

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Spotsylvania Middle School! As a middle school student you will face many new and exciting challenges both academically and socially. To help you begin the year in a positive direction, we have prepared this handbook, which includes the policies, and regulations that are necessary for the effective operation of the school. Please read this information carefully so that you will be familiar with the school rules and share them with your parents.

Throughout the year, should you ever have a problem and are in need of assistance or advice, our teachers and staff will always be available and eager to help you. Their concern for you is part of our school pride, which you will always experience by having belief in yourself, concern for others, respect for property, and loyalty to your school. We're proud that you're a BULLDOG, and we wish you a successful and enjoyable school year!

Sincerely,

M. Lane Byrd, Principal

## SCHOOL HOURS

School begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 2:45 PM. Students may not arrive prior to 7:30 AM.



## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are issued to all students free of charge. However, students will be charged for lost or damaged textbooks. If a book is lost, it must be paid for before another book is issued. When books are returned, if the books have suffered more than normal wear and tear, fees will be collected. We recommend placing book covers on all of your books.

## INSURANCE

Student insurance will be offered. Any student involved in the student athletic program must have school insurance or other insurance. Any injury must be reported as soon as the injury occurs. The policy is a contract between the parent and the insurance company.

## VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers at Spotsylvania Middle School to serve on committees, as guest speakers, assist in classrooms or to help with clerical chores and PTO functions.



## SCHOOL STORE

For your convenience, most items required by teachers are available in the school store. The school store is located just outside the band room. The store is open during morning homeroom. Items for sale include paper, pencils, theme tablets, composition books, erasers, ink pens, and other miscellaneous supplies.

## VISITORS

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the school to observe the instructional programs and other related activities. All visitors are to register in the office and obtain a visitor's pass before entering any other area of the building. All visits to observe classrooms must be approved by the principal a minimum of one day in advance of the request.

## LOCKERS

All students are provided with hall lockers. No fee will be charged for the use of these lockers. These lockers have built-in locks, and combinations are changed in the summer. It is the student's responsibility to keep the lockers neat and clean. Any abuse, failure to keep the locker clean, or storage of contraband may cause loss of locker privileges. Lockers, desks, and coat closets are the property of Spotsylvania County Public Schools and are subject to search and inspection by school officials and law enforcement agents anytime.

## GYM LOCKERS

Students may choose to provide their own lock or rent one from school. Students who bring their own lock must provide the combination to the school. Students who rent locks will be charged a \$3.00 fee. To protect their property, students must take responsibility for keeping locks on their lockers.

## LOST AND FOUND

All found articles should be turned in to the office. You are expected to turn in any articles that are found in the building or on school grounds. This includes money, textbooks, clothing, etc.

### TIPS IN SAFEGUARDING YOUR PROPERTY

The school has done everything possible to provide students with facilities to safeguard their property. However, students must take precautions in order to protect their property. We recommend the following:

1. Do not give out the combination to your locker.
2. Do not leave any articles in a classroom or hallway, even for a minute.
3. Rent a gym lock and use it.
4. Do not bring valuables to school.

Report lost or stolen items to your teacher immediately.

## ABSENCES

When you are absent from school, you are expected to bring a written excuse explaining the reason for your absence. This excuse, which must be signed by your parent, is due your first day back to school. The excuse is to be given to your homeroom teacher who will turn it in to Guidance, where it will be filed for future reference. Absences due to personal illness, family emergencies, and death in the family will be considered excused.

Parents are asked to notify the school if their child will be absent. Please call the attendance office at 582-6341 Ext. 1, no later than 9:30 AM if possible. In the event that your child will be absent two or more days, requests for assignments may be left on the voicemail. Parents may also call the school to request homework. Assignments will be available for pick up **after 2:30 PM the same day**.

Parents are responsible for promoting positive school attendance by creating a support system that is conducive to learning, making sure that the student is in school on time each day, and being an active participant in the student's school activities.

## ARRIVING LATE OR LEAVING EARLY

Any student who arrives at school after 8:00 AM should report to the front desk to sign-in with a note explaining the reason for their tardiness. If a student is tardy to school more than 4 times he/she will experience the following consequences:

4<sup>th</sup> Tardy: Warning Letter

7<sup>th</sup> Tardy: Administrative detention

10<sup>th</sup> Tardy: Additional detention and/or ISS (In School Suspension)

Students are not charged with tardies if their buses are late. Students leaving during the school day must be checked out through the front desk and have written permission signed by a parent/guardian to leave school grounds with anyone not listed on the student emergency card. Unauthorized leaving of school grounds will result in disciplinary action. This includes walking and leaving in an automobile with person(s) not authorized by parents.

### TARDINESS



Tardiness seriously disrupts class and causes delays that take away from instructional time. The school deems punctuality as a desirable behavior, which is necessary for a successful experience. Classroom teachers will take disciplinary action when tardiness occurs. The only valid excuse for being late for class is a pass signed by a school authority. Tardies to class are tracked per semester with the following consequences:

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Offenses: Warning and other preliminary action by teacher.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Parent contact by teacher.

4<sup>th</sup> Offense: Office referral - Detention

5<sup>th</sup> Offense: Detention or ISS assigned by administrator.

### MAKE-UP WORK

All students are to make up all assignments missed when absent or tardy. It is the student's responsibility to meet with teacher to arrange for make-up work. Make-up work should be completed within a maximum of five days of the absence. If a student was present on the day a test is announced, but is absent on the day of the test, he/she is expected to make up the test on the day he/she returns to school. Students likely to be absent for more than one day may call the school office to have assignments collected.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home with students for each nine-week grading period. Please refer to the school calendar for exact dates. A grade will not be placed on the student's report card at the end of the grading period if make-up work has not been completed. The legend "INC." is placed on the report card in the grade column until make-up work is completed.

### GRADING SCALE:

A Excellent 90 – 100

B Above Average 80 – 89

C Average 70 -79

D Below Average 60 – 69

F Unsatisfactory Below 60

Numerical grades will be used on the report card and in the permanent record folder for all high school credit courses.

## INTERIM/PROGRESS REPORTS

All students are issued progress reports at the mid-point of each nine weeks grading period. Interim progress reports will be issued by each teacher. The interim report will show individual grades per assignment and an average.

## RETENTION LETTERS

Possible grade failure notices are sent out in February and in April to all parents whose children are in danger of failing. Should you receive one of these, you should make an appointment through Guidance with your child's teachers.

## GUIDANCE



The purpose of the guidance program is to help each student achieve his or her highest growth mentally, emotionally, and socially. We try to do this by:

1. Helping the new student feel at home in our school with teachers and friends in a different setting.

2. Holding individual conferences whenever the student, a teacher, administrator, or the counselor deems it necessary.
3. Providing a testing program designed to help the student learn as much as possible about his or her career interests.
4. Welcoming any opportunity to talk things over with any student, teacher, or parent.

## ACADEMIC CLASSES

All students will take math, science, social studies, language arts, and physical education. Foreign languages are available to students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Choices include band, strings, chorus, art, work and family life science, computer concepts, and technology education.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is an important aspect of the educational process and is a natural extension of the school day. Work assigned for home study should supplement and reinforce work done in school. All homework that is assigned is for one or more of the following purposes:

1. To practice and expand skills that have been introduced and developed in class.
2. To prepare for classroom discussion the following day.
3. To complete unfinished classroom assignments.
4. To relate understandings and skills developed at school to everyday life.
5. To provide for independent study and enrichment.

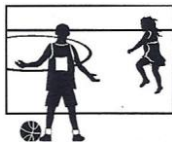
## CONTACTING TEACHERS

Call 582-6341 and then follow directions for leaving voicemail. Teachers can also be e-mailed a message through our school address, <http://www.spotsylvania.k12.va.us/sms/>

## CONFERENCES

Parents who are concerned about their child's school performance should contact their child's teacher(s) or counselor to set up a conference to discuss concerns. Parents, teachers, and students who work together can find solutions to most school problems. Child Study Teams

and Student Assistance Teams are available to help students experiencing significant academic, attendance, or behavioral problems in school. Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled periodically throughout the school year. Please refer to the school calendar for specific dates.



### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students are expected to participate in physical education after having changed into appropriate gym clothing, including tennis shoes. A note from a parent or doctor is required to be excused from participating. Repeatedly not dressing out for gym will result in a lowered grade and/or disciplinary action. Gym suits may be purchased through the school. Showers are not mandatory. Health and Family Life Education are provided through our PE Department.

### TELEPHONE CALLS



School telephones are for business purposes only. In emergency situations, students may be allowed to use the telephones in the office or Guidance Department only. Routine phone calls for forgotten homework and rides after school should be avoided.

### STANDARDS OF LEARNING TESTING

All students will be required to take Standards of Learning Tests during middle school. State testing programs are extremely important. As students progress to high school, passing scores on Standards of Learning Tests will be required for graduation.

### SCHOOL PICTURES

School pictures are taken twice a year. The pictures taken in the fall are used in the yearbook. A make-up day is scheduled for students who are absent on picture day.

### CLINIC

Students must get a pass from the teacher to go to the clinic, and are not to go to the clinic during class changes, unless it is an emergency. Students with vomiting, diarrhea, or fever above 100°F must go home. Those recovering from illness must be fever free for 24 hours, without the use of medications such as Tylenol, before they can return to school.

### MEDICATIONS

Students are prohibited from possessing any prescription or non-prescription drugs (i.e. Tylenol, Midol, etc.) while under the jurisdiction of the school. The exceptions are asthma inhalers & epi-pens, when a medication form is signed by the doctor and on file in the clinic. The school nurse must administer all medications. **Parents are responsible for transporting medications to and from school and filling out a Medication Request Form, which must be signed by the parent and the child's doctor.** Medication Request Forms are available from the nurse and on the County web site under Health Services/Forms. All medications must be in their original container and may not exceed the expiration date. The school is not responsible for lost or spilled medication. Please contact our school nurse at 582-6341 Ext. 2 for further information.

### CAFETERIA

Students may purchase lunch and/or breakfast daily. Lunch costs \$2.65 and breakfast costs \$1.55. Meals may be purchased with cash, check or students may charge to a prepaid account. To apply money to student accounts, please visit [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch. The cost of an adult lunch is \$3.45. Applications for free and reduced lunch are distributed to all students.

Students are expected to sit at assigned tables, stay seated, and clear their areas of trash when dismissed.

In order to keep the lunch lines running smoothly, students are not permitted to enter the lunch line until the teacher on duty releases students by table.

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

We regularly practice various emergency drills such as fire, severe weather, bomb threat, or hostage situation. Evacuation plans are located in each classroom. Students are taught the signals and procedures for each emergency drill.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students may participate in a variety of school activities, such as SCA, Drama, Yearbook, National Junior Honor Society, Dances, James Farmer Scholars, Band, Chorus, Strings, and Athletics. For more information about these activities, contact your guidance counselor, coach, or sponsor.

## BUS PASSES

Students must have written permission from a parent to ride a different bus or to get on or off at a different bus stop. This note must include the bus number, destination and dates. Requests for bus passes need to be turned in at the front desk during homeroom. Passes will be delivered to students by the end of the day.

## HALL PASSES

**All students are expected to have a hall pass signed by a teacher when they are in the halls during class time. Students found in the hall without a pass are subject to disciplinary action.**

## TOBACCO USE

The use of any tobacco product on school premises is prohibited. This applies to all persons, including members of the staff and public. Additionally, use of tobacco products is prohibited during athletic contests, student performances, or other public events, whether or not school-sponsored.

## STUDENTS RIDING IN CARS



Students using private transportation use the front entrance and discharge and load at the front door in the mornings and afternoons. Please observe the entrance and exit signs, and follow the one-way traffic routes. Students are not permitted to leave school in cars unless permission has been granted from the office.

## STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. Parents have the right to inspect and review the scholastic records of their children. Parents may ask Spotsylvania County Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal; clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the request is not satisfactorily resolved within ten working days, the parent has the right to appeal. **For additional information please see your guidance counselor.**



## ATHLETIC REGULATIONS

Fall Sports: Football, Girl's Soccer, and Girl's Basketball.

Winter Sports: Boy's Basketball, Wrestling, and Girl's Volleyball.

Spring Sports: Boy's and Girl's Track, Boy's Soccer, and Girl's Softball.

Age: No member of a team shall reach their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday on or before the first day of school of the school year in which they wish to participate.

Grade: Students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade are eligible to compete. No 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are eligible for any sport, either as player or manager.

Scholastics: In order for a student to participate in any sport during the year, he/she must have been promoted from the preceding year, and must maintain a "C" average in all subjects.

Conduct: Each member of a team must have a good conduct record for each grading period. Poor conduct may result in revocation of athletic eligibility by the principal.

Athletic Fee: Each student that is a confirmed member of a sports team must pay a non-refundable athletic fee of \$100 for each sport in which he or she participates. If a student qualifies for free or reduced lunch then that student will be exempt from this athletic fee.

Physical: Each member of a team must have had a physical examination before the student will be allowed to try-out, practice, or play in a game. A record of this examination must be kept on file at the school. The examination must take place after May 1<sup>st</sup> preceding the school year in which the student wishes to participate.

Insurance: Each member of a team must turn in an insurance form signed by his or her parent stating the type of insurance coverage that is provided.

Parental Consent: Parent's written consent must be on file before a student may practice or play in a game.

Absence from School: Students may not practice or play in a game if they have been absent from school. If a student leaves school early, then he/she must check back into school and complete at least a half day in order to practice or play.

Students subject to in-school or out-of-school suspension shall not participate in any practice or contest during the period of their suspension.

Students will only be eligible to participate on a competitive sports team offered within the grade levels of their assigned school. A student may not participate in two different sports during the same sport season.

There will be no pep rallies, pep clubs, majorettes, or cheerleaders at any of the Spotsylvania County Middle Schools.

Admission will be charged for sporting events.

Students who stay after school to watch a game must furnish their own transportation.

Students are allowed to stay after school for games only with parental permission. No student may stay to watch a team practice.

### **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Students are expected to abide by the Spotsylvania County Schools Code of Conduct. Each student is given a copy of the Code of Conduct and is required to read it, and sign an agreement to abide by the rules and regulations it contains. Parents are also required to read and sign the Code of Conduct.

At Spotsylvania Middle School we strive to teach skills which are necessary for survival of life. There must be rules and regulations if people are to work together harmoniously. We believe that all students must learn self-discipline, and that such things are courtesy, punctuality, accepting responsibility and meeting commitments are essential and important parts of school and life. Every student is expected to:

- Obey requests of all staff members, whether or not they actually teach you.
- Report to class on time.
- Demonstrate acceptable behavior and not disrupt the learning atmosphere of the classroom.
- Be courteous and respectful to all faculty members and school employees.
- Obey all school rules.
- Obey all School Board policies.
- Respect the rights and feelings of others regardless of race, sex, national origin or religion.
- Refrain from using profanity.
- Be honest.

At Spotsylvania Middle School students are not allowed to:

- Eat or drink outside of the cafeteria.
- Deface school property or the property of others (i.e. textbooks, yearbooks, etc.)
- Possess toys or any other items that may be distracting.
- Possess any type of dangerous item, including ammunition, pocketknives, firecrackers, pepper sprays, toy guns, or any type of weapon or look-a-like weapon.
- Horseplay or roughhouse.
- Verbally or physically abuse others.

- Threaten or harass others, verbally, physically, or sexually.
- Bring any type of tobacco, alcohol or drugs to school.
- Display affection in public (i.e. hugging and kissing).

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Students who do not comply with school rules and regulations may be subject to one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- Counseling with an administrator.
- Notification to parents and/or request for parent conference.
- Task assigned by administrator.
- Lunch detention.
- After-school detention on Wednesdays.
- Restitution for damage to school property.
- In-school suspension (ISS).
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS).
- Expulsion or legal action.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES**

Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards as prescribed by Spotsylvania County Schools Code of Conduct. Students who become serious disciplinary problems on the bus may have their riding privileges suspended. In such cases, the parents of the student become responsible for seeing that their children get to and from school safely. Disorderly conduct by students at bus stops shall be reported and acted upon in the same manner as misconduct on buses. To assure the safe and efficient transportation of students the following rules shall apply:

- The bus driver is the only person who is permitted to open and close the entrance door.
- Drivers have the same authority as a teacher in the classroom.
- All students are to get on the bus and take a seat and remain there until they reach their destination.
- Standing while the bus is in motion is not permitted.
- Students are expected to be at the bus stop prior to the appointed time for pickup.
- Students are expected to ride the designated bus that picks up at the stop nearest his or her home.
- Any student found guilty of destroying any part of a school bus will be required to pay for the damage and disciplined by the school.

- Fighting, yelling, profanity, or any conduct that is distracting to the driver will not be tolerated.



### **FIELD TRIPS**

Each grade level may take one field trip per year. All school rules apply on field trips, athletic events, dances and other extracurricular activities. Students who have not demonstrated acceptable conduct may not be allowed to participate in these activities. It is the policy of the Spotsylvania County School Board not to discriminate against any disabled person or any person on the basis of race, national origin, sex, age, ancestry or marital status.



### **DRESS CODE**

Dress guidelines are established to promote a standard of appearance that complements the learning environment. Students are expected to appear at school and school activities clothed and groomed appropriately for the occasion. If school personnel deem an item of clothing inappropriate, the student will not be allowed to attend class/activity until the situation is remedied. The following items are deemed inappropriate for school.

Students who violate the dress code will be referred to the office. If they are unable to find something appropriate to wear, then parents will be called to bring a change of clothes to school.

- Clothing that is excessively revealing, such as short mini skirts, short shorts, tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, tube tops, see-through tops, muscle shirts, bare midriffs. No undergarments may show.
- Clothing that displays profanity, suggestive writing or symbols, language promoting drugs, alcohol, death, sexual relations or violence.
- Clothing that is excessively soiled, torn or ragged.
- Hats, caps, bandannas, and sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building.
- Any article, hairstyle or make-up considered disruptive or distracting to the learning environment.
- Sleepwear/pajamas are not permitted. Students will be asked to change into appropriate school attire.