

Mount Holly Middle School

Student and Parent Handbook

2023-2024



Mrs. Tyler West, Principal
Mr. Michael Dermott, Assistant Principal
Ms. Anna Miller, Assistant Principal



August 2023

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! At Mount Holly Middle School, our vision is to empower students to take charge of their own learning. We know that with the support of staff and parents, our Hawks will be academically and socially prepared to soar into high school.

Middle school is a unique experience that offers challenges and opportunities. At MHMS, we are committed to providing students with a range of academic, social, and athletic experiences that will grow them into well-rounded scholars and prepare them for 21st century citizenship.

Parents are an integral part of our school community. Because support in the home is key to student success at school, we invite and encourage parents to take advantage of the range of opportunities to be involved in your child's school experience. Our parents and staff are partners in ensuring success for students.

At Mount Holly Middle School, we believe that:

- All students benefit from a school culture that sets high standards while recognizing the diversity of learners we serve.
- All students can achieve academic and social growth each year.
- Partnerships and relationships with community, parents, students, and school staff are vital to student success.
- Rigorous and relevant learning will prepare each student for his/her future.

The information in this handbook will prepare your student for a successful school year at Mount Holly Middle School. Please take the time to review this handbook and the Gaston County Schools Code of Conduct.

We look forward to having a great year with the students and parents of Mount Holly Middle School as we work together to help your child succeed.

Sincerely,

Mrs. West
Mr. Dermott
Ms. Miller

ACADEMICS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

MHMS follows the Gaston County Schools' pacing and curriculum guides. Students learn in whole group, small group, and independent settings as they practice their academic skills.

All students take English Language Arts and Math throughout the entire school year. Their Science and Social Studies courses are for one semester each. Electives include Physical Education (required for one semester during 6th, 7th, and 8th grade), Chorus and Band (all-year classes), Spanish, Art, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays an important part in preparing students for their future academic and career success. Students experience the integration of technology into their classroom environment on a regular basis. All students will sign an acceptable use policy the first time they log into the school network. This outlines specific rules for students using the Gaston County Schools' computer network and computer hardware, including care for the equipment and proper use of the Internet.

In an effort to ensure that our students have consistent and equitable access to digital tools and instruction, students will be allowed to bring their device home with them each afternoon. These devices are for academic use only, and parents should closely monitor their use outside of our filtered school network..

Again this year, **Canvas** will be used as our online learning platform. This is not a replacement for in-person teaching, but sometimes serves as a launching pad for classroom assignments that help students learn, practice, or show evidence of their skills. Canvas will be used in class to differentiate activities, and it can also be used at home when students have to miss school. In addition, **iReady** will be used to diagnose learning levels and create unique learning pathways for each student in Reading and Mathematics.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

MHMS uses the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process to provide interventions for students who are below grade level. Progress is documented by classroom teachers and data is discussed with other professionals to find the best support for each student. Part of this process includes vision and hearing screenings and a social/developmental history form filled out by the parents. Your child's teacher will contact you if he/she is going through this intervention process.

Other instructional supports include the Exceptional Children's program, English as a Second Language, and Academically/Intellectually Gifted classes.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The faculty, staff, and administration at MHMS work diligently to promote good character and citizenship. As a result, MHMS takes cheating very seriously. Students are expected to do their own work at all times. Evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero and a parent will be contacted. Additionally, the student will not be permitted to make up the assignment in question. (*GCS Student Code of Conduct Rule 25: Integrity and Civility*)

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are carefully considered and are planned to be part of our instructional program. In order for students to participate in any field trip offered at MHMS, they cannot be suspended on field trip day or have recent behavior that creates concern for taking the student off campus.

GRADING POLICY

Except for classes that are for high school credit, the nine weeks grade shall be determined by the following:

- 40 percent - tests (major projects, papers, and performances)
- 30 percent - independent work (quizzes, classwork, etc.)
- 20 percent - guided work (group activities, teacher led activities, etc.)
- 10 percent - homework

GRADING SCALE

90-100 = **A**
80-89 = **B**
70-79 = **C**
60-69 = **D**
0-59 = **F**

INTERIM REPORTS & REPORT CARDS

Interim reports are sent home approximately halfway through each 9-week grading period to any student who is performing below grade level standards.

Report cards are distributed to all students on the following dates:

- October 19th, 2023
- January 11th, 2024
- March 14th, 2024
- Week of June 3rd, 2024 (via mail)

ATHLETICS

SPORTS TEAMS

Mount Holly Middle School offers the following sports:

*Football	Wrestling	Volleyball
Golf	Softball	Baseball
Cheerleading - year round		
Soccer (boys and girls)		
Track (boys and girls)		
Basketball (boys and girls)		

*7th and 8th grade only

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

We follow all Gaston County policies for student athletic eligibility. These are available on the GCS webpage. In order to be eligible for athletics at MHMS, a student must:

- Live in our attendance zone or have a GCS-approved transfer for MHMS.
- Pass current physical exam (within 12 months).
- Comply with/pass the Gfeller-Waller law.
- Not be 15 years old on or before October 16th of the school year.
- Be in attendance at least 85 percent of the previous semester.
- Pass at least 4 out of 5 courses and meet the Gaston County local promotional policy. (*GCS Local Promotion Policy Code 3420*)

For the fall semester, a student must meet the above criteria for the second semester of the previous school year **and meet local promotion policy for the previous school year. **The spring semester is based on the January report card.

Each coach will set forth team rules in accordance with school and GCS rules. Each athlete is expected to follow these rules. Athletes represent our school and are expected to conduct themselves in a positive manner both within and outside of school.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance directly affects your academic performance. Therefore, we expect all parents, guardians, and students to be concerned with attendance. MHMS will enforce all state and GCS policies on attendance. Please observe the following procedures:

ABSENCES

- Students must be in attendance for more than half of the school day (12:00 PM) to be counted as "present."
- Within 2 days of your return to school from an absence, it is the student's responsibility to bring a written parent note or a doctor's note to their 1st Core teacher giving the following information: name, date, day(s) of absence, reason for absence, and parent/guardian signature.
- Examples of excused absences include: Illness or injury; Death in the immediate family; Medical or Dental appointment; Court or administrative proceedings involving the student

Students who accumulate **10 unexcused absences** will be referred to the School Social Worker and are candidates for truancy. Students who accumulate **13 or more absences (of any type)** may be retained for the following academic year.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Our school day ends at 3:30 PM. If it is necessary to leave prior to 3:30 PM, the student must be signed out in the front office by a parent/guardian or someone from their approved contact list in Power School. Photo identification must be presented.

Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to an early dismissal. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to make arrangements with their teachers prior to their early dismissal.

Leaving campus without permission or without being checked out by a parent/guardian will be considered skipping and may result in disciplinary action.

MAKE UP WORK

Students are responsible for making up all work missed during an absence from school regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Upon the student's return to school, arrangements must be made within THREE (3) school days to make-up all work missed from each class. Students are responsible for asking for this work.

TARDY POLICY

Any student who is not in class and ready to learn at 8:30 AM is considered tardy. Beginning at 8:30 AM, all students are REQUIRED to sign in at the front office. Being tardy detracts from active learning time and can impact student grades.

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Valid reasons to excuse a tardy are limited to:

- Doctor/dentist/orthodontist appointments
- Court appointments
- Late bus

Please note: MHMS requires written verification from medical and courthouse staff regarding the student's appointment.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

CODE OF CONDUCT

All parents are strongly encouraged to review the *GCS Student Code of Conduct* including all of the rules and the consequences for violating each rule. These behavior guidelines are reviewed by teachers, signed off on by students, and are strictly enforced at each Gaston County middle school.

PBIS

(Positive Behavior Intervention and Support)

In addition to the school system's behavior guidelines, MHMS has specific positively-phrased expectations which are outlined on our School Behavior Matrix (below). Students will be rewarded with prizes and privileges throughout the year for following these expectations by being **Honorable, Accountable, Wise, and Kind**.

				
	Honorable	Accountable	Wise	Kind
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your best • Do your own work • Use appropriate and kind language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come to class prepared • Use time wisely and stay on task • Follow class procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow teacher directions • Ask permission to get up or leave • Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be kind to all students and staff • Use appropriate voice level • Clean up after yourself
Hallway Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate and kind language • Transition quietly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the most direct route • Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in assigned location • Listen to adults • Use right side of hallway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain personal space • Respect all staff members
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect others' privacy and personal space • Use facilities as intended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use supplies wisely • Thru students at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report problems immediately to the nearest adult • Wash hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be quick, clean, and quiet • Clean up after yourself
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate and kind language • Use facilities as intended • Wait your turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat your own food • Get all items before sitting down • Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask staff members on duty for help • Stay seated in assigned area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate voice level • Maintain personal space • Respect all staff members and use good manners
Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond appropriately to visitors (sit up, actively listen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask appropriate questions • Exit only when instructed • No food or drink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter quietly and fill every row • Follow adult directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect yourself, others, and property • Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
Technology Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up with your own device 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report issues to the nearest adult • Use equipment appropriately • Keep charged and carry with two hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay on appropriate and approved websites • Use only your own account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow others to learn • Honor the work of others
Buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on and off at your assigned stop • Be on time • Use appropriate and kind language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay seated and keep aisles clear • Keep the bus clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Student Code of Conduct • Listen to the driver and other adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect yourself, others, and property • Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself

CONSEQUENCES

CLASSROOM CONSEQUENCES

Teachers at MHMS have the duty and authority to document and assign disciplinary consequences for incidents. Teacher-assigned consequences include, but are not limited to, silent lunch, time-out in another classroom, and Redirect (a timeout in In-School Suspension). Example behaviors for which teachers have discretion over the consequences include:

- Gum / food / drink
- Lack of materials to class
- Incomplete homework
- Talking
- Being out of assigned area
- Name-calling
- Throwing non-dangerous objects
- Horseplay / childish behavior
- Possession of electronic devices
- Passing notes
- Off-task behavior / sleeping
- Not following directions
- Blurting out / Distracting behaviors
- Inappropriate language
- Defiance/ Noncompliance / Disrespect
- Skipping Class

Students who cause persistent classroom disruptions are impeding their learning and the learning of other students. Teachers will handle minor misconduct; however, if a student's behavior does not improve with the teacher's efforts, the student will be referred to school administration.

OFFICE REFERRALS/CONSEQUENCES

When referred to the office for persistent or severe behavior, administrator-assigned consequences include, but are not limited to silent lunch, Redirect (a timeout in In-School Suspension), restitution, In-School Suspension, and Out of School Suspension.

OTHER GENERAL BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Misbehavior in the gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, school grounds, and/or at athletic events will result in removal from the event, loss of the privilege to attend future events, and/or suspension from school. This includes field trips.

There will be no bodily contact between students on our campus. This includes displays of affection. No hugging, kissing, or groping is allowed. Throwing objects is not permitted. Quite simply, **KEEP YOUR HANDS, FEET, AND OBJECTS TO YOURSELF.**

BULLYING

Peer conflicts are common in middle school. Oftentimes students use the term bullying to describe a negative relationship with another student when in fact, the students just don't get along. Mount Holly Middle School staff, including teachers, counselors, and administrators, are available to assist students with navigating all peer relationships, including those between students who struggle to treat each other with respect. Bullying, however, will not be tolerated. According to the government sponsored website stopbullying.gov:

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Students who feel as though they are being bullied or who have witnessed another student being bullied should report to any teacher or staff member. The administration will investigate the situation using the definition and criteria listed above and provide appropriate consequences based on the *GCS Student Code of Conduct*.

CYBERBULLYING

Instances of cyberbullying will be investigated by our School Resource Officer. Disruptions at school that result from cyberbullying will be investigated and addressed by administration.

BUYING / SELLING

Any sales that are not connected with or approved by the administration at MHMS as part of an authorized school club or athletic project are strictly prohibited. Items illegally placed on sale will be confiscated without consideration of monetary loss.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Students are not permitted to bring the following items on school property, including the school bus.

Aerosol:

Due to allergies, aerosol products including, but not limited to, AXE, hairspray, perfume, etc. are not permitted to be sprayed at school. (After PE students are allowed / encouraged to use deodorant as long as it is not in an aerosol container.)

Laser Lights/ Laser Pointers:

Please know that laser lights are considered a weapon according to *Gaston County School Board Policy 4381*.

Wheels:

Hoverboards, heelies, and other wheeled items are not permitted on campus. Bikes can be ridden to school and locked on the bike rack at the front drive.

Tobacco Products and Drugs/Medicine:

Vapes, tobacco products, drugs of any nature (over the counter, prescription, or illegal) are not allowed to be in the possession of students at any time. State and local consequences related to the possession, use, and/or sale of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products are strictly enforced.

Weapons of Any Kind:

Knives, pocket knives, box cutters, razors, BB guns, airsoft pellet guns, firearms, and/or any weapon (or item that could be used as a weapon) as defined by state law and/or *GCS Student Code of Conduct* are not allowed on campus or on buses. Consequences will include confiscation of the item and appropriate disciplinary measures.

Other:

The following items are not to be brought to school: radios, CD/DVD/MP3 players, gaming electronics, toys, yo-yos, ropes, beepers, lighters, matches, mace, tear gas, pepper spray (or any product designed to stun and/or cause any temporary/permanent damage to a person), toy weapons, starter guns, water guns, laser lights.

CAFETERIA

FOOD GUIDELINES

Students may either bring a lunch from home or purchase one in the cafeteria. **DO NOT bring food from outside vendors to school.** Students will not have access to refrigerators while at school. All food and drinks must be consumed in the cafeteria.

To ensure proper safety and sanitation, all foods served to students in the school must be obtained from a commercial food service entity which is subject to local rules, regulations, and inspections.

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their students. Due to the capacity of our cafeteria and the confidentiality of all students, parents are not permitted to eat with their student in the cafeteria. An alternate location, such as a picnic table/bench in front of the building, may be available.

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to follow all school rules and procedures in the cafeteria. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

Lunch Line

- Skipping in line is prohibited. No student or class can break in front of others.
- Students should get all food items as they go through the line. They cannot return to the line after being seated unless their teacher gives permission.
- Taking food without paying for it is stealing. Students who steal food will face administrative consequences up to and including out-of-school suspension.

Lunch Room

- Once seated, students should remain seated until their teacher directs them to take trays back.
- Exchanging lunches is prohibited. Receiving a free or reduced lunch and trading or giving it away is prohibited.
- Students are expected to leave tables, chairs, and floors clean.

GCS SCHOOL NUTRITION INFORMATION

MHMS is one of 40 campuses in Gaston County Schools that will now participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program. **All students** at schools involved in the CEP program **receive meals free-of-charge**. Our students do not have to pay for breakfast or lunch, and families do not have to fill out an application for free or reduced-price meals.

Staff and Visitor Meal Prices: Breakfast \$2.00 & Lunch \$4.00

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

Students will need money in their lunch accounts if they wish to purchase extra food, snacks, drinks, or a la carte items.

- A. Check, cash, or money order can be accepted in the school cafeteria.
- B. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to utilize Linq Connect (formerly Titan) at <https://linqconnect.com> to pay with their credit or debit card.
- C. Positive balances remaining at the end of the school year will remain on students' accounts for the following school year unless a refund is requested.
- D. NSF checks are referred to Envision Payment Solutions, a check guarantee and collection service.
- E. Parents/Guardians with questions about lunch accounts or who desire to restrict or prohibit the purchase of a la carte items in the cafeteria should contact the school Cafeteria Manager.

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

Students with medical conditions, such as allergies and diabetes, may request modification to school meals by completing a Diet Order form. Diet Order forms may be obtained from the Cafeteria Manager, the School Nurse, the School Nutrition Center in Lowell, or on the School Nutrition page on the Gaston County Schools website. The Diet Order form must be signed by a physician and returned to the Cafeteria Manager or the School Nutrition Center.

All students are encouraged to complete a new Diet Order form for each new school year; however Diet Orders will remain in effect perpetually until School Nutrition receives a signed notification from a physician indicating a change to, or termination of the Diet Order.

COMMUNICATION

SCHOOL TO HOME

ParentLink is an automated telephone system that allows the school to send a recorded message out to families with information regarding current events at the school. We send these out weekly on Sunday nights. It also allows Gaston County Schools to notify the entire school system at one time in the case of severe weather.

Our school website and Facebook page are kept up to date with information, documents, photos, and good news. You are also welcome to call the school office with any questions.

We are committed to maintaining two-way communication with all families. It is vital to have up-to-date contact information for parents/guardians in the case of an emergency. Any time contact information changes, parents are asked to share that information with the front office and teachers. After repeated failed attempts to contact a parent, the school's Social Worker will be contacted so that a home visit may be initiated.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE USAGE

We understand it may become necessary for parents and students to communicate during the school day. Students may come to the front office to use the school phone **ONLY** with permission from their teacher. Examples of valid requests include: illness, medication, dress code, tutoring, and practice or club change/cancellation.

Parents who need to communicate with their child during the instructional day are asked to call the school and speak with one of our secretaries. Channeling all communication through the front office simplifies the process and ensures that instructional time is protected.

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In the event a parent needs to change a student's afternoon transportation:

For safety purposes, we will not allow a student's afternoon transportation to be changed over the telephone without verification that the request is approved by and coming from the parent/guardian. Parents must choose one of the following methods:

- Accompany a phone call with an email from the parent/guardian sent to the school secretary.
- A handwritten note including a parent signature.
- Stop by the front office in person to leave a note.

DRESS CODE

MHMS will enforce the Dress Code put forth in the Gaston County Schools' Student Code of Conduct. It is included below:

The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his/her parents. Each student is expected to maintain an appearance that is neither distracting to other students nor disruptive to the educational environment or the safe and healthy climate of school. Students shall **not** wear:

- Hats, bandannas, hair picks, combs, sunglasses, or other types of headgear in the building.
- Clothing that displays sexually explicit words or drawings, profanity, alcohol, drugs, weapons, or gang symbols.
- Clothing that exposes undergarments.
- Clothing that creates a distraction or disturbance in the educational setting.

Items not specifically mentioned may still be deemed inappropriate in a school setting based on the judgment of the school administration. All MHMS students should follow these additional dress code rules:

- Shirts/tops should cover the stomach and chest completely.
- Shorts/skirts should not be shorter than the tip of a finger with relaxed shoulders.
- For safety: Shoes should be worn at all times and bedroom slippers are not appropriate for school.

CONSEQUENCES

Our goal is to keep students in an instructional setting as much as possible. A range of consequences will be used including, but not limited to, covering up the inappropriate item, turning the clothing inside-out, providing the student with a change of clothing, requesting a parent/guardian bring a change of clothing to the school, etc. Repeated violations may also result in disciplinary action, including suspension from school. (*GCS Student Code of Conduct Rule 16: Dress Code*)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DRESS REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to dress appropriately for PE classes during the semester in which they participate. Students will not use the locker rooms to "dress out," so it is important that they wear clothes to school that they can be physically active in. Students may wish to bring a change of shoes when necessary. PE teachers will review these procedures with their classes.

The same dress code requirements apply for physical education classes. In order to optimize students' ability to participate in this class, these types of clothing are *preferred*:

Footwear - Tennis shoes/sneakers/athletic shoes.

Bottoms -Athletic shorts/pants.

Shirts - T-shirts.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

CELL PHONES

In accordance with *GCS School Board Policy 4318: Students are permitted to possess cell phones on school property so long as the devices are not activated, used, displayed or visible during the instructional day or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel.* Cell phones have the potential to interfere with instruction, as well as the plans we have in place to safeguard the wellbeing of all students in our building.

The vision statement of Mount Holly Middle School is that our school will "empower students to take charge of their own learning." Because we believe that student access to personal electronic devices hinders this goal, the following procedure will be implemented by all 6th - 8th grade teachers:

- Students who choose to bring electronic devices to school are doing so at their own risk. Mount Holly Middle School is not responsible for lost or stolen devices.
- Cell phones and other personal electronic devices will be turned in to the teacher before 8:30 a.m.
- The devices will be filed and stored in a locked area, inaccessible to students during the school day.
- Prior to dismissal, teachers will hand devices back out to students.
- If a student arrives late to school, he or she is responsible for turning their phone in to a core teacher or the front office.

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Should a student be found with a cell phone during the instructional day, staff will confiscate the phone and it will be taken to the front office. Phones that are confiscated will be secured by the front office staff until they are picked up by the appropriate person (detailed below).

Please note: A student's cell phone and its contents, including, but not limited to text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reason to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated a law, board policy, the Code of Student Conduct, or a school rule. (*GCS Student Code of Conduct Rule 18: Use of Wireless Communication Devices*)

CONSEQUENCES

If a student's phone is visible or used during the instructional day, they are subject to the following consequences:

- 1st offense - Phone is collected and turned in to the office for student pickup after 3:25pm.
- 2nd offense - Phone is collected and turned in to the office for parent/guardian pickup (phone will not be returned to the student).
- Subsequent offenses - Phone is collected and turned in to the office for parent/guardian pickup (phone will not be returned to the student); Student is subject to disciplinary action for insubordination.

EMAIL / SCHOOL GOOGLE ACCOUNTS

All students will receive a Gaston County Schools Google account and email address. This account and email are monitored. Students are required to abide by the Acceptable Use Policy at all times, regardless of whether they access their account on or off campus..

EMAIL

The school email and Google drive is to be utilized for academic purposes only. This means that students should not be sending messages/emails to others during class unless there is an instructional purpose and teacher permission. Failure to abide by this policy may result in a restriction of computer privileges including, but not limited to, having email access revoked.

GOOGLE ICONS & DESKTOP

Students are not permitted to change their Chromebook backgrounds except to those provided by Google. Additionally, all images and icons related to student accounts must be school appropriate.

OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of wireless earbuds/headphones, iPads, gaming devices, tablets, etc. are not allowed at school. Please leave those items at home. Certain items listed above may be approved in classrooms occasionally for rewards; however, students who choose to bring them to school or to play with them on the bus on the way to and from school assume all liability for the device.

PHOTOGRAPHS / VIDEOS

Photographs and videos of students may be taken by school personnel for internal purposes, celebrations,, honor roll, GCS website, our Facebook page, the yearbook, etc. In addition, we may release similar publicity information to the media. Any parent who does not want his/her child to be photographed or videotaped must indicate so on the student enrollment form and/or notify the administration.

Students shall not take pictures/videos at school or on the bus of each other or of adults without the consent and direction of the teacher/staff member. Posting pictures from school on Social Media sites without consent is subject to application of the *GCS Student Code of Conduct (Rule 20: Responsible Use of Technology)*.

MEDICATION

MHMS strictly enforces the *Gaston County Board of Education's Policy 6130* concerning medication. Accordingly, we will not administer medication to students without written authorization from the student's parent/guardian **AND** their medical provider. This includes both over-the-counter **AND** prescription medications for both short **AND** long-term use. If your child needs medication **of any kind** during school hours, you have the following options:

1. Come to the school to give the medicine at the appropriate time.
2. Talk to your doctor about an alternative schedule for administering medications outside of school hours.
3. Obtain a medication authorization form from the school nurse. Have your doctor complete the form with medication, dosage, times, etc. Both the doctor and the parent need to sign this form. Parents should deliver the medication and the form to school. (Do NOT send them with your child!) Prescription medications must be in a pharmacy labeled bottle, and over-the-counter medications must be in their original container.

Please Note: It is against school policy for students to carry any medication, prescription or nonprescription, on the school campus without appropriate paperwork. Violation of this policy will result in administrative consequences up to and including out-of-school suspension.

SUPPORT SERVICES

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

MHMS is assigned a full time Resource Officer through the Mount Holly Police Department. Sergeant Bell's top priority is the safety and security of our students, staff, campus, and community.

COUNSELORS

We have two school counselors who are available to see students in small groups or individually. Sessions can focus on such areas as peer conflicts, substance abuse, depression, career planning, and any other issue the student feels they need to discuss. Students who want to see a counselor should use the request form on their website.

Parents are welcome to contact our counselors by telephone. We ask that parents make appointments if they wish to visit a counselor in person. Without an appointment, it is likely that a counselor will be busy and unable to give parents the time they deserve.

SCHOOL NURSE

Our nurse is currently on campus 5 days a week to assist with medical emergencies, health plans, and routine illnesses. Any time a student is sick during the school day, he/she should request permission to visit the nurse's office. Any calls to parents about sick students will be made by the school nurse/designee.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

MHMS has a part-time social worker who assists families and the school with eliminating barriers to student success.

SCHOOL VISITORS

All school visitors must check in at the front office, sign in to the computer system with their ID, and wear a visitor badge while in the building. Visitors are required to abide by school rules and safety protocols. Community members wishing to volunteer are required to complete a specific training and will have nightly background checks through our district's volunteer database.

In accordance with GCS Board Policy 5020, parents may be permitted to visit their child's classroom during the school day, as long as the parent's presence does not pose the risk of disruption to the learning environment. Parents seeking to visit a classroom should communicate with an administrator to make an appointment. Visits will be limited to 30 minutes because outside observers must be supervised by an administrator. Parents should not interact with students or the teacher during classroom visits to ensure the classroom environment is conducive to learning.

TRANSPORTATION

BUS GUIDELINES

All students are expected to follow school rules from the time you begin waiting for the bus in the morning until you leave your bus stop area in the afternoon. Bus riders must follow

additional bus rules at all times. Failure to do so may result in a suspension from the bus and/or from school. ***Please Note: Bus transportation is a privilege, not a right.***

For safety and liability reasons, students are not allowed to ride buses to which they are not assigned. Bus riders must go home to their physical address which means students are required to get off the bus at their assigned stop only.

Please observe the following rules when riding our buses:

- ALWAYS follow the bus driver's directions.
- Remain seated at all times when the bus is moving.
- Keep all body parts and items inside the bus at all times.
- Keep all conversations in a normal tone of voice.
- Food and drinks are not permitted on the bus.
- Follow all behavioral expectations as set forth in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

MORNING ARRIVAL

Adult supervision will not be provided prior to 7:45am; therefore, **students should not be dropped off prior to 7:45am**. Please be cognizant of the weather conditions as students will not be permitted to enter the building until that time.

All car riders **MUST** be dropped off at the front entrance of the school using the circle driveway. Students are **NOT** to be dropped off **anywhere** along Hawthorne St., Catawba Ave., Central Ave., and/or the school service drive located at the baseball field behind the school building.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Car riders are required to exit the school at the front of the building. Parents are strongly encouraged to pick up your student in the carpool line at the front circle drive. While we understand that many students walk to the Mount Holly Library, Moose Pharmacy, or to Open Gym, the safest option for all students who are going to be car riders is to be picked up from our circle drive sidewalk.

Walkers should follow the directions of the crossing guard, police, and all school staff and should leave campus immediately. Loitering is not allowed at the old auditorium or along Hawthorne Street. Once students begin walking home or to an off campus location, they are no longer supervised.

Bus riders should listen for their bus to be called over the intercom and exit out of the back of the building. Afternoon bus routes begin between 3:30 and 3:35 and last up to an hour. In the event of absent drivers, late buses will be housed in the cafeteria to await a second load ride home.