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St. Matthews K-8 School

**2017-2018 Parent Handbook**

**Treda L. Keith, Ed.S- Principal**

**Melissa Peeples, Ed.D Assistant Principal**

**135 Saints Road**

**St Matthews, South Carolina 29125**

**Telephone: (803) 655-2750**

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***Empower. Compete. Succeed.***

**Vision**

Our vision is to be the premier, competitive school district recognized globally for embracing the

needs of each student.

**Mission**

The mission of Calhoun county Public Schools is to empower all students to compete and succeed globally in an ever-changing society.

**TITLE I SCHOOL**

August 22, 2017

**Dear Mighty Cardinals,**

**WELCOME** to St. Matthews K-8. The faculty and staff are excited and prepared for the new school year. We are eager to begin this year with opportunities that will open the world of learning for you. Additionally, we look forward to communicating and collaborating with your parents/guardians in order to give you the best learning opportunities.

This handbook is a guide to help you with information about our school. Please review it with your parents/guardian, and use it as a reference as often as necessary for “procedures and expectations” This will help you maximize your education experience and guarantee a safe learning environment. I want you to remember, Cardinal character counts!

If you have any questions concerning our procedures and expectations, please ask any staff member at the school. You can also drop by and talk with me. My office is always open.

Sincerely,

**Treda L. Keith**

Principal

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**CARDINAL CHARACTER COUNTS**

Dear Parents,

When it comes to education and character education in particular, there are many important key players: teachers, parents, and the community at large. Educating youth is a cooperative effort. When schools, parents, and communities deliberately encourage similar values and goals, the opportunities for our children’s success and growth become unlimited.

Developing character in a child is overwhelming. Respect, Self-Control, Responsibility, Gratefulness, Kindness, Dependability, Honesty, Cooperation, Diligence and Empathyare just as important as the intellectual gifts we treasure. Like intelligence, instilling character take years of deeply personal, rigorous cultivation.

Each month St. Matthews K-8 will feature one of the character traits listed above. We encourage all students to exhibit these traits in order to empower, compete, and succeed in school and life. Please look forward to monthly letters that will identify the character trait, along with family activities to reinforce good character. Together, we have, can, and will do what’s best for our children.

St. Matthews K-8 Guidance Department

St. Matthew K-8 School ~ Dates to Remember

Tuesday, August 22, 2017...............................................................................First Day of School

Monday, June 4, 2018........................................................Last Day of School for **ALL** students

Tuesday, September 19, 2017.....................................................Open House (5:00PM - 7:00PM)

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Student Fees**

Montessori and Child Development.................................................$25

Kindergarten - 3rd Grade.................................................................$15

Grades 4 - 8......................................................................................$15

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Digital Device Fees (Chrome Book)**

New Students to SMK-8 and Third Grade Students.................................................$25.00 (Fee Due by August 24, 2017 and will not be due again until January 2019).

Returning Students to SMK-8 in Grades Fourth- Eighth...................................................$25.00 (Fee Due by January 31, 2018 and will not be due again until January, 2019 unless fees were not paid for the 2016-17 school term).

**1. Early Arrival / Breakfast:** The school will continue to open promptly at 7:20 a.m. Child Development through 2nd grade will report to the cafeteria. Third through sixth grade students will report to the gym. At 7:40, students will go to his/her classrooms and receive breakfast.

Seventh and eighth grade students will report directly to the cafeteria and remain there until dismissed to their homeroom at 7:40 a.m. for breakfast.

We anticipate breakfast being completed by 8:00 a.m. It is very important that students who plan to eat breakfast arrive at school by 7:45 a.m. daily.

**Supervision of students at SMK-8 begins each morning at 7:20 a.m. Students should NOT be dropped off before this time. Please remember, it is for the safety of our children.**

**2. Tardy: Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. must come in to the office with a parent to be signed in.** Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy and must receive a pass from the office to enter class (no teacher will admit a tardy student without an official pass.) The entrance door for the main hallway will be locked daily at 8:00 a.m. to ensure the safety of our children. The Calhoun County Code of Conduct addresses the consequences for students who are tardy. Please be sure to look over the information. SMK8 will adhere to the district's tardy policy.

**3. Dismissal Times for Bus Riders**

**Tuesdays**

**Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Primary Hall | 3:00 pm | 2:00 pm |
| Elementary Hall | 3:00 pm | 2:00 pm |
| Middle School Hall | 3:00 pm | 2:00 pm |
| Buses Leave | 3:05 pm | 2:05 pm |

**Dismissal Times for Car Riders**

**Tuesdays**

**Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| All Car Riders | 3:00pm | 2:00 pm |

**For safety reasons, parents are asked to remain in their vehicles when picking up their child/children in the afternoons.**

**4. Early Dismissals:** Once a student reports to school, he or she is expected to stay the entire day. If a student has to leave early due to illness or any other circumstance, it must occur before 2:30 p.m. Sign out will not be allowed after this time. When possible, appointments should be scheduled after school or on school holidays.Parents are urged to request early dismissal **only when necessary. Extensive early dismissals will be considered an attendance concern**. Students will not be dismissed on a regular basis to prevent waiting in the car line.

**5. Transportation Changes:** Changes in student transportation must be in writing. You may send a note, an email (ldebruhl@ccpsonline.net or dmichael@ccpsonline.net), or you may fax the request to 803-874-3273) before 2:00 p.m. For the safety of our children, transportation will not be changed over the phone.

**6. Student Attendance**: Attendance is the key factor in student achievement. Any school absence represents an educational loss to the student. Please help ensure that our "children" are College and Career ready by attending school daily. The following policies govern student attendance for Calhoun County Schools. All students are expected to attend school until the last day of school, June 4, 2018.

**Attendance Policy and Laws:**

* Any student who accumulates more than ten absences faces the possibility of being retained.
* Attendance starts when your child enters Pre-School.
* Your child(ren) must be at school for over 50% of the day to be counted as present.
* When your child is absent, you must turn in a medical note or parent note within **five** days of his or her return to school.
* A parent note will excuse a maximum of ten days. *These notes will only be accepted if the absences are considered to be lawful.*
* If notes are not handed in within the specified time frame your child's absences are considered unlawful.
* There are serious consequences for unlawful absences.

**Lawful Absences:**

* Absences that are excused by a doctor or other medical professional
* Death in the immediate family (parent, grandparent, or sibling)
* A recognized religious holiday
* Special circumstances **approved in advance** by the principal *(Teachers do not have the authority to approve absences for special circumstances.* ***You must get approval from an administrator.)***
* If your child has an illness that will cause him/her to be absent in excess of five days, you must call the school and make a request for homebound instruction. You must have medical documentation verifying the need for this request.

**Unlawful Absences:**

* An unlawful absence is any absence that is not excused under the conditions mentioned above.

**Consequences:**

* A total of three consecutive or five total unlawful absences is considered to be truancy.
* **Five** unlawful absences will result in a referral to Truancy Mediation.
* Refusal to attend truancy mediation and accumulating two or more unlawful absences after the scheduled mediation date will result in a referral to family court.
* Parents convicted for educational neglect may be placed under court order, fined up to $50 a day, and/or imprisoned for up to thirty days in jail for each unexcused absence thereafter.
* Students between the ages of twelve and seventeen years of age may be prosecuted for truancy in family court. This could result in the child being placed in a DJJ facility for a period of 30 to 90 days and will result in the child having a criminal record.

**A Court Order may remain in effect until a child reaches 17 years of age or completes high school.**

**7. Visitors:** SMK-8 School has an open door policy. Visitors are welcomed and encouraged at SMK-8. Because of security considerations, visitors including parents, should enter the school at the main entrance to sign-in in the office. Any person on school grounds without authorization will be asked to leave.

Parents are also encouraged to visit their child/children's classroom. However, we do ask that you not interrupt the learning environment. Please refrain from talking with your child, the teacher, or other children. If you need to speak with the teacher, please telephone the school and schedule a conference.

**Please remember, for the safety of our children, all visitors must check in at the school office to obtain a visitor's pass.**

**8. Parent Conferences:** Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers. Conferences are to be scheduled before/after school or during teacher planning periods. You will need to call the school and schedule the conference through guidance. T**eachers will not be allowed to talk with parents or receive telephone calls during instructional time unless there is a true emergency.** Telephone messages will be forward to the teacher's voice mail.Messages will be given to teachers as soon as possible.

**9. Medication Procedures:** If possible, please give all medication before and after school. When prescription medication is to be administered for any period of time and must be given at school, the parent/guardian **must obtain a permission form from the nurse and have it signed by the doctor.** It is the parent’s responsibility to get the form signed by the doctor. **Short-term prescription and non-prescription drugs must be brought to school by the parents in the original bottle with the appropriate permission form. Students are not allowed to keep medication with them in the classroom.** Appropriate disciplinary actions will occur if a student is found to have medication in class or on school grounds and not with the designated personnel.

**10. Immunization Certificate:** South Carolina requires that students have a Certificate of Adequate Immunization. No student will be allowed to begin school without being in full compliance of the law. Only “transfer” students will be allowed to receive a 30-day exemption in order to begin school.

**11. Withdrawals:** The school should be notified if you plan to withdraw your child/children. **All** **textbooks, library books, lunch fees, chrome books, and other fines must be cleared before the student receives a transfer record to another school.**

**12. Guidance Services:** Services are provided for all students. Emphasis is placed on each student’s developmental needs. Some specific objectives are orientation, placement, appraisal, counseling, information, and evaluation.

**13. Library Services**:

**St Matthews K-8 School Media Center Circulation Policy**

**Child Development and Kindergarten:**Students who have turned in permission forms may check out one book at a time for one week starting after Christmas break.  The book will be overdue after two weeks.

**First Grade:**First grade students may check out one book for one week. The book will be overdue after two weeks.

**Second through Eighth Grade**: Second through eighth grade students may check out two books at a time.  The books will be overdue after two weeks.   It is recommended that students check out books in their comfort reading zone according to the STAR reading assessment.

***Renewals***

Books may be renewed if not in demand or on hold for another student.

***Overdue Policy***

A book is overdue the day after the due date. Overdue notices for students with late materials will be placed in teacher mailboxes for distribution to students. Checkout privileges are suspended when a student has an overdue item on record.  These are reinstated when the overdue clears.

***Lost Book Policy***

When a book is reported “lost”, the media center will issue a Lost/Damage Book notice to the student.  Checkout privileges are suspended for the student until payment is made.  After payment, a receipt is issued, and the student may check out books.  If the book is found within 30 days and is in good, usable condition, the student will receive a complete refund.  If the book is found after thirty days, there will be no refund given.  The student may keep the book or donate it to the library.  Lost book fees are based on current replacement cost of the book. \*\*

***Damaged Book Policy***

All students are informed of the guidelines for taking care of books during orientation.  When a book is damaged, a student should return the book to the media center.  A damage fee assessment based on current replacement cost of the book will be made.  A Lost/Damage Book Notice will be issued to the student.  Checkout privileges are suspended for students with outstanding Lost/Damaged Book Notices. When payment is made, a receipt is issued, and checkout privileges are reinstated.  Damaged books are discarded or given to the student.

***\*\*The school has the right to withhold from any student the privilege of attending a school sponsored paid event until outstanding fines are paid on all overdue, lost, or damaged books.***

***The media center will open at 7:30 a.m. and close at 3:30 p.m. Please be mindful that on rare occasions the media center may be closed or the hours may be adjusted.***

**14. Lost/Damaged Textbook Policy:**

* 1. Students will be charged the replacement cost if a book is lost.
  2. Students will be charged the replacement cost if a book is damaged and cannot be reissued next school year.
  3. Students whose names appear on the Textbook Obligations List will not be issued any textbooks.
  4. Students who lose their textbooks during the year will not be issued any replacements until the books are returned or paid for.
  5. Students will be responsible for completing assignments during the time between the loss of the book and receipt of a new book. A book may be loaned to a student (if available) for classroom use only.

**15. 2017-2018 Grading Scale**: Calhoun County School District uses a 10 point grading scale. Our teachers practice rigor in the classroom to enhance and challenge students.

**Rationale for 10 Point Scale**

Grading Scale Change

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | 2017-18  10PT |
| A | 90 - 100 |
| B | 80 - 89 |
| C | 70 - 79 |
| D | 60 - 69 |
| F | 59 - Below |

**16. Academics: Report Cards:** Report cards will be issued every nine weeks and must be returned signed. See School Calendar for issue dates. Interim reports will be issued mid-grading period of each quarter.

**17. Academic Recognition:** At the end of each nine week grading period, grades are reviewed to determine qualification for Honor Roll. Students who have earned a grade of “A” in every subject will qualify for the Principal's List. Students who earn no less than a “B” in every subject will qualify for the “A – B” Honor Roll

**18. Homework:** Homework is assigned as the needs of students are determined. The reasons are:

* To provide practice on learned skills and the opportunity to learn good study habits.
* To provide opportunity for growth in responsibility.
* To provide the parent with an opportunity to see what the student is studying and how well the student is doing.

**19. Make-Up Work:** A student will be allowed to make-up work missed during an absence if arrangements are made with the teacher within two days of school return. The teacher will notify the student of a reasonable work completion time.

**20. Test Papers:**  Teachers of grades K-4 will send test papers and other work home bi-weekly. Parents should sign and return these papers to the teacher the next day. Parents should contact the school office if papers are not being sent home at least twice per month.

**21. Flowers:**  Students receiving flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, etc. will be called to pick them up at the end of the day.

**22. Birthday Celebrations:**  Birthday celebrations must be pre-approved by the teacher. The teachers will inform administration and receive approval. Celebrations must be held in the cafeteria at the end of the day.

**23. Food/Treats:** All food items shared with students must be purchased, (no homemade items) packaged and sealed. This is for the safety of ALL children.

**24. Field Trip Procedures:** It is recommended that all students be transported via school/site arrangements. It is the principal’s discretion whether or not to allow students to be transported via another means of transportation. If the student is transported via means other than arranged by the school, the parent releases the School District from any and all liability that may arise as a result of this alternate means of transportation. In addition, a Field Trip Transportation Release must be completed upon approval and returned to the principal/assistant principal prior to the day of the trip.

**25. SMK-8 Dress Code**

**Purpose**: The purpose of the St. Matthew K-8 Dress Code is to create an atmosphere that will allow us to provide the best education possible for your children and our students.

The Student Dress and Grooming regulation at St. Matthews K-8 School specifies standards that promote a positive and safe learning environment for students. Appropriate dress for special events will be communicated to parents and students by the school. Exceptions to the dress code may be made by the administration for special days, special events, or activities. Third-eighth grade students must follow the student dress and grooming regulations.

Standards

1. To ensure adequate coverage of the body at school and school activities, the following articles of clothing are not permitted:

* + - See-through garments
    - Backless or strapless dresses or tops, including halter-tops or any tops that expose cleavage
    - Bare-midriff tops. (Tops and bottoms must touch when student is standing.)
    - Muscle shirts or sleeveless undershirts that expose the torso
    - Shorts, skirts, or dresses that are shorter than five inches above the knee or that expose undergarments when standing or sitting. These articles must provide full coverage of the body at all times.
    - Clothing that is tight or revealing
    - Flip flops and slides
    - Face or body piercings that are distracting

2. Shoes shall be worn at all times. Shoes that interfere with safe play and instructional activities are inappropriate.

3. Clothing, accessories, and jewelry shall be free of writing, pictures, symbols, or any other insignia, that are vulgar, profane, obscene, libelous, slanderous, or sexually suggestive. Clothing, accessories, or jewelry that degrade any cultural, religious or ethnic values, that advocate, racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice or discrimination, or that promote sex, the use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol or any unlawful acts are prohibited.

4. Hats, caps, and other head coverings shall not be worn.

5. Dark glasses shall not be worn indoors, except for valid medical reasons authorized by the principal or administration and verified in writing by a physician.

6. Gang-related clothing or accessories, including but not limited to bandannas, or other symbols, emblems, or insignia are prohibited. School officials shall use information obtained from community resources and the local gang task force to make judgments on what items and accessories are gang-related.

7. Tattoos, on any part of the body, must be covered if they are gang-related or violate any of the provisions of this dress code.

8. Items of clothing or accessories with spikes, safety pins, or chains, including wallet chains, are prohibited. Clothing or any attachments to clothing that could be covered weapons are not allowed.

9. Sleepwear or slippers may not be worn.

10. Clothing must not have excessive rips or tears, and appropriate clothing should be worn under clothing with rips in them.

11. At the elementary and middle level school, a student's hair color must be within the spectrum of colors that hair grows naturally.

12. Excessive sagging or baggy pants are not to be worn. Undergarments may not be exposed.

13. Any clothing or an accessory that inhibits the safety of the student or others is prohibited.

**26. Locker Policy:**

**St. Matthews K-8 School Locker Policy**

All lockers made available for student use on the school premises, including, but not limited to, lockers located in the hallways, physical education and athletic dressing rooms, industrial education and home economics classrooms and the art classroom, are the property of the school corporation. These lockers are made available for student use in storing school supplies and personal items necessary for use at school, but the lockers are not to be used to store items which cause, or can reasonably be foreseen to cause, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or which are forbidden by state law or school rules. A student who uses a locker that is property of the school corporation is presumed to have no expectations of privacy in that locker or the locker's content.

The student's use of the locker does not diminish the school corporation's ownership or control of the locker. The school corporation retains the right to inspect the locker and its contents to ensure that the locker is being used in accordance with its intended purpose, and to eliminate fire or other hazards, maintained sanitary conditions, attempt to locate lost or stolen materials such as weapons, illegal drugs or alcohol, or any other material forbidden by school rules.

**LOCKER RULES**

In order to implement the school corporation's policy concerning student lockers, the school board adopts the following rules and regulations:

1. **LOCKS**

The school corporation will retain access to student lockers by keeping a master list of combinations or retaining a master key. Students may not use their own locks to prevent access to lockers by school officials, and any unauthorized locks may be removed without notice and destroyed.

2. **USE OF LOCKERS**

Lockers are to be used to store school supplies and personal items necessary for use at school. Lockers shall not be used to store items which cause, or can reasonably be foreseen to cause, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or which are forbidden by state law or school rules, such as drugs (other than medicine for which a student has current prescription or common cold or headache medicine sold over the counter), drug paraphernalia, beverages containing alcohol, weapons, any flammable substances, bombs or explosive device, any pungent acid or nauseous chemicals, any library book not properly checked out or overdue, unreturned gym or athletic equipment, any stolen items, any obscene material, or tobacco products that are banned by school rules or regulations. Students will be expected to keep their lockers in a clean and orderly manner.

3. **AUTHORITY TO INSPECT**

The school corporation retains the right to inspect lockers to ensure they are being maintained in accordance with the conditions of Rule No. 2. All inspections of student lockers shall be conducted by the principal, his/her designee, or a member of the administrative staff designated in writing by the principal.

4. **INSPECTION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENT'S LOCKERS**

The inspection of a particular student's locker will not be conducted unless the principal or his/her designee has a reasonable suspicion to believe that the locker to be inspected contains items which cause, or can reasonably be foreseen to cause, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, which are forbidden by state law or school rules, or which pose an imminent and serious threat to health and safety necessitating the general search of part or all of the lockers.

1. Before a particular student's locker is inspected, the student (or students if more than one have been assigned to a locker), if present on the school premises, shall, where practicable, be contacted and given the opportunity to be present during the conduct of the inspection unless circumstances require that the inspection be conducted without delay in order to protect the health and safety of others present on school premises. Whenever an individual student's locker has been inspected under this rule without the student's presence, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the student of such inspection as soon as practicable thereafter.

5. **INSPECTION OF ALL LOCKERS**

An inspection of all lockers in the school, or all lockers in a particular area of the school, may be conducted if the principal, superintendent, assistant superintendent, or police officer reasonably believes that such an inspection is necessary to prevent, impede or substantially reduce the risk of:

(1) an interference with school purposes or an educational function,

(2) a physical injury or illness to any person,

(3) damage to personal or school property, or

(4) a violation of state law or school rules.

**Examples of circumstances justifying a general inspection of a number of lockers are:**

1. When the school corporation receives a bomb threat;

2. When evidence of student drug or alcohol use creates a reasonable belief of an

unusually high level of student use;

3. At mid-term, end of grading period, before school holidays to check for missing

library books, of lab chemicals, or school equipment;

4. When there is a reasonable belief that weapons are stored in the lockers.

B. If a general inspection of a number of lockers is necessary, then ALL lockers in the defined inspection area will be examined. Students will not necessarily be given the opportunity to be present while a general inspection is being conducted.

6. **STUDENT MATERIAL**

When conducting an inspection pursuant to these rules, the inspector shall take care to avoid disrupting the contents of the locker or intruding unnecessarily into any student's written material located in the locker. In addition, as to written material, the inspection will be kept to the minimum level necessary to determine that such materials are contraband or are being used to conceal contraband.

7. **DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED CONTRABAND**

All contraband confiscated from lockers may be disposed of by the principal or his/her designee as he or she deems appropriate, including:

1. return to the proper owner or place, unless it poses a threat to health or safety;
2. use as evidence in a student discipline proceeding if possession of the contraband constitutes a ground for suspension or expulsion under the Public Schools of Calhoun County.
3. delivery to the appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution purposes if possession of the contraband constitutes evidence of a crime; or destruction.

8. **INVOLVEMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS**

A. The principal, superintendent or assistant superintendent, may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to assist the school administrators in inspecting lockers or their contents for purposes of enforcing school policies only if such assistance is required:

(1) to identify substances which may be found in the lockers; or

(2) to protect the health and safety of persons or property, such as to aid in the discovery and disarming of bombs which may be located in the lockers.

B. The principal may cause a locker inspection to be performed for school purposes if information supplied by law enforcement officials gives rise to a reasonable suspicion that a locker or lockers contain contraband.

9. **LOCKER CLEANING**

Nothing in these rules shall affect members of the custodial staff, who at the direction of a supervisor, clean out:

A. lockers from time to time in accordance with a general housekeeping schedule, or

B. the locker of a student no longer enrolled in the school.

10. **PUBLICATION OF RULES**

A copy of these rules shall be provided to each student and his/her parents or guardian at the start of each school year or as soon as practicable after the student's enrollment in the school. The document will also be placed on the school's website. Please complete the enclosed form and return to your child's HOMEROOM TEACHER within the first week of school. Thank you.

***Please complete this form and return it to your child's HOMEROOM TEACHER within the first week of school. Thank you.***

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

St Matthews K-8 School

MC900070936[1]

~ Together, we have, we can, we will do what’s best for children ~

I have read and understand the following policies as explained in this handbook. I am aware the policies will be followed as outlined.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Date |  | Student Signature |  | Parent Signature |