickly as possible:

- Schedule a conference with the person to discuss the situation and identify possible solutions.
- If the problem remains unresolved, contact the grade level administrator.

Counseling Services

The services of our counselors are available for each of our students. School related problems in class work, grades, and social adjustments are some of the areas in which the counselors may help. Parents are encouraged to become acquainted with their student's counselor and share anything that may help in better understanding the individual needs of the child. Students must submit a Counseling Request, found in the main office, to schedule an appointment.

Dances

All school dances are for students that currently attend Mason Creek Middle school only. Listed below are the rules to attend a school dance.

- Students must be present in school, not in ISS, the day of the dance to participate.
- Students must remain for the entire dance; students may not exit the school without permission during the dance.
- All school rules apply.
- School dress code must be followed.
- Students must remain in the designated area.
- Students must be picked up promptly at the end of the dance; privileges to attend future events will be jeopardized if students are picked up late.

Discipline Plan

Behavior that is disruptive to learning will not be tolerated at Mason Creek Middle School. Students and parents are encouraged to review the Douglas County School System Policies and Procedures Middle School Handbook. This handbook can be found online at www.douglas.k12.ga.us. The administration will follow these policies in dealing with all discipline issues.

Discipline: Law of the Pack

Teachers will be responsible for mid-level interventions and documentation in the student agenda. Each student has four "Law of the Pack" (LOP) character action cards (one for each nine weeks) in the back of the agenda. This progressive discipline form provides immediate feedback to students and parents regarding school rules and procedures. Points are kept to track student behavior. When a rule is broken or ignored, points are deducted. Mid-level interventions may include parent phone calls, notes in agenda or conferences, silent lunch, detention, in-team isolation, etc. Students are rewarded for good behavior each nine weeks at the Wolf Howl. The Wolf Howl guidelines can be viewed on each LOP card.

Discipline Referrals

Discipline referrals are completed as a step in the school-wide behavior management plan-Law of the Pack, repeated minor disruptions, and major disruptions. After a discipline referral is

processed, the student is given a copy of the form. Please refer to the Douglas County School System Policies and Procedures Middle School Handbook. Students who assigned to ISS or OSS are not permitted to attend any extracurricular activities (athletic events, dances, club meeting, team practices, etc.) during their suspension. This applies to events at Mason Creek Middle School as well as any other Douglas County schools.

Dress Code

The Douglas County Dress Code for middle school students is strictly enforced. Students who are not appropriately dressed will be asked to change clothes or call home if they do not have appropriate clothing at school. Students who cannot rectify the dress code violation will spend the school day in ISS. See the guidelines for the Douglas County School System's dress code in the DCSS Student Handbook (see link provided above).

Due Process

Students have the rights of citizenship as defined by the U.S. Constitution and its amendments. These rights may not be abridged, obstructed, or in otherwise altered, except in accordance with the due process of law. School authorities must show that actions of students are a detriment to themselves, interfere with the rights of others, or create a disruption of the educational processes. The rules, regulations, and due process procedures of the Douglas County School District are designed to protect all members of the educational community: students, teachers, parents, and administrators in the exercise of their rights and duties.

Administrators and teachers are charged with the following duties:

1. To maintain a safe and healthy environment
2. To see that all school activities have a legitimate educational purpose
3. To minimize property loss or damage
4. To eliminate any serious disruption of the educational process.

Definitions of discipline, suspension, expulsion, and due process limitations and conditions are spelled out in detail in the Douglas County School District Policy Manual.

Elevator Use

The elevator is available for students whose physical impairment limits them from using the stairs. A doctor's note must be submitted to the office and approved by an administrator before using the elevator.

Fire Drills

Fire Drill activities are very serious and will be held monthly throughout the year. Please read this carefully. Consequences will be assigned to students who do not follow these rules.

1. When the fire bell sounds, all students shall walk quickly, quietly, and orderly from the classroom to the exits specified.
2. Students shall not stop to take books, coats, or other personal belongings with them.
3. The first person to a door shall open it.
4. The teacher will be the last to leave the room and will accompany the class out of the building.
5. Once outside the building and in line, the teacher will check roll to see that all students are present.
6. Running, talking, and horseplay are not allowed under any circumstances.
7. Students shall proceed to assigned location once the signal to enter the building is given.

Food and Beverages

Food and beverages are available for purchase from the vending machines during lunch only. Students must receive permission from their teacher and the principal in order to use the machines.

Fund-Raising

Only recognized school-sponsored organizations may conduct fund raising activities at Mason Creek Middle School. Any fund raising activity must be sponsored by a faculty member having prior approval. All fund raising proposals must be approved by the principal and must be placed on the school calendar. Students are not allowed to sell candy or other items to students during school hours.

Gum and Candy

Gum or candy is not allowed at school or on the school bus. No food or drink is allowed in the classroom unless authorized by the teacher. The selling of gum, candy, or any other items by students at school is prohibited.

Hall Passes

Hall passes are not to be authorized by teachers during instructional time except for an emergency. Students are expected to be on time to class and to remain in class during the entire instructional period.

Homework

Homework is work that is assigned to be completed at home. It is an effective tool in developing/reinforcing academic skills and study habits. It is an extension of the learning process and involves the home/family in the student's learning.

Middle School students should expect to complete homework/study for upcoming assessments. Middle School students are not typically expected to spend more than 90 minutes total on homework per night.

Illness/Injury

Illness should be reported to the teacher who may refer the student to the office. Students must have a pass to the office. In case of an accident, no matter how minor, the injury must be reported immediately to the teacher. If the injury requires medical attention, it must be reported to the school office before going to the doctor. Parent notification, if needed, will be done in the office. Office personnel will, if necessary, contact the nurse. All students must have a pass to see the health monitor. In the case of severe accidents/acute illness emergency care will be given and the parents will be notified.

Late to class

When a student is late to class, he/she should bring a note signed in the agenda by the teacher or staff member who detained him/her. Students who are tardy to class and do not have a note will be given a consequence per the Law of the Pack card.

Law of the Pack- see Discipline

Lockers

A locker with a built-in combination lock may be rented for the school year at a cost of \$5.00. All students are expected to rent a locker for the school year. Students who do not rent a locker should not bring a book bag or purse onto campus since these items cannot be stored in the classroom setting. It is extremely important that students do not share the combination with anyone nor leave the locker unlocked. Lockers may not be shared with another student. Lockers must be clean and free of writing or stickers. If the locker is scratched or defaced with writing or stickers, there will be a charge to the parents.

for the locker to be refurbished. Lockers remain under the jurisdiction and supervision of the school. Searches of lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause whether or not the student is present.

Lockdown Drills

In today's world, we must be prepared for all situations. MCMS will routinely practice lockdown/emergency drills. On a verbal command from an administrator, the teachers will:

- *instruct students to gather in a corner of the room
- *remove any students from the immediate hallway
- *close and lock the door

The building will remain in lockdown until an administrator gives the all clear command.

Lost and Found

Found articles should be taken to the office. Lost articles may be claimed upon proper identification in the office. It is strongly recommended that all articles of clothing and all possessions are clearly marked with the student's name. Those articles not claimed within reasonable time will be given to charity.

Make-Up Work

All students may receive credit for completing makeup work after an absence. A student will be given as many days as he/she was absent from that class to make up assignments and tests. Teachers are not required to provide assignments to students prior to an absence.

It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with each teacher to find out what assignments must be completed. When a student has been absent 3 or more days, a parent may call and request the assignments. Please give us 24 hours to collect the make-up work. Some teachers post their assignments on the school webpage. When the missed work is collected and sent home, it is due the day the student returns to school.

Meals

Breakfast is served each morning from 8:10 a.m. until 8:25 a.m. Lunch begins at approximately 11:00. At lunchtime, students have several menu choices: fast food, traditional hot meal, salad bar, and deli bar. Students may pay for their meals in advance by the week, month, or year. Refer to the school website for cost. School board policy restricts the amount that a student may charge for lunch. No one is allowed to charge more than \$5.00. Students who have accumulated more than \$5.00 in charges will be offered an alternative meal of a sandwich and a beverage.

Media Center

- *The Media Center is open from 8:10 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
- *Students may visit the Media Center individually or in small groups of four students with passes in agendas signed by teachers.
- *Student barcodes will be placed in the student's agenda. The bar codes are used to check out books.
- *When visiting the media center, students must have their own agenda. A limit of two books may be checked out for a period of two weeks.
- *Overdue fines are charges 5 cents per day with a maximum of \$2.50 for each late book.
- *The cost of the book will be charged if the book is lost or damaged.
- *Students may print in the media center. The first three pages are free. For additional pages, students will pay 10 cents per page.

Medication

All medication (prescription and non-prescription) must be delivered to the school office by a parent or guardian. Parents must sign a Medication Permission Form to allow office personnel to administer medication at school. Medication must be in the original, childproof container. When empty, containers will be sent home. However, when refilled, a parent or guardian must bring it in. All over-the-counter medications (Advil, Tylenol, cold/allergy medication, etc.) must be left in the office. Students should not carry any medications with them throughout the school day. Students are allowed to carry a personal inhaler or Epipen if required by medical conditions. A Medical Permission Form should be completed for inhalers or Epipens.

Observations/Visitations

Parents and community members have opportunities for observing students in the educational setting through a number of established activities and events such as musical/dramatic presentations, athletic events, award ceremonies, school spelling bee, and school geography bee. Parents participate directly in the instructional program through PTSA, volunteer work, field trips, school advisory committees, and individual parent/teacher conferences. If parents wish to arrange individual classroom or school visitation, the following guidelines should be followed. Visitations will be limited to two class periods during the day. Make your request to the principal at least 24 hours prior to the requested visitation time. In your request, please state the purpose of the visit. Sign in at the front office to receive your visitor's badge. You will then be escorted to your student's classroom. During the visit, refrain from engaging the attention of teachers or students through conversation or other means. Remain as inconspicuous to the instructional process as possible. Return to the office at the end of your visit to check out and return your badge. Parent/legal guardians may eat lunch with their child only. Parents should sign in at the office and obtain a lunch pass. Parents will be informed regarding a designated eating area. For the safety of students, no unauthorized persons are allowed in the building without administrative approval. Students not enrolled at Mason Creek Middle School are not allowed to visit during the school day due to unnecessary classroom interruptions. Visitors are under supervision of the administration while on the school campus. Any questions or concerns regarding your visit should be referred to the administration.

Parents' Role

Parents are encouraged to participate in the education of their student. Parents' major role is to continually show the student that they are interested and supportive of them doing their best. Thus, the student is given an incentive to strive for excellence. Parents may be asked to support the teacher in helping the child to learn a particular skill, such as independence, how to take responsibility for their own behavior, such as remembering homework, or how to handle anger in a mature way. By working together, parents and staff can help the students learn behaviors that increase their chances of success.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences may be requested by writing a note in the agenda, sending an email, or leaving a phone message or voicemail for the teacher.

Prohibited Items at School

The following items should not be brought to school for any reason:

- Knives or other weapons
- Alcohol, over the counter drugs, look-a-like drugs, prescription drugs, illegal drugs
- Electronic games or devices
- Matches, lighters, cigarettes, tobacco, fire crackers
- Laser pointers
- Radios, Music players, portable electronic games
- Toys, stuffed animals, water pistols, skateboards
- Other items deemed to be a nuisance at school

These items will be taken and may not be returned.

PTSA

The parent/teacher/student organization is composed of parents, teachers, and student with the goal of promoting the welfare of children in our homes, our school, and our community. The PTSA sponsors various activities during the school year that support the schools vision, mission, and goals for learning. Membership dues are \$5.00 and may be paid to any officer of the PTSA. Membership forms will also be included in the school information packet sent home with each student the first day of school. Make checks payable to the Mason Creek Middle School PTSA and return to the homeroom teacher. Officers and contact information are located on the schools web page.

Purses

All purses and handbags must remain in lockers during the school day.

Telephone Use

School phones are for business purposes and are available for students to use for emergencies only: injury, illness (fever). Students will not be permitted to use the phone to arrange rides with friends or to retrieve homework or items left at home. Students will not be excused from the instructional setting to receive a phone call.

Textbooks

Textbooks are furnished at no cost to students. The student will sign for each textbook verifying the condition of the book at the time of issuance. The student is liable for a lost or missing textbook or damage in excess of normal wear. In the event of a lost or stolen textbook, the student will be required to pay the replacement cost of the book before being issued another book. Damage to textbooks in excess of normal wear will be assessed by the teacher, and the student will be charged accordingly.

Transfer/Withdrawal

If a student transfers to another school, the parent or guardian will request a student withdrawal form. Textbooks, Media Center books, and school equipment must be returned to the proper teacher(s), and all teacher signatures are necessary to complete the withdrawal form. The completed form and payment of fines must be received by the office before withdrawal is complete. Withdrawal forms will be processed and available to the parent for pick-up after 24 hours.

Truancy

Students are truant when they willingly leave the campus during the school day without permission or do not attend class. Students who are truant are subject to school disciplinary action and a referral to the school social worker for follow-up.

Unauthorized Areas

Students are not to be in the following areas without staff supervision:

- Stairwells
- Elevators
- Behind the school
- Hallways, gym, media center, computer labs, or classrooms
- Another grade level hallway or restroom without permission

Valuables

Students should not bring excessive amounts of money or valuable items to school. The school is not responsible for these lost or stolen items and is not required to investigate incidences involving these lost or stolen items.