

Fred Fifer III Middle School

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STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK 2009-2010

This School Agenda Book Belongs to:

Name: _____

Grade: _____

1st period Teacher: _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. WELCOME.....	2	III. STUDENT INFORMATION (cont'd).....	5-10
II. GENERAL INFORMATION.....	3-4	Homework (Homework Hotline).....	8
Terminology.....	3	Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities (Athletic eligibility).....	8
Program of Study.....	3	Library.....	9
Grading Policy.....	3	Lockers (Locker inspection, Locker use, Locker problems).....	9
Honor Roll.....	3	Lost and Found.....	9
National Junior Honor Society.....	3	Meals (breakfast & lunch).....	9
Promotion Policy.....	4	Personal Property (protecting valuables during P.E. and athletics).....	10
Interim Reports and Report Cards.....	4	Telephone Use.....	10
Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).....	4	Textbooks, Library Books, and Instructional Materials.....	10
School Hours.....	4	Transfer or Withdrawal from School.....	10
Emergencies, Late Openings, Closings, and Cancellations.....	4	Visitation Policy.....	10
III. STUDENT INFORMATION.....	5-10	IV. ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL/CLASS.....	10-11
Bus Passes.....	5	V. HEALTH.....	12
Dance Rules.....	5	Illness During School.....	12
Discipline (Detentions, State/district policies, Hall behavior, Book bags / Gym bags, Student behavior/discipline, Teacher classroom rules, Dress code, Dress code violations, Secret societies/gang activity.....)	5-7	Physical Check-Up.....	12
Emergency Building Evacuations.....	7	Being Excused From Gym Class.....	12
First Period Procedures.....	7	Medication Policy.....	12
Guidance Services.....	7	Guidelines for Admin. of Non-Prescription Drugs..	12
		Student Accident Insurance.....	12

WELCOME to FIFER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Since we first opened in the fall of 1999 we have been working hard to prepare our students for success both in high school and on the State-Wide Assessment. Our creed of “Every Student Up One Level” has carried over into our instructional staff, as we believe that in order for each student to improve academically from the 6th to the 8th grade, we need to strive for constant improvement in our instructional practices. The middle school years are always a time of excitement, challenge, reward and success, and it is our hope that all students and parents will participate in the total school experience, including activities for both students and parents, both inside and outside of the classroom.

This Student Handbook outlines the rules and procedures for which you are responsible – please familiarize yourself with them thoroughly. These rules and procedures exemplify the values expressed in Fifer Middle School’s Mission Statement:

Fifer Middle School’s mission is to nurture a learning community in which all stakeholders – students and staff, parents and citizens – work together to enable all students:

- to meet or exceed state standards at the 6th, 7th and 8th grade levels,
- to acquire the tools they need to become successful life-long learners,
- to recognize and respect the rights of all members of our diverse community,
- to pursue personal interests and activities to promote physical and emotional well being, and
- to become active, participating citizens.

Parents and students should refer to the Student/Parent Handbook section of the school district calendar for additional information on district-level policies and procedures related to student discipline and to other important aspects of student life.

The staff at Fifer Middle School is dedicated to providing all students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need to succeed in high school. To that end, we will push you to read and write, to think and solve, and to be creative and to apply

what you know more than ever. On this journey we hope that you take time to socialize and have fun, but above all we hope that you learn, grow and develop both as students and as young adults.

Dr. Josette L. McCullough, Principal

Dr. Jessilene E. Corbett, Assistant Principal

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

TERMINOLOGY: Throughout this handbook, the word “parent” is used to refer to guardians, relative caregivers, foster parents and any other legal custodial adult as well as to biological parents.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

A. Basic Academic Instruction

English Social Studies Mathematics Science

B. Related Arts Program

All 8th graders will take: Physical Education (1 semester) and Keyboarding (1 semester).

All 7th graders will take a full year of Physical Education / Health

All 6th graders will take a full year of Physical Education / Life Skills

Any 7th or 8th grader with an interest in music may elect to take Band or Chorus. All 7th or 8th graders who do not sign up for Band or Chorus will automatically be scheduled to take one marking period each of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Technology Education and Family Living & Consumer Science.

6th grade chorus is handled in the same way as chorus for 7th & 8th grades.

6th grade band is a pull-out program. Students will rehearse once a week on average. The 6th grade band teacher will rotate the class periods from which students are pulled out so as to minimize time missed in any given class.

***Any schedule change requests must occur within the first five days of classes and a parent/guardian note must accompany the request.

GRADING POLICY

Grading criteria include oral and written assessments (including but not limited to tests, projects, reports, presentations and portfolios), homework and participation. **Questions concerning students' grades should be directed to the teacher.**

A = 92 - 100 B = 85 - 91 C = 75 - 84 D = 70 - 74

HONOR ROLL

Students who earn grades of “A” or “B” in all courses will be placed on the Honor Roll.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The chapter is governed in all matters by the rules, regulations, and Constitution of the National Junior Honor Society. "Membership in the National Junior Honor Society is both an honor and a responsibility. No student has a right to belong to the National Junior Honor Society – it is an honor bestowed by the faculty. Students selected for membership are expected to continue to demonstrate the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship" (NJHS Handbook, 1992 edition, p.13).

To meet the **SERVICE** requirement a student must have been active in three or more community or school activities.

LEADERSHIP is based on the student's level of participation in two or more school activities and/or on qualities of leadership which may have been observed in the student's interaction with others. **CHARACTER** is based on documentation of the student's integrity, behavior, ethics and cooperation with students, faculty and the community.

CITIZENSHIP is based on documentation of the student's participation in civic-related organizations and/or activities.

The following procedure is used to select students for membership in the Fifer Middle School chapter of the NJHS.

- A student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale in the first 3 marking periods of 7th grade (for students to be inducted as 7th graders, beginning this school year), or all marking periods of the 7th grade AND the first 3 marking periods of the 8th grade (for students to be inducted in the 8th grade).
- Students who qualify based on GPA will be asked to complete a Student Information and Activity Form for membership and to supply letters of recommendation.
- The Faculty Council will consider and may request additional information on all eligible candidates in the areas of service, leadership, character and citizenship.
- **Selection for membership will be by majority vote of the Faculty Council** (made up of representative members of the Fifer faculty). Selected students will receive a letter from the school notifying them of their selection.
- **Decisions of the Faculty Council are final with no right to appeal.** If the principal finds reason to believe that there may have been errors in the selection process, the principal will review the process for compliance with the guidelines published by the Junior National Honor Society. If significant process errors are found (i.e., errors which

could have affected the final decision on a student's selection), the principal may direct the Faculty Council to conduct the screening again using proper procedures.

- **Only the selection process is subject to review by the principal.** At no time will the principal review or alter the properly made decisions of the Faculty Council.
- **The deliberations of the Faculty Council are confidential – students and parents WILL NOT be given reasons why a particular student was or was not selected.** Students or parents who have concerns about non-selection should contact the principal.

PROMOTION POLICY

Students must receive a passing final grade in all core academic subjects (English, mathematics, science, and social studies to be eligible for promotion to the next grade. Students who do not pass all core academic subjects will be retained in their present grade.

In any grade, students who meet eligibility requirements may work to achieve promotion standards by attending a Board approved summer school. Students and/or parents should see a guidance counselor for more information.

INTERIM REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Interim reports and report cards are each sent home with the students four times throughout the year, on the dates listed on the Caesar Rodney School District calendar that is sent home with each student on the first day of school. If a student is absent on the day of distribution, the interim report or report card may be obtained from the guidance office when the student returns. Student copies of interim reports and report cards should be kept by parents for their records.

If a grade of D or F is received in a subject, parents are strongly encouraged to **phone the teacher to schedule a conference.** Early communication and cooperation between the home and school may prevent failure. To schedule a conference, please contact the team leader of your student's team by calling the main office.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) focuses on the promotion and development of a better understanding of educational awareness and communication between the parents, teachers, and student body. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the school library (except for the September meeting, which will be held in the cafeteria).

SCHOOL HOURS

- 7:30 a.m. Students may enter the *cafeteria only* to eat breakfast. Students who are not eating breakfast should stay outside.
- 7:50 a.m. Doors open to students — students are not permitted to enter prior to 7:50 a.m. **Students are to go directly to lockers, to the cafeteria (for breakfast only) and to first period —loitering in the halls is not permitted.**
- 8:00 a.m. First period begins
- 2:45 p.m. Dismissal

EMERGENCIES • LATE OPENINGS • CLOSINGS • CANCELLATIONS

**PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OR THE CAESAR RODNEY DISTRICT OFFICE FOR INFORMATION.
All announcements will be made on the radio and TV stations listed below and on the state web site.**

WDOV – 1410AM WQVL – 1600AM

WSCL – 89.5FM WDSB – 92.9FMWDNO – 95.3FM WAFL – 97.7FM WXPZ – 101.3FM

WBOC-TV (16) WMDT-TV (47) <http://phoenix.state.de.us/schoolclosing/school.nsf/info>

www.cr.k12.de.us

If school is closed due to a weather emergency or other such reason, all school-related events and events scheduled for the school building are canceled. Any school days which must be made up because of school closings will be added to the end of the regularly scheduled school year.

II. STUDENT INFORMATION

BUS PASSES

Students who need to ride buses other than their normal bus must bring a parent note requesting the change to the main office at the beginning of the school day. All notes should explain the request, provide a daytime phone number for the parent or guardian, and be signed by the parent. If a student wants to ride a bus to visit another student, notes must be submitted from both sets of parents. The school secretary will submit the request to the principal for approval. Approved notes may be picked up in the main office before boarding the bus in the afternoon.

BUS BEHAVIOR

School bus transportation is a privilege that may be withdrawn for inappropriate behavior. The normal rules of conduct are applicable to our students while riding a bus. All students must abide by the following rules:

1. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before approaching it.
2. Students must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
3. Refrain from tampering with the bus or its equipment. Charges for damages will be submitted to parents.
4. Do not extend hands, arms, legs, or any body part out of the bus window.
5. Refrain from using profane language or obscene gestures. In the event this occurs, charges may be filed for disorderly conduct.
6. Refrain from throwing items inside or outside of the bus.
7. Refrain from distracting the driver with loud talking, disorderly behavior, or any other inappropriate behavior that prevents the bus driver from normal operation of the bus.
8. Possession of any tobacco products, weapons, or drugs of any kind is strictly prohibited.
9. Obey the bus driver at all times.

DANCE RULES

1. **No guests are permitted.** Fifer Middle School dances are for the enjoyment of Fifer Middle School students only.
2. Beginning in October, **students may be required to show their FMS Student ID cards to be admitted to dances.**
3. Students who receive an **In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, or who have an outstanding debt notice may not attend the dance** following the detention or suspension.
4. **Students who are absent on the day of the dance may not attend.**
5. **Students are not permitted to leave the dance until the posted ending time** unless accompanied by a parent. The parent must come inside the building to pick the student up prior to 8:30 p.m. unless the parent is a chaperone. Students must be picked up by 8:45 p.m. or they will not be permitted to come to the next dance unless the parent agrees to be a chaperone at the next dance.
6. **Once a student leaves a dance, the student may not return.**
7. **All school rules and regulations are in force** during school dances (see DISCIPLINE, below).
8. Exceptions to these rules must be approved by the school principal or assistant principal.

DISCIPLINE

The District Code of Conduct is in force any time a student is on school grounds, on the bus, attending any school or district activity, going to or from school, or waiting at a bus stop. Students need to exhibit good manners and demonstrate appropriate behavior not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit and safety of others. To that end, the Code of Conduct and other policies in the Student Handbook are strictly enforced. Students and parents should thoroughly familiarize themselves with these policies and discuss them at the beginning of the school year. **Parents and students should read carefully the discipline information provided in the district calendar.**

Detentions: Students may be assigned a detention by the principals or any other member of the faculty. After school detentions may be assigned for tardiness to school or class, not bringing in a legitimate excuse for being absent from school, being unprepared for class, classroom misconduct or other disciplinary problems. Students serving detention should report directly to the room listed on the detention form. Teachers may assign detentions until 4:00pm and keep the students in their classrooms. Teachers must give overnight notice in writing before students are expected to attend so that students can arrange for transportation. If the student is absent on the day of the detention, the student is expected to make up that detention on the day the student returns to school. Students who fail to attend a detention will be referred to the office for additional disciplinary action.

State/district policies: State law dictates that certain discipline incidents, including but not limited to all felonies, sexual offenses, organized gambling, assaults, extortion, weapons, drug and alcohol offenses, incidents of offensive touching, offenses against school personnel and/or property and information about gang activity must be reported to the local police and the Department of Education.

Confiscated hats, walkmans, MP3 players, book bags or other inappropriate items will not be returned until a parent comes in to claim the item or until the last day of school. These items will be held with the staff members that confiscated the item. Please refer to the district calendar or website for the district's cell phone policy.

Hall behavior: Students should keep to the right, walk instead of run, and keep their hands and feet to themselves. They should not litter, yell, loiter or use profane or inappropriate language. Food, beverages and other non-permissible items will be confiscated — abuse of or defiance toward any staff members will result in disciplinary action. Students are expected to keep moving and to follow the directives of ALL staff members.

Book bags / Gym bags: Book bags should be placed in the student's locker when the student arrives in the morning and kept there until the student leaves in the afternoon. Students may use gym bags to carry their gym clothes to and from their physical education classes, but not for any other purpose.

Student behavior / discipline: All teachers are expected to watch for any student behaviors which are in violation of school regulations. Students should behave in a manner that will be a credit to our school.

Teacher classroom rules are made by individual teachers and may not be school-wide; however, individual classroom expectations must be followed.

The following are not permitted:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Loitering before and after school, or between classes | Destruction or defacing of school property |
| Littering | Improper or profane language |
| Unsafe conduct, including running in the building | Refusing to stay for detention |
| Locker misuse | Leaving school property without permission |
| Carrying book bags throughout the building | Dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism |
| Cutting class, being out of class without a pass | Possessing or using laser pens or laser pointers |
| Open food or drink containers outside of the cafeteria | Possessing, using, dispensing or selling alcohol or drugs
(including look-alike substances) |
| Public display of affection, offensive touching, sexual harassment | Possessing or using anything that may be considered a
weapon |
| Having radios, iPods, walkmans, or small electronic games, etc. during school hours | Using electronic communication devices, i.e., beepers,
cellular phones during school hours (including time
spent in detentions or after school academic programs) |
| Stealing, Extortion | Possessing or igniting firecrackers or other explosives |
| Possession of cigarettes/tobacco products, smoking in school or on school grounds | Possessing matches or lighters |
| Starting or encouraging conflict with or among others | Skateboarding, rollerblading, or rollerskating on school
property. |
| Fighting on or near school property or any instigation of such offense. | Any other offenses deemed serious in nature by the
building administration |
| Disrespect or any threatening remarks made to staff members/or students | |

Dress code: All students are expected to dress neatly in clothes which are appropriate for school activities and not distracting to the educational process. Shoes must be worn at all times. **Hats, sweatbands, bandannas and head coverings must be removed** upon entering the building unless the item is being worn for religious or medical reasons. **Coats and outerwear of any type are not permitted** to be worn inside the building.

Students are permitted to wear regular length shorts or long shorts. When a student stands with hands comfortably at the student's sides, shorts or skirts should be **no shorter than the ends of the student's fingertips**. During the middle school years, parents should be particularly careful to take students' growth into consideration. Warm-weather clothes purchased for going back to school in the fall may turn out to be too short or too small to wear to school when the weather turns warm again the following spring.

Dress code violations: Students should dress in a reasonable fashion avoiding articles of clothing (or absence of clothing) which would draw attention to the person or disrupt the educational process. Students who indulge in extremes of dress may expect to be counseled, asked to change or be sent home, and receive disciplinary action. Teachers may direct students to call home to request that a change of clothing be brought to school. Repeat offenders will receive disciplinary action.

Students are **not permitted** to wear, and will be asked to remove or change, the following:

- Extreme dress or appearance which disrupts the school environment (including pajamas and/or bedroom shoes)
- Mini-skirts, mini-dresses, sheer capris or short shorts (See length requirements in the Dress Code section, above. If a skirt or dress has a slit, this requirement will apply to the TOP of the slit.)
- Spaghetti straps, tube tops, tank tops, mesh tops, sleeveless shirts, muscle shirts, half shirts or any tops that allow bare midriffs (Note: All shoulder straps must be a minimum of two inches in width.)
- Any clothing that is see-through, unless worn over an otherwise acceptable garment
- Any article of underwear worn as outerwear (i.e., boxer shorts, undershirts)
- Clothing and/or jewelry which contain or suggest profanity or obscenities or which encourage illegal, lewd, or vulgar actions
- Clothing displaying unacceptable wording, graphics, or advertisements promoting activities which are illegal for minors, such as smoking, gambling, consumption of alcohol or drugs or use of weapons
- Any type of clothing considered gang related (see secret societies/gang activity, later in this section)
- Hats or other head coverings (in the building) unless worn for medical or religious reasons
- Coats, jackets or any outdoor apparel in the building
- ATHLETIC or running shorts, or skin-tight pants
- Jeans or other pants worn too low on the hip, below the buttocks or showing the student's underwear
- Flannel pajama pants
- Pants with words across the buttocks
- Chains attached to belts and/or pants

Finally, students must comply with staff member's direction when any question of dress occurs.

Secret societies / gang activity:

Secret Societies: Secret fraternities, sororities, or other clubs made up of students from public schools are prohibited. Secret fraternities, sororities, or clubs have been adjudged by the courts to include those social clubs operating off campus which, nevertheless, derive their membership wholly or in part from the public schools. These organizations practice a process of selection designed to create an exclusive membership and seek by this process to maintain the club's identity and caste system of self-perpetuation, rushing, pledging and undemocratic selection of new members.

Gang Activity: Student behavior which is gang related is prohibited at school or at school sponsored events. Students who engage in such activities shall be suspended until the matter is resolved. Gang paraphernalia, clothing, grooming, etc. or any activity which indicates or implies membership or affiliation with a gang presents a clear and present danger to the educational environment are prohibited.

Consequences for Membership in Secret Societies or Gangs: Students who violate this policy will immediately forfeit all privileges of participating in extracurricular activities, honors, or offices.

EMERGENCY BUILDING EVACUATIONS

Unfortunately there may be some times when we must evacuate our building quickly and without prior notice. Our first concern in any such situation is for students' safety, and we will always give top priority to evacuating the building in a timely manner. **Anything kept in a book bag, in a locker or in the nurses' office may have to be left in the building overnight. Since students might not be allowed to re-enter the building before dismissal, proper preparation is essential.**

Please take a few minutes to review the items below with your family. If you have not already done so, please do what you can to make the arrangements we suggest. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

- **Students should keep house keys and other such critical items with them at all times.** Keys may be kept in pockets, in purses or worn on lanyards around students' necks.
- **Arrange for an alternate way to get into the house or for an alternate place to go.** Hide a key somewhere on your property or make arrangements with a neighbor or friend for your child to go there in case of an emergency.

- **KEEP A SECOND SUPPLY OF CRITICAL MEDICATIONS AT HOME** in case meds in the nurse's office are not available. If police seal the building we will not be able to get medications out, no matter how critical they may be to your child's health.
- **Have students prepare properly for the weather.** This may include wearing a sweater or sweatshirt at some times, or having sun screen in your pocket at other times. Students might have to wait outside for several hours before being allowed back into the building or being sent home.
- **In any emergency situation, students should stay with their teachers, stay calm, and LISTEN!** In such situations, the principal and assistant principal may be working with the police or other such agency, and we probably will not be able to talk with students directly. We will get information to the teachers as quickly as possible, and teachers will relay that information to students. Even if they are bored and uncomfortable, it is vital that students stay calm and do as they are told. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who do not comply.

FIRST PERIOD PROCEDURES

1. Students may enter the building at 7:50 a.m., and are to go **directly** to their lockers and to 1st period. Students who wish to eat breakfast may enter the *cafeteria only* between 7:30 and 7:50.
2. Students must be in 1st period by 8:00 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:00 should report to the office for a late pass.
3. Attendance is taken by the teacher. All students are to be in **assigned seats** to insure accuracy.
4. Students are to remain **quiet and orderly** during opening exercises.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Counseling services are available to every student in the school to assist students with their personal/social, academic, and career development needs. Services include assistance with educational planning; interpretation of test scores; career information; study help; assistance with home, school and/or social concerns; or any other such issues students may feel they would like to discuss with a counselor.

To come to the Guidance Office, a student must have a valid written pass from a teacher, administrator or counselor.

HOMEWORK

Appropriate homework assignments are an integral part of the educational program. The amount of homework will vary from subject to subject and from teacher to teacher. Students should complete their assignments independently, but parents should monitor their student's progress closely. Homework should be checked by parents as well as by the teacher.

With assistance from parents, students need to budget and organize their time in order to complete school responsibilities and still have time to interact with family and friends in meaningful activities outside of school. Students should set aside a definite time and place for doing homework each night, make sure to have all necessary materials easily accessible, be sure to turn off the radio & television while doing homework, and use this Agenda Book (or a similar system) to record homework assignments while at school so that there will be no confusion over what needs to be done at home.

Homework Hotline: Parents or students will be able to call the school anytime between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. to hear a message related to the student's homework. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will give students instructions on how to reach their particular Homework Hotline numbers.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Interscholastic and intramural sports are recreational in nature and act as outlets for physical development and for social and emotional growth. They serve to enhance the individual's well-being, the overall school tone, and the relationship between the teacher and student. Participation is voluntary and with parental consent.

The following activities may be available to students at Fifer:

Bank at School Program	Junior National Honor Society	Student Council
Basketball (boys & girls)	Intramural Basketball (boys & girls)	Technology Student Assn. (TSA)
Cheerleading	Math League	Track (boys & girls)
Cross Country (boys & girls)	Newspaper	Yearbook
Drama	Softball (girls)	YELL
Field Hockey (girls)	Soccer (boys in Fall, girls in Spring)	Wrestling
Football (7 th & 8 th grade only)		

Athletic eligibility: Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) regulations are the final authority regarding eligibility for any Fifer athletic programs (refer to <http://www.doe.state.de.us/diaasite/>).

- Students who turn 15 years old on or after June 15th in the summer before their 8th grade year shall be eligible for all sports during that year.
- Students in the 6th grade may participate in any interscholastic sport EXCEPT football (as per state regulation).
- A student is not eligible if he/she does not pass 4 classes that meet each day.
- A student is not eligible if he/she fails more than 2 of the 4 major subjects (English, math, science, social studies).
- A student MUST have a completed physical examination form dated on or after May 1st of the current year.

See also: ATTENDANCE FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND DANCES in Section III of this Handbook.

LIBRARY

The library is available for student use during the school day. Procedures are provided by the librarian, who will be available to assist students with their book selections, research and organizational skills.

The library has a storehouse of materials and information to be shared and used by all students. It makes available books and magazines for pleasure reading and is an educational center where the librarian is ready to advise and guide each student. Our online catalog is available on nine student workstations that also provide access to Microsoft Office applications and to the internet. Students are expected to abide by the rules of Caesar Rodney School District's Acceptable Computer Use policy.

1. The library is open from 7:30am to 3:15pm each school day. Students must have a pass from a teacher to come to the library.
2. Orderly, quiet, courteous conduct is expected at all times in the library.
3. Students may have three books signed out at a time. Books go out for three weeks and may be renewed as needed. One of the student's three "books" may be a magazine. When a student desires a book which is signed out, a "hold" can be placed on the book and the student will be notified when the book is returned.
4. A student is responsible for taking care of items signed out in his/her name and for returning them on time. Students must pay for lost or damaged books. Report cards will be held for students who owe debts or have overdue library materials. A student whose report card is held for overdue materials will have a two-book limit for the remainder of the year. Students are not permitted to sign out anything until overdue books are returned and all debts are paid.
5. Nothing is to be taken from the library unless it is properly checked out at the desk.
6. Reference books may circulate overnight ONLY. They are due in the library at 8:00 a.m. so that other students may have them available during the day.
7. Any violation of the above rules may result in the forfeiture of privileges or more severe disciplinary action by the administration.

LOCKERS

At the beginning of the school year, students are assigned lockers which are fitted with a combination lock. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her locker clean at all times. Students are responsible for the security and care of their lockers. Locker sharing or switching is not permitted. Students may use only the lockers to which they are assigned. **Do not give your locker combination to anyone. The school is not responsible for anything missing from lockers.**

Locker inspection: Lockers are NOT the student's private property. Lockers are district property which students are permitted to use for their convenience — **the administration reserves the right to search lockers at any time and for any reason.** Lockers will be checked for neatness on a regular basis. Students who misuse or damage lockers, fail to maintain a clean locker, have in their lockers school property that was not assigned to them (library books, etc.) or use the locker for an excuse to be late to class, will be denied the use of a locker for a period of time determined by the principal or assistant.

Locker use: Each academic team will determine when its students may and may not visit lockers. Students using lockers at unauthorized times will result in disciplinary action.

Locker problems: If your locker fails to operate, write down your name, grade, team, combination and locker number and give a short description of your problem; and turn this information in to the office. If your locker fails to operate repeatedly, report it to an assistant principal as soon as possible.

LOST AND FOUND

The lost and found is located in the cafeteria. Articles found around the school should be taken there. Lost items may be claimed by the owner with identification. Periodically, unclaimed clothing will be turned over to a charitable agency.

MEALS (breakfast & lunch)

Lunch platters, beverages, and snacks may be purchased in the cafeteria, or students may bring lunch from home. Forms for free or reduced lunch are available in the office. Platter prices are 70¢ for breakfast and \$1.10 for lunch.

Our cafeteria operates on a non-profit basis for the benefit of the student body. It participates in the National School Lunch Program / School Breakfast Program, thus providing the students with nutritious meals at a nominal fee. **Students are not permitted to charge lunches** as the cafeteria must operate on a cash basis for its bills.

Parents may put money into a cafeteria account and have students draw against that account to pay for their meals every day. This helps to assure that students are always able to buy their lunch without having to handle cash. **ALL DEPOSITS INTO LUNCH ACCOUNTS SHOULD BE MADE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY** (i.e., while breakfast is being served), not when the student is standing at the cash register with a full lunch tray. Deposits may be made with either cash or a check. **Checks should be made out to FMS CAFETERIA, and the student's name should be written in the memo line** on the check. Please *do not* write the student's account number on the check. You may also register on the web at www.paypams.com. This allows you to pre-pay for meals by using the parent account management system.

The cafeteria staff and your fellow students will appreciate your cooperation in:

- Arriving on time and going directly into the line.
- Taking a seat after getting your lunch and staying there until dismissed by an administrator or staff member.
- Depositing all lunch litter in wastebaskets.
- Returning all trays and utensils to the dishwashing area.
- Leaving the table and floor around your area in a clean condition for others.
- Not carrying/wearing coats, hats, book bags or gym bags in the lunch line.

Failure to follow any cafeteria procedure could result in clean-up duties, lunch detention, regular detention, or suspension.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

LEAVE VALUABLES AT HOME. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Label all personal property and record serial numbers or identifying marks. Bicycles should be locked.

The following are **not permitted in school**: fire works, mace or pepper gas, pagers, candy, gum, dice, water guns and any other items which the administration determines are disruptive to the educational process. **These items will be confiscated** and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Protecting valuables during P.E. and athletics: During Physical Education (PE) class or athletic practice, any money or articles of clothing that are of great value to you should be checked in with your physical education teacher or coach before class or practice starts. Regardless of circumstances, however, the school is not responsible for the security of valuables.

TELEPHONE USE

Office telephones are for school business only. **Students are not permitted to use the telephone except in an emergency.** Two pay phones are available to students just inside and just outside of the south cafeteria doors. Students must ask for permission to use these phones during the school day. Students should have change with them for phone use.

Students may possess cell phones, but only for use before and after school. Cell phones should be kept turned off and out of sight while school is in session, including any time students spend serving detentions or participating in after school activities.

TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY BOOKS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Students are responsible for the security and care of textbooks, library books and other instructional materials assigned to them. Everything we have has been paid for with the money that the district's citizens pay in taxes. It is costly to replace this property; therefore, students will be held accountable for damages or loss. State law requires that lost textbooks be paid for and replaced. **Therefore, no student will receive final grades until his/her obligations to the school are satisfied.**

TRANSFER OR WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

A student who is withdrawing from Fifer Middle School should notify the office at least one week prior to the last day of attendance. On that day, a withdrawal form must be signed by each teacher and all books and materials must be returned. Missing or damaged books and materials must be paid for or student records will not be forwarded to the new school.

VISITATION POLICY

Parents are encouraged to visit the school. According to Delaware State Law, **visitors must report to the main office.** Parents who wish to sit in on a class should contact the main office in advance to make an appointment for their visit.

III. ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL/CLASS

STATE LAW REQUIRES THAT CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 16 ATTEND SCHOOL.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Students returning to school after an absence must submit to the 1st period teacher a **written excuse within one day of the return.** The excuse must include the **date of absence, a telephone number where a parent or guardian can be reached during the day, the reason for the absence, and a proper signature.** If a student fails to bring his or her note from home within 2 days, he or she will be sent to the Attendance Officer for a conference and disciplinary action (detention). All absences are considered to be unexcused until a legal excuse has been received by the Attendance Officer. The school will determine whether the absence is "excused" or "unexcused" as permitted by state law and school regulations.

The following are the only reasons that the state of Delaware accepts for an absence to be excused:

1. Illness of child, attested, if necessary, by physician's note;
2. Contagious disease within the home of the pupil;
3. Death of an immediate family member or of a close friend;
4. Remedial health treatment;
5. Legal business, court summons;
6. Pre-arranged absences or other emergencies, as approved or determined by the administration;
7. Observance of a religious holiday

8. Suspension

A child is considered **truant** if the individual is **absent from school without a valid excuse for more than three (3) days, if the individual is absent intermittently, or if the child is continually late to school without a sound reason.** Parents or guardians who allow their children to be truant will be referred to the visiting teacher for court action.

A student whose absence is unexcused may receive a failing grade for all assignments missed or tests given during the period of the unexcused absence.

ATTENDANCE FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL DANCES

Students must be in school at least 4 full instructional periods to be eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities. Lunch time does not count as an instructional period. Students who are absent on Friday may not participate in weekend activities without permission from the administration.

Students who are suspended either in school (ISS) or out of school (OSS) may not participate in extra-curricular activities on the day of the suspension.

LATE TO SCHOOL

1. **Students who report to school or 1st period after 8:00 a.m. are considered late.**
2. A student who reports to school after 8:00 a.m. must report to the main office. The student **must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or have a note signed by a parent/guardian giving the reason for the lateness.** The office will give the student a pass to class.
3. A student must attend at least 4 full instructional periods (excluding lunch) and meet the requirements for an excused late or dismissal in order to be considered present for the day.
4. After 2 unexcused lates per marking period, any additional unexcused lates will result in detention.
5. Parents/Guardians will receive a letter regarding excessive unexcused absences from the attendance office.
6. Acceptable reasons for excused lates are the same as the reasons for excused absences (see above). Lates due to oversleeping, missing the bus, etc. will not be excused.
7. If a student accumulates 10 or more unexcused lates within a given marking period, an In School Suspension will be assigned and a parent conference will be scheduled by the administration.

LATE TO CLASS

Students are expected to be in class on time. If a student is late, he/she will be **admitted to class** but may be subject to disciplinary action. **(The lateness is considered unexcused unless the student presents a handwritten excuse with a valid reason, time, date, and staff signature.)**

EARLY DISMISSALS

Whenever a child must be dismissed early or in a manner different from the usual, the child must have **prior written parental permission which must include a daytime parental telephone number and the reason for the early dismissal.** The note must be given to the 1st period teacher no later than on the morning of the early dismissal, and it will be sent to the main office to be verified. Permission by telephone is for emergencies only. For safety, we ask parents to come into the office when picking up children and to avoid the bus loading area. All students leaving school early **must sign out** in the main office. Failure to follow the above procedure will result in a class cut and disciplinary action.

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

Family trips and attendance at special activities can also be classified as "excused" absences if the proper procedure is followed. Forms are available in the Attendance Office for a "Family Trip" or "Special Activity." The forms must be signed by all of a student's teachers and a parent and must be submitted for approval by the principal no less than two school days prior to the beginning of the trip or activity. A parent-principal conference may be necessary before approval is granted.

ATTENDANCE ON FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are considered to be an integral part of students' instruction, and all students should make every effort to attend. Teachers will follow official School Board policy in determining student eligibility for attending field trips. Parent questions should be addressed to the team or teacher sponsoring the trip. Attendance at school sponsored activities will not be reflected on the student's absentee record.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students who miss an entire day of school because of any excused absence (including suspension) will be given one day for each day absent to arrange for make-up work. A student is allowed to make up all work missed, including tests, and to submit assignments which were due during the absence. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the teacher. **It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher for all make-up work.**

IV. HEALTH

ILLNESS DURING SCHOOL

Parents should make sure that the school has a current telephone number. Students who become ill during school should obtain a pass and report to the nurse, who will decide what should be done. Students must not leave the building without authorization. If the nurse is not in, students should report to the main office.

PHYSICAL CHECK-UP

Periodically the nurse checks the physical well-being of each child (eyes, ears, skin, scalp, teeth, etc.). Physical problems found during the screening process will be reported to the parents.

BEING EXCUSED FROM GYM CLASS

All children who attend school are expected to participate in all school activities unless there is a medical reason documented by a doctor's note stating otherwise. In order to be excused from physical education classes over an extended period, students must supply a written statement from a doctor indicating the reason for non-participation and the length of time before the student is to resume physical education activity. Students may only be excused from physical education classes for one day with a note from home signed and dated by a parent or guardian.

MEDICATION POLICY

Only employees licensed to practice professional or practical nursing under 24 Delaware Code, Chapter 19 are permitted to administer medication. During school hours prescription and non-prescription medications must be administered by the school nurse utilizing instructions outlined in this policy. **STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TAKE OR POSSESS MEDICATIONS OF ANY KIND IN SCHOOL UNLESS THAT MEDICATION IS GIVEN BY THE NURSE.** Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home rather than in school.

If it is necessary for your child to receive medication during the school day, adhere to the following instructions:

- Parents should bring the medication to and from school whenever possible.
- If it is necessary to send the medication with your child, you must **notify the nurse by telephone or in writing** of the following information:
 1. the name of the medication
 2. the amount of the medication (quantity of pills or liquid)
 3. the dosage of the medication
 4. the time of administration
 5. the reason for the medication
- The medication must be in the **original container, with the prescription label attached.**
- Parents must notify the nurse **each time medication is sent to school.** Forms are available in the nurse's office.
- The nurse will verify the quantity of pills or liquid as soon as the medication arrives. Parents will be notified by the school nurse immediately if a discrepancy is found.
- Students on a continual medication regimen must produce a **current physician's order** at the beginning of each school year or immediately after a physician prescribes the medication.

GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (adopted by the State Board of Education)

- No medication is to be administered without parental permission.
- A careful history of any allergies, especially to medications, must be noted on the student's school health record.
- A record that includes the date, time, dosage, and purpose must be kept.
- Assess the particular complaint and symptoms to determine if other measures can be used before medication is administered.
- Medical attention should be sought if symptoms or conditions persist.
- Medications may be considered for the following: dysmenorrhea, orthodontics discomfort, follow-up of known medically treated injuries, general malaise, severe allergic reactions, skin lesions.
- Proper labeling of containers and proper storage of medication is necessary.
- Nurses must use restraint at all times in the administration of nonprescription medications.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Forms to purchase student accident insurance will be sent home with students in early to mid September.

By signing below, you acknowledge receipt of the Fifer Middle School Student/Parent Handbook. Please read through the entire handbook and sign below. Your student should return this page to his/her teacher as soon as possible. Thank you.

SIGNATURES: Please sign below to indicate that you have read this Handbook and that you understand its contents.

_____ / _____ / _____
Student Parent Date