



## **Eighth Street Middle School**

**2016-2017**

## **Student Handbook**

## **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Tift County School System is to educate, prepare and inspire students to reach their fullest potential.

## **ESMS CORE VALUE:**

To show **LOVE** in all that we do!  
By striving for  
**Excellence, Preparation, Virtue, and Effort**

## **ESMS GOALS 2016-2017**

**Increase the percentage of all students scoring as proficient or distinguished learners as measured by EOG assessments in all content areas.**

**Increase the percentage of students scoring within their Lexile grade band as measured by the EOG assessment.**

**Increase student instructional time as measured by 80% of students having zero to one office discipline referrals.**

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year at Eighth Street Middle School! I hope that all of you enjoyed your summer break and had some time for rest and relaxation. I am looking forward to a great school year.

As your Principal, I want you to know a little about my life. I have been married to my best friend, Kristy Stone, for 16 years. Education is in our family. Kristy is a Literacy Coach at Omega School here in Tift County. Our daughter, Ellie Stone, is a fifth grade student at Matt Wilson. Mollie is our five year old daughter and Brody is our very active four year old son. As we start a new school year, I would like to share with you that my priorities start with my faith, followed by my family, friends, church and work. I believe if we keep everything in its proper place, we can and will be successful in life. I am so pumped about starting my 19th year in public education.

Middle school is a time for growth, challenge and adventure. A new school year is always an exciting time. It presents opportunities for new beginnings. As students advance through middle school, they will explore new courses and meet new people. Eighth Street Middle School students are offered more choices for academic and connection classes. Students and families are given opportunities to explore careers and academic courses that interest them and meet their needs. Your child's time at Eighth Street Middle School will be exciting and filled with new opportunities.

The faculty and staff of Eighth Street Middle School is committed to providing a superior education for all students. We are excited to build each student's passion for learning and to prepare them for their transition to high school. Our core values guide the faculty and staff as we interact with students at Eighth Street Middle School. We strive everyday to show LOVE in all that we do here at ESMS!

I know this will be a great school year for our students, parents, faculty, and staff. I want to encourage our parents to be involved in your child's education. Please know that we need you, and you are always welcome here at Eighth Street Middle School.

**Sincerely,**

**Dr. Chad Stone**

**Principal**

**To Show LOVE in all that we do!**

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Employees, students and the general public are hereby notified that the Tift County School District does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.

## **Parental Responsibilities**

The ultimate responsibility for a student's behavior rests with the student and his/her parents. Students are to respect constituted authority, which includes obedience to school rules, regulations and procedures. The school anticipates that parents will be cooperative in dealing with any behavioral problems that may arise and expects that this cooperation will be made apparent to the child.

One of the most significant objectives of discipline must be to develop within the individual student the desire to exercise his rights judicially. To realize this objective, the school reserves the right to hold parental conferences, guidance conferences, or conferences with the court and the right to request schedule changes or psychological examinations and/or treatment.

## **Change of Address or Phone Number**

Parents are required to provide the school with a change of address or phone number. Parents can contact the main office (229-387-2445).

## **Policies**

Every student has the right to an education, and our policies are enforced to protect this right. School policies are developed keeping in mind the requirements set by Georgia State Law, the Georgia State School Board, and the Tift County Board of Education. In areas where these organizations do not give specific direction, the administration and faculty develop policies. Student and parent committees may be used in an advisory capacity. All policies are subject to review and change at any time. Each policy that has been established has a logical reason for its existence. Please help us work well together by treating fellow students and teachers with courtesy and respect. We request your cooperation in abiding by these policies.

## **Emergency Situations**

The school has an approved emergency management plan on file in the principal's office. This plan has provisions for tornadoes, fire, and terrorist situations. Anyone interested in reviewing the plan should request a copy from the principal's secretary.

## **Eighth Street Middle School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

### **Car Riders**

Parents dropping-off and picking-up students enter and exit campus from 6<sup>th</sup> Street on the south side of the campus. Students CANNOT be dropped off in front of the main school entrance before 7:45 a.m. If parents need to enter the building, they should park in visitors' parking, not in the driveway itself. Drop off in the mornings begins at 7:15 a.m. Students will not be allowed to enter the building before 7:50 a.m. unless they are going to the cafeteria to eat breakfast.

After school dismissal for car riders begins at 3:16 p.m. each day. Please encourage your child to make use of the entire sidewalk under the canopy.

In the afternoon, car rider pick-up is located in the back of the building. Students should pay attention and move quickly to their designated vehicles to help alleviate traffic congestion.

At 4:00 p.m. all remaining car riders will be escorted to the front of the building, where they can wait to be picked up.

**At NO time are students to be picked up or dropped off in the visitor's parking lot of the high school's football stadium or by the gym area as those areas are not supervised.**

**\*\* Due to buses for students with disabilities loading and unloading in front of the school, students may not be dropped off in front of the school prior to 7:45 a.m. or picked up before 4:00 p.m..**

### **Walkers**

All walkers will be dismissed at the same time as car riders, 3:16 p.m. Walkers are expected to leave campus immediately upon dismissal.

### **Bus Riders**

All bus riders will be dropped off at the front of the building. If eating breakfast, students may enter the front of the building and go directly to the cafeteria.

Bus riders not eating breakfast should report to the gym area where they will be seated and remain there until dismissed for first period.

After school, first bell bus riders will report to the front of the building. The second bell bus riders will remain in the classrooms until their buses are called over the intercom. When called, students will exit down the main hallway and line up at their designated locations outside.

# BELL SCHEDULE

Bell Schedule	
Period	Time
1st Period	7:55-9:00
2nd Period	9:04-10:04
3rd Period	10:08-11:08
4th Period	11:12-1:08
1st Lunch	Lunch-11:08-11:38 <b>Class-11:42-1:08</b>
2nd Lunch	<b>Class-11:12-11:38</b> Lunch-11:38-12:08 <b>Class- 12:08-1:08</b>
3rd Lunch	<b>Class- 11:12-12:08</b> Lunch-12:08-12:38 <b>Class- 12:38-1:08</b>
4th Lunch	<b>Class- 11:12-12:38</b> Lunch-12:38-1:08
5th Period	1:12-2:12
6th Period	2:16-3:16

# Lunch Schedule

<b>1st Lunch 11:08-11:38</b>	<b>2nd Lunch 11:38-12:08</b>	<b>3rd Lunch 12:08-12:38</b>	<b>4th Lunch 12:38-1:08</b>
<b>100 Hall</b>	<b>400 Hall</b>	<b>500 Hall</b>	<b>300 Hall (Minus 301)</b>
<b>200 Hall</b>	<b>Beth Golden (301)</b>	<b>Mrs. Drawdy (604)</b>	<b>Mrs. Griffin (613)</b>
	<b>Chorus (602)</b>	<b>Mr. Lightfoot (610)</b>	<b>Mr. Hughes (615)</b>
			<b>Mrs. Payne (616)</b>
			<b>Band (603)</b>

## Lunchroom Procedures

Students are allowed to eat in the outdoor picnic area as weather permits. Students eating outdoors should choose a disposable lunch tray and exit to the outdoor area as soon as they collect their lunch. Students indoors and outdoors are expected to be courteous and respectful in the hallways, in the lunch line, and at the table. Students indoors and outdoors are expected to clean up after themselves. Students that choose to eat outside, may not re-enter the building until the end of the lunch period.

Students eating indoors will be released by table to clear their lunch area and empty their tray. Students may return to the table or transition outside.

All students will go to lunch with their 4th period teacher.

- 7th grade teachers will walk students to the lunchroom at the designated time.
- 8th grade teachers may release students to politely walk to the lunchroom at the designated time. (Teachers may walk 8th grade students to the lunchroom as needed.)

## School Nutrition

Our mission is to provide quality meals at a reasonable price that promote healthy children, ready to learn. The school nutrition program provides breakfast and lunch to help your child get the nutrition they need to learn, grow and develop. Each meal planned must provide the required (USDA) number of food components and food items and meet the nutrient standards for the age/grade group served. Your child's monthly menus are posted online and sent via peachjar.

There will be **no charge** for breakfast or lunch. We are part of a new pilot program, Community Eligibility Provision, under the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. Our District will not issue, process, or collect Free/Reduced Meal applications for the school year 2016-2017. All students will be given a lunch number, which they must scan into a computer using their student ID. Students may not use another student's lunch number.

Adults may purchase a meal at the following prices:

Adult breakfast: \$2.00 (includes beverage)

Adult lunch: \$3.50 (includes beverage)

a la cart tea: 75 cents

Students may purchase a second entree (if available) for an additional charge (TBA).

**Outside Food for Lunch:** To encourage healthy eating habits and to protect our established eating areas from food allergy contaminants, ESMS supports the school nutrition program and will not allow the delivery of retail food in the lunchroom (McDonald's, Wendy's, etc.). Parents are welcomed at ESMS and those that would like to have lunch with their child are encouraged to purchase a school meal and join us in the lunchroom or outdoor picnic area. Parents that bring outside food to school for their child may eat with their child in an established area separate from the student lunch area. All visitors must check-in with the front office and receive a visitor's badge before entering the student areas.

### **Changing Classes**

Students have four minutes to move quietly between classes. Loud, disruptive behavior and running in the hallways will not be tolerated. Students may use restrooms and get water; however, students may not loiter in the hallways or in the restrooms during class changes. Teachers will assist in supervising students in hallways during class changes.

### **Connections Classes**

PE, Art, Technology, Band, Ag, Remedial Math, Remedial Reading, Public Safety, Chorus, Journalism, Middle School Spanish, Spanish I (for high school credit) Jazz Band, One Voice, and Careers

Students will have an opportunity to participate in up to 4 connection classes throughout the school year. Our goal is to try to get every student in a PE class during the 2016-2017 school year unless their academic needs change. The students will take each course for an 18 week period of time before rotating to their next connection class.

### **Band**

Band is designed to teach students basic musical skills, appreciation of music of the master composer's, personal responsibility and teamwork. It is also to prepare young musicians for participation in the band in upper grades. At the end of the course the students will not only be able to demonstrate knowledge of musical vocabulary and methodology for study, rehearsal and performance of band music, but also have an understanding of working with others toward a common goal. Band students will have the opportunity to perform on an instrument in a large group as well as perform individually.



## **Chorus**

Chorus is designed to teach students basic musical skills, appreciation of music of the master composer's, personal responsibility and teamwork. It is also to prepare students for participation in chorus in the upper grades. At the end of the course the students will not only be able to demonstrate knowledge of musical vocabulary and methodology for study, rehearsal and performance of choral music, but also have an understanding of working with others toward a common goal.

## **Pledge to the Flag**

The Pledge to the Flag will occur each morning following a moment of silence. Students are encouraged to show respect for the flag by standing quietly, facing the flag, placing their right hands over their hearts, and repeating the pledge.

## **Flowers and Gifts**

The delivery of flowers and gifts to students is not permitted at any time during the school day. Businesses should deliver these items to the student's home.

# **Attendance Regulations**

## **Tardiness**

Anyone not in the classroom by the time the tardy bell stops ringing will be considered tardy. If you arrive late to school, (after 7:55 a.m.), report to the front for a tardy slip. It is necessary for a parent/guardian to sign in a tardy student after 8:25 a.m. Be sure, if you are detained in the office or by a teacher, that you have a note to take to your first period teacher.

## **Make-up Work**

Students will be given three days to make arrangements with teachers regarding make up work missed due to excused absences. Make-up work for students who are home suspended will be left up to the discretion of the students' teachers and the principal. A parent/guardian may request missed assignments by calling the school before 10:00 a.m. Work can be picked up after 2:30 p.m.

## **Checking In and Out**

Before a student can check out of school due to illness, a school official must contact his/her parent or legal guardian. The student will be given a checkout permit that must be presented to his/her teachers.

Parents requesting permission for their son/daughter to check out of school will go through the main office.

**Requests should be made only for emergencies.** Students must not leave school without permission of a school official. **Students may not leave with anyone other than an adult listed on their emergency checklist.**

Any student who checks in late will be marked tardy to school. Any student checking in after 8:25 a.m. must report to the main office with a parent or legal guardian to sign in. The secretary will provide the necessary admittance slip.

## Attendance Rules

### Absences

Poor attendance causes students to miss important classroom instruction. As a result, the student has difficulty being successful. Parents should see that their children are in school every day possible and that students remain in school the entire day. Requests for early dismissal should be made only when an emergency exists.

1. Upon returning to school after being absent for any reason, the student will bring a written excuse from the parent or other acceptable documentation. **(Students have 3 school days to bring in a note from their parents or doctors.)** This statement will be turned in to the attendance desk. When the student fails to provide proper documentation upon his/her return to school, the student's absence will be considered unexcused. If this student fails to submit acceptable documentation by the third day of his return, the unexcused absence will be handled as truancy.
2. Students may be temporarily excused from school for any of the following reasons: (1) personal illness which would endanger their health or the health of others; (2) serious illness or death in the immediate family which would reasonably necessitate absence from school; (3) observance of special and recognized religious holidays of their faith; and (4) an absence mandated by order of governmental agencies. Also, students will be excused from school attendance when conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to their health and safety. Absences resulting from attendance at school-approved programs or other activities approved by the administration of the school will be excused. Teachers will be notified of such events by the principal.
3. Extended absences because of illness should be reported to the school so that the student can be placed in the Hospital-Homebound program.
4. Extended unexcused absences will be referred to the school social worker so that an investigation may be conducted. Legal action may be taken against students/parents who are found to be habitually truant according to the Georgia compulsory attendance law.

## WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER

The procedure for withdrawing or transferring is as follows:

1. Secure withdrawal or transfer note from parent or guardian stating the date you will be leaving.
2. Obtain appropriate forms from the school guidance office.

3. Have the form filled out by teachers, return all school books and property, and make sure all fees are paid. Be sure to check out in the library.
4. Take completed form to the school guidance office for final clearance by signature of the guidance counselor.
5. Student records will be transferred by mail.

## **Right to Know**

In compliance with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind statute the Tift County School District informs parents that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.
- Whether or not the teacher is "Highly qualified" as required by the state.

If you have any questions concerning your child's teacher's qualifications, please contact the principal at 387-2445.

## **Eighth Street Middle School Grading Policy**

Grading tasks will be categorized by formative and summative assessments.

- **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT—65%**
  - These are ongoing or daily assessments that may include but are not limited to the following: homework, daily grades, class work, labs, notebook check, and quizzes.
  - No less **than** 10 grades must be given per nine weeks in this area.
- **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT—35%**
  - These are summary assessments which may include the following: culminating activity, quizzes, mini assessments, and tests.
  - No less than 4 grades must be given per nine weeks in this area.
- **9 WEEK EXAMS**
  - The exam and the administration of the exam will be consistent through the department.
- **EOC—20%**
  - Some high school credit classes require a state mandated End-of-the-Course test. For these classes, the EOC will count as 20% of the overall course average, as mandated by the Georgia Department of Education.

## **Disciplinary Policy**

It is of the utmost importance that students and teachers be provided a safe and comfortable learning environment. Teachers should have the opportunity to teach, and students the opportunity to learn in an orderly, non-threatening environment.

Our goal is to achieve a school climate where teaching and learning occur with an absolute minimum of distractions. There must be a mutual respect among students and staff. It is important that students are polite and considerate of others.

A WELL-DISCIPLINED school promotes the idea of each student working toward self-management and controlling his or her own actions. However, the school recognizes that sometimes adult intervention is both desirable and necessary.

When interventions are necessary, school personnel will follow the discipline policy as outlined in the Tift County School System Code of Student Conduct. All students will be given a copy of the Code of Student Conduct upon entering school and will be expected to adhere to this policy. Students and parents should read thoroughly and become familiar with this policy. When students, parents, and school personnel know and understand the level of student conduct expected, then together, we can work towards creating a positive learning environment for all.

Some disciplinary actions that could be used, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, include conferences, counselor referral, administrative time out, lunch detention, after school detention, removal of privileges, corporal punishment, school chores, In-school suspension, home suspension, recommendation for sixth street academy, expulsion, or juvenile referral.

## **Board Policy Bullying**

**Descriptor Code: JCDA**

The Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
  - a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harms as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
  - b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
  - c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or

- d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Each school shall encourage teachers or other school employees, students, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in the person's name, at the person's option to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity.

Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying is encouraged to immediately report it to the principal.

Any report will be investigated by the administration based on the nature of the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented and what other steps should be taken.

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action, as appropriate under the circumstances. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative education program.

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

Student and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the student/parent handbooks.

OCGA 20-2-751.4

## **OFFENSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

Each student is furnished a copy of the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*. This code is the basis for disciplinary expectations, offenses and consequences (disciplinary action) for Eighth Street Middle School.

There are five Disciplinary Action Plans in the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*, beginning with teacher action and progressing to administrator recommendation for expulsion and referral to law enforcement. *The Code of Student Conduct* lists these as Plans A, B, C, D, and E. Students progress through the five levels depending on the number of referrals and/or the severity of the offense(s). Please refer to the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct* for further explanation.

Disciplinary actions represent the range of consequences possible for the offense listed. All consequences take into consideration the age of the student, the severity of the offense, and the number of discipline referrals the student has on file.

Consequences are hierarchical and cumulative. Once a student is in the discipline sequence, each succeeding referral will result in a more severe consequence. **Repeated episodes of misconduct will result in increasingly severe disciplinary actions.**

## **Lunch Detention & In-School Suspension**

### **Lunch Detention**

Lunch Detention will be held on designated days. If a student misses lunch detention the student will be re-assigned and may accumulate additional days of detention. Failure to attend the re-assigned lunch detention may result in ISS or other means of punishment as set forth in the student code of conduct.

Teachers may also use lunch detention as a form of disciplinary action.

### **In-School Suspension (ISS)**

Eighth Street Middle School will utilize an ISS facility. While there, you will be required to complete the work assigned by your teachers.

### **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) is reserved for serious and/or repeated offenses and can be from one to ten days, at the administrator's discretion. Students may not attend any school-sponsored event during the time he/she is suspended out-of-school.

### **Expulsion**

Recommendation for expulsion from school will be made by the principal.

### **Disturbance Devices**

Students are not allowed to bring radios, cassette players, cameras, beepers, noisemakers, pets, or any nuisance devices to school except as a part of a supervised activity. Any action or piece of equipment that will create a disturbance in the school is strictly prohibited, and such items will be confiscated. Parents must come to school to pick up confiscated items at the proper time given by administration.

## Dress Code

Students at Eighth Street Middle School will adhere to dress code standards outlined in the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*. Students not adhering to dress code standards will phone home to make necessary changes and will remain in isolation until proper clothing can be brought, or will be isolated for the remainder of the day. Repeated episodes of failure to comply with dress code will result in disciplinary action.

## Student Dress Standards

The **rationale** for dress standards is to foster good citizenship and the schools' ability to achieve their academic and instructional purposes. The **goal** is to promote student learning, safety, and behavior by assisting students in making choices about appropriate school attire. The **expectation** is for students to dress in a clean, modest, and dignified manner reflecting self-respect and respect for others.

## General Guidelines

- Clothing must be worn with appropriate undergarments, and the undergarments must not be exposed.
- Clothing must not expose cleavage or midriffs.
- Clothing must not have holes or tears.
- Clothing, body, and hair should be clean.
- Clothing with words or graphics depicting or alluding to any of the following are strictly prohibited:
  - violence
  - weapons
  - gang affiliation
  - sex
  - profanity
  - drug use
  - alcohol
  - tobacco
  - intimidation
  - bullying
  - self-destructive behavior
  - negative/inappropriate messages

**“Any attire deemed by the administration to be a threat to the safety and security of the campus or a distraction to the learning environment will not be permitted”.** (*Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*, pg. 36)

## Shirts/Tops

- All shirts and tops must have sleeves and be appropriately sized.

- o Exception for grades 4-12: a dress jacket, blazer, shirt or sweater may be worn to cover a sleeveless top
- o Exception for grades K-3: tank tops allowed, halters and spaghetti straps not allowed
- Un-tucked shirts must be hemmed and may not exceed the length of the hips.
- Shirts that exceed the length of the hips must be tucked in.

### **Pants/Skirts/Dresses**

- Pants and skirts must be fastened securely at the waist. Sagging and oversized pants are strictly prohibited.
- Pants, skirts, shorts, and dresses must be knee length or longer.
- Exception for grades K-3: shorts above knee of appropriate length allowed
- Not allowed:
  - o athletic sweat or sheer silky pants (except in the gym)
  - o pajama pants
  - o biker pants
  - o leggings without a skirt or dress

### **Shoes/Footwear**

- Shoes must be worn at all times and properly secured. Appropriate footwear is required at all times in science laboratory, P.E., and other classes deemed appropriate by administration.
- Not allowed:
  - o house slippers or bedroom shoes
  - o roller-skate shoes / heelys

### **Accessories/Hair**

- Accessories or jewelry promoting gang activity, exhibiting demeaning symbols or words, presenting a hazard, or construed to be a weapon are strictly prohibited.
- Earrings and pierced jewelry may only be worn on the ears; other facial or exposed body-piercing jewelry is not permitted. Hair bands and hair pins designed to secure hair from the eyes are allowed.
- Not allowed:
  - o hair dyed inappropriate or odd colors
  - o excessive and distracting hair styles
  - o earrings on males

### **Head Wear**

- All head wear, including sunglasses, must be removed upon entering the building.



## **Computer Use**

Parents and students must read the Board of Education Policy IFBG that outlines the acceptable use of computer/internet resources. This policy is located in the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*. Violations of the educational use policy will result in disciplinary action also outlined in the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*.

Students will be assigned laptops for use during instructional time in individual classrooms. It is the student's responsibility to abide by established protocols concerning the use and care of laptop computers. Restitution may be applied in situations where technology is damaged as a result of inappropriate care and/or failure to follow protocol by the student.

## **Conferences**

The faculty of Eighth Street Middle School welcomes the opportunity to discuss with students and parents classroom performance, behavior, or any other topic(s) of concern. Conferences with a teacher should be scheduled through the Guidance Department. Appointments will be made at a time that is convenient for everyone involved. Appointments may not be made at a time that interferes with instructional activities. Conferences may be held before school, after school, or during the teacher's planning period.

## **Due Process Hearings**

The final step in the disciplinary sequence is a due process hearing before the Board of Education disciplinary hearing officer. The Board of Education hearing officer can suspend a student for more than ten (10) days, expel a student for a semester, an academic year, or permanently. Due process governs all expulsion decisions including notice to student and parents and the appropriate appeals process. Students and parents will receive details of due process when the hearing is scheduled.

## **Complaints & Grievances**

The Tift County Board of Education has prescribed an orderly process to consider grievances concerning decisions made by school personnel who students believe are in violation of pertinent policies of the Tift County Board of Education, federal and state laws, or individual school rules. Students' complaints and grievances shall be resolved through this orderly process and at the lowest possible level. However, the Tift County Board of Education provides channels for eventual hearings should circumstance dictate.

Complaints and grievances shall be approached in the following manner:

1. The opportunity shall be awarded to any student and/or his/her parents to discuss with his/her teachers a decision or situation that he/she considers unfair.
2. If the matter is unresolved, it may be brought to the attention of the school principal within five school days from the date of the initial complaint with an expected response from the principal within two days.

## **Fundraising & Clubs**

Students are permitted to engage in the sale of approved items as a means of financially supporting the programs and activities of clubs and school organizations. The principal, the superintendent, and the Board of Education must approve all fundraising activities before solicitation begins. The sale of raffle tickets by students as a school-sponsored activity is illegal, against State Board of Education standards, and will not be permitted. This policy does not prohibit parent support organizations from conducting raffle ticket sales.

## **Candy Sales**

The sale of candy or other food items by individuals on campus is prohibited unless approved by the principal.

## **Hall Passes**

Students are not to be in the halls during instructional time without an official hall pass. School officials or teachers will provide a pass with a signature, date and time.

## **Smoking Prohibited**

Students may not smoke or use tobacco at school, on school buses, or on any school property. This includes all use of tobacco in any form. Tobacco products will be confiscated and not returned. Students in violation of this policy will be subject to further disciplinary action according to the *Tift County Schools Code of Student Conduct*.

## **Items of Personal Value**

Students are encouraged not to bring valuable items on campus. This includes jewelry, electronic devices or large amounts of money not needed for school. It is difficult to insure the safety of these items. Large amounts of money are strictly prohibited and will be confiscated. Any item of value that is confiscated will be returned to a parent upon request.

## **Textbooks**

The care of textbooks is the responsibility of the student to whom they are issued. The condition and number of the textbook are recorded when it is issued by the teacher. The student must pay for any unnecessary abuse or loss of the textbook. All lost books are paid for at the state textbook list prices. No student will be allowed to enroll the following year until all fees and fines have been paid.

## **Visitors**

Any visitor, including former students, having valid business at the school must report to the front office and request a visitor's permit from the receptionist.

## **Guidance Department**

The goal of the counselor is to help students succeed in their academic and personal lives. This help may take many forms and offers a confidential environment where students can explore solutions to their problems. A counselor is available to provide personal support and academic guidance not only to achieve success in school, but to help them be prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society.

Middle school is an exciting, yet challenging time for students, their parents and teachers. During this passage from childhood to adolescence, middle school students are characterized by a need to explore a variety of interests, connecting their learning in the classroom to its practical application in life and work. Common characteristics of the middle school child include, but are not limited to, high levels of activity coupled with frequent fatigue due to rapid growth; a search for their own unique identity as they begin turning more frequently to peers rather than parents for ideas and affirmation; extreme sensitivity to the comments from others; and heavy reliance on friends to provide comfort, understanding and approval (ASCA).

School counselors assist students with a multitude of issues accompanying adolescence, including:

- classroom concerns & academic motivation
- personal decision making

- self-concept issues
- peer and friendship concerns
- dealing with conflict & crisis
- external issues which affect school performance

Counselor's may offer one-on-one support and group counseling to students and their families. All students are encouraged to seek out their school counselor to discuss any personal matters of importance. Staff members or parents may also refer students. Confidentiality is maintained with the exception of information that suggests danger to the student's well-being or the well-being of another. Parents are not automatically notified when students meet with a school counselor, but are welcome to make appointments to discuss concerns.

Counselors also work with many community programs and services to support our students' achievement and personal growth. When students have significant needs requiring more ongoing or involved support, school counselors may refer them to professionals outside the school. In these instances, the school counselor stays involved in the student's progress.

## **Health Clinic**

The School Nurse will:

- Assess student illnesses and notify the parent/guardian if any illness appears to require home care or a physician's evaluation. If medication related to the complaint has been provided, the clinic will administer the medication in a responsible manner.
- Assess student injuries that occur during school hours on school property and administer appropriate First Aid. The clinic will notify the parent/guardian if any injury appears to require a physician's evaluation.
- Assist in the administration of medications necessary for school attendance provided that all clinic requirements have been met.
- Notify parent/guardian when daily prescription medication needs to be refilled. A note will be sent home with the student.
- Maintain immunization records as required by Georgia law and enforce penalties for non-compliance as allowed by Georgia law.
- Conduct head checks for lice and/or nits as deemed necessary by school administration or upon student's request and notify parent/guardian if student pick-up and home treatment is required; and determine upon follow-up evaluation if student may return to school.

Please do not ask the clinic aide or other school personnel to diagnose any illness or injury or to recommend any treatment for your child. Only a licensed physician is qualified to offer medical counsel.

**The parent/guardian will:**

- Complete Student Health Record form given at the beginning of each school year.
- Inform the clinic of any changes in the student's health or medication in writing.
- Provide the clinic with current contact names and phone numbers and notify the clinic of any changes.
- Provide the clinic with all medication that is to be taken during school hours; including specific instructions and related equipment. Prescription medication must be in the original bottle.

Over-the-counter medication must be in the sealed original bottle. All medication will be kept in a locked cabinet in the clinic.

- Be aware of the quantity available in his/her child's prescription medication; and have the medication refilled in a timely manner.
- Comply with immunization requirements and provide proper documentation as required.

**The student will:**

- Be respectful while in the clinic.
- Report to the clinic on time every day to take his/her medication.
- Give all notifications regarding medications, immunizations, or other information to his/her parent/guardian on the day received.
- Not abuse his/her medication in any way.
- Understand that the school will administer medicine in the safest manner possible.

**Clinic Hours:** 7:45-3:45 p.m. and closed from 1:00-1:30 p.m. for lunch.

**Clinic Location:**The clinic is located in the main office.

**Over the Counter Medication**

Schools no longer provide over-the-counter medication for the students. If your child requires medicine (prescription and/or over-the-counter), you must provide it. Please refer to the [Medication Information](#) link on the system site.

**Health Records & Admission Procedures**

Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school have a Certificate of Immunization on file. Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school.

Transfer students have 30 days to furnish the school with the appropriate Certificate of Immunization. Vaccinations and vaccination records may be obtained from the Tift County Health Department or from a private physician. Please note that the vaccination record must be on an official form provided by the Georgia Department of Human Resources. In addition, those students entering this Georgia public school for the first time must provide an eye, ear, and dental certificate.

ESMS reserves the right to deny admission to any student that does not provide the above information. Students may also be denied admission until a certified discipline record is received from the school that a student last attended. Parents may also be asked to provide proof of residency in Tift County.

**Insurance**

The Board of Education sponsors an optional accident insurance program for students at a nominal cost. Two plans are available: one provides coverage during the school year, while at school, and going to and from school. The other provides protection 24 hours a day. Students will be given insurance forms the first week of school. A commercial company writes the policies. Accidents that occur on the school grounds or at a school sponsored activity should be reported to the office. Insurance is provided for all students participating in

athletics or cheerleading. This is a supplemental policy that will pay after filing an individual primary family insurance.

## **Hospital/Homebound Instruction**

Hospital/homebound instructions are provided to students who meet certain state eligibility requirements including a completed medical referral form signed by a certified physician. A student, who has a non-communicable, chronic health condition and requires an absence of a minimum of 10 consecutive school days, may qualify for hospital/homebound instruction provided there is proper verification. This service may be requested by contacting the student's guidance counselor. Certain regulations govern the program, and these will be reviewed by the attendance administrator when a request for services is made. Dates approved for hospital homebound instruction are not absences.

## **Media Regulations**

The media center offers the following services to students at Eighth Street Middle School:

- Assistance in the search for materials and in locating information.
- Online resources, automated catalog.
- Guide in the acquisition of library media skills.
- Obtaining backdated periodicals for research purposes and pleasure reading.
- Assist in production skills.
- Guiding in effective problem solving and thinking skills.

## **Basic Rules**

- Students must have a media center pass stating the date, time, and purpose of the visit.
- Print only school-related information; utilize print preview to reduce unwanted pages or information.
- Be considerate of others by remaining quiet.
- Please! No eating, drinking or chewing gum.

## **Hours of Service**

The media center will be open for service from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

## **Check Out Period**

Students may check out regular materials for two weeks; reference materials are circulated overnight. Students are limited to two items checked out at one time. Limited renewals are allowed. Students are not charged overdue fines, but books must be returned in a timely manner. Media center privileges may be held for students with overdue book(s) or owing for lost book(s).

## **Audio-Visual Materials and Equipment**

Audio-visual materials are checked out to teachers; students may use the materials under teacher supervision.

## **Copyright**

*Adherence to the copyright law of the United States is practiced in the media center. Duplications of copyrighted materials are done within the "fair use" guidelines. The media center reserves the right to refuse a request for copy if it involves a violation of the copyright law. This applies to both print and non-print material.*

## **Student Passes**

A pass is required for each student or small group that enters the media center. Students must have a pass during instructional time, lunch and after school. Passes during instructional time and afternoon passes must be obtained from classroom teachers. Priority computer use is given to the large groups with teacher sign-up.

## **Lost Library Books**

The current replacement cost will be charged for lost/damaged library books. Refunds will be made for books returned during the current school year.

## **Computer Use**

Several computers are available in the media center for student use. Computers are for educational purposes only. Computer games and recreational usage are prohibited.

## **Interscholastic Activities**

Athletics is a very important part of any school program. Students who participate increase their leadership and social skills and learn to work in harmony with others. They help create greater school spirit among the faculty and student body. Students are encouraged to participate. The Eighth Street Middle School athletic program includes: baseball, basketball, cross country, soccer, football, golf, softball, tennis, track, wrestling and cheerleading. Any Eighth Street Middle School student who wishes to try out for one of these has the right to do so. **This does not guarantee the ability to make the team.**

Students must be present for one-half of the school day in order to participate in any extracurricular activities that day. A student who is assigned to ISS or home suspension will not be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored activity during the period of his/her suspension.

In addition, students participating in interscholastic activities must meet the requirements of the Georgia High School Association (see No Pass/No Play Policy).

## **No Pass No Play Policy**

In order to participate in extracurricular activities, students must pass at least three out of five classes each semester. Eighth Street Middle School will check eligibility on a case by case basis for 6<sup>th</sup> graders who participate. This list will show the grade, student's name, and period of ineligibility. The list shall be given to

each coach and/or sponsor of any extracurricular activity prior to the initial meeting to ensure that ineligible students do not participate.

A student on the ineligibility list may remain in a class (example, band), but is ineligible to participate in any before or after school activities. The list must be retained in the school's file for five years.

A student is ineligible on the first day of the next semester if he/she has not passed three out of five subjects the preceding semester. The student is eligible on the first day if he/she passed five subjects the preceding semester. A student may have the first 14 calendar days after the close of each semester to complete work and change an incomplete grade. A student is ineligible during these 14 days and cannot practice or play until he or she passes five subjects.

***INELIGIBLE STUDENTS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PRACTICING, TRAVELING OR TRYING OUT FOR TEAM PROGRAMS.***

**Clubs & Organizations**

The following is a list of clubs and organizations that are offered at Eighth Street Middle School:

**4-H**

Administered through the Tift County Extension Service, 4-H is a nationally affiliated club which provides opportunities for students to explore their interests in numerous areas including livestock, clothing, public speaking, forestry, auto mechanics, horticulture, and much more. Club members attend training seminars and participate in competitions on the local, district, state and national levels.

**Student Council**

Student Council members are elected by the students to represent the student body. The council seeks to maintain a healthy rapport between the students and the administration by providing an avenue for students to be directly involved in many administrative decisions. Council members meet frequently with members of the administration to discuss issues that concern the student body. Council members sponsor various activities and other enhancement projects for the school.

**Yearbook**

The Yearbook Staff is responsible for compiling the annual yearbook. Throughout the year students attend various functions and festivities capturing candid shots to be placed in the yearbook. These students are given the task of making sure every student and faculty member's photo is in the yearbook, creating layouts for athletic teams and clubs, and documenting special moments throughout the year. Students use technology to learn elements of design and advanced publishing techniques. Students are responsible for editing, photography, and design as they produce a creative and professional yearbook full of middle school memories and events.

**Other Clubs and Organizations:**

Drama, See you at the Pole, FBLA, FCA, First Priority, TSA, Y-Club and possibly more.

## **Honor Roll & Academic Incentives**

### **Honor Roll**

Each nine weeks ESMS will publish a list of students who have academic averages high enough to be placed on honor roll or merit roll.

Honor Roll - A student earns an A (90 or above) in all classes. *This includes Connection Classes*

Merit Roll - A student earns a B (80 or above) in all classes. *This includes Connection Classes.*

### **Honors Day Recognition**

Each student with a cumulative grade point average between 90.0 and 94.9 at the end of the third nine weeks will be recognized as an honor student at the annual Honors Program. Those with academic averages of 95.0 and above will be recognized as superior honor students. All class grades will be used until the end of the 3rd nine weeks. Departmental awards are given to those students who have excelled in a particular subject area based on academic and overall participation.

### **Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS)**

The ESMS PBIS Program rewards academic excellence, progress, and school appropriate behavior. Incentives such as reward days and points for purchasing from the PBIS store encourage academic achievement and rewards students for following established school rules and policies.

### **About our Academic Recognition Programs**

To obtain more information on any of the Academic Recognition Programs, contact the Guidance Department.

### **English Language Learners**

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a state funded instructional program for eligible English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-12 (Georgia School Law Section 20-2-156 Code 1981, Sec. 20-2-156, enacted in 1985).

Title III is a federally funded program. It provides eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) sub grants to provide supplemental services for ELLs. Both ESOL and Title III hold students accountable for progress in English language proficiency and evidence of attainment to the exit level.

The ESOL Program is a standards-based curriculum emphasizing language proficiency. The program's overarching standard is that students will use English to communicate and demonstrate academic, social, and cultural understanding. To reach this standard, it is critical that instructional approaches, both in ESOL and general education classes accommodate the needs of Georgia's linguistically and culturally diverse student and parent populations.

To the extent practicable, it is appropriate to use the home language as a means of facilitating instruction for English language learners and communication with their parents.

### **Tift County ESOL Mission Statement**

Tift County strives to meet the needs of ELL students by providing:

- Support to students most in need of assistance, with the youngest students as the lowest priority with the understanding that they are placed in language/literature rich environments



- Professional Learning for classroom teachers
- ESOL programs in schools where the greatest needs are identified
- Resources and materials to support students in various subject areas
- Life skills and survival skills
- Instruction that meets the individual needs of the ELL (English Language Learner) student

## **Tift County Goal for ELL students**

*To give students the skills they need to function and reach their own potential as members of an English speaking society. Parent involvement and opportunities for parents to learn are encouraged. Whenever possible, notes and messages are sent home in the parent's' native language.*

## **English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program Plan/Policy Rationale**

An ESOL program plan/policy is designed to provide consistent and non-discriminatory procedures throughout each local school district as recommended by the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights. Districts are mandated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide an alternative program of service when there are students who are limited English proficient (LEP) and are unable to participate effectively in the district's regular instructional program.

## **ESOL Program Description**

The English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is offered to all (ELL) English Language Learners who meet the testing eligibility criteria. This program aids in the success of a limited English proficient student in an English-speaking classroom. Our goal is to have students succeed in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) both socially and academically. We also want them to understand and function successfully in our American culture. Immersion in an English-speaking environment with guidance from the ESOL teacher and accommodations provided by all other school personnel will produce the results necessary. The ESOL teacher shall have the ESOL endorsement issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GAPSC), and the ESOL class is limited to the maximum size specified in State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-08 Class Size.

## **Local School Governance Team**

Tift County Schools begins implementation of a charter system during the 2016-2017 academic year. The goal of becoming a charter system is to increase academic achievement through flexibility and innovation while improving the school's overall organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Included in the charter system is the establishment of a *Local School Governance Team* at each individual school. **The responsibility of the School Governance Team is to provide school-level governance by setting the long-term direction of the school, as well as design and implement school-level innovations that are responsive to local school needs.**

**More information coming during the 2016-2017 school year.**

## **Parent Support Group**

The Parent Support Group is made up of any parent that wishes to join from Eighth Street Middle School and J. T. Reddick. This group provides food and feeds teachers frequently throughout the year. They also volunteer at the school for various events during the year.

## Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Dr. Gina Cox  
207 North ridge Ave  
Tifton, GA 31794  
229-387-2400  
[gcox@tiftschools.com](mailto:gcox@tiftschools.com)

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.

13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

## **Section 504 Procedural Safeguards**

**1. Overview:** Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.

**2. Hearing Request:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

- a. The name of the student.
- b. The address of the residence of the student.
- c. The name of the school the student is attending.
- d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
- e. The requested reasons for review.
- f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
- g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the grievant of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

**3. Mediation:** The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an

agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

#### **4. Hearing Procedures:**

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
- a. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
- b. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- c. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- d. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
- e. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
- f. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
- g. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- h. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
- k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
- l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
- m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a

personal appearance before the impartial review official.

**5. Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

**6. Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulation.