



MARY ELLEN HENDERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grades 5, 6, & 7

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School. The faculty and staff are excited about sharing this school year with you. We look forward to working with you to create an invigorating and successful school year. We will continue working towards building our learning community and maintaining high standards for academic and social excellence.

At Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School we strive for academic achievement and to nurture respect for self and others in a global student-centered community. We welcome you to become active participants in helping us to achieve this goal. Learning occurs best when the school, home, and community work collaboratively to ensure students' success.

The school year will go by quickly. Thank you in advance for your support in helping us to provide a quality educational experience for all of the students at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School. Let's work together in making this a great year for everyone.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We, the stakeholders of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School, believe:

- ▶ The primary goal of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School is to provide a developmentally appropriate education that meets the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of every student.
- ▶ Each student learns in multiple ways.
- ▶ A strong, collaborative partnership among students, parents, staff, and community is essential.
- ▶ Diversity enriches our community.
- ▶ Open communication among stakeholders of the community is critical to our success.

At Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School:

- ▶ We will create a strong academic program with high standards that meets the learning styles and educational needs of each student.
- ▶ We will hold equally high expectations for every student.
- ▶ We will involve all students in sharing responsibility for their learning.
- ▶ We will encourage students to be independent and creative thinkers.
- ▶ We will encourage all members of the community to continually assess and reflect on the learning process.
- ▶ We will create a safe environment for learning where students are nurtured and respected.
- ▶ We will involve all students in shaping the norms of behavior.
- ▶ We will respect our differences.

ACADEMIC POLICIES, GRADES AND REPORTING

Middle School Students Taking High School Credit Classes

When middle school students take classes for high school credit, the grades become part of their high school transcript. These grades are included when the high school grade point average (GPA) is calculated. Students taking classes for high school credit that have end of the course SOL tests must pass the end of course SOL test in order to receive verified credit towards graduation. Parents may request that a high school course taken for credit be purged from the transcript and retaken.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report Cards and Progress Reports are sent home at the end and the middle of each of the 4 grading periods respectively - please check the school calendar for specific dates. Report Card/Progress Report envelope should be returned to the Advisory teacher to indicate parent receipt. Reports will be held if your envelope from the previous grading period has not been returned or a new envelope has not been purchased. A new envelope is \$0.50.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance ([School Board Policy 9.22](#), Code of Virginia: 1950, Section 22.1-254 and 22.1-258 through 22.1-269)

Attendance, punctuality, and participation in each and every class, each and every day, are keys to academic success. Parents are requested to notify the middle school attendance office within the first hour of the school day that a student will be absent. **Students who are absent during the school day or leave early due to illness cannot participate in after school activities. Students who come to school tardy must arrive by 11:30 a.m. to be considered present for the day.**

As required by state law, the **fifth unexcused absence** during the school year will result in notification of the attendance officer and a compulsory conference with parents to develop an attendance plan for the student. Additional unexcused absences will result in notification of the attendance officer or the Superintendent, with a complaint to the juvenile or domestic relations court to be filed.

**For further clarification on excused and unexcused absences please refer to Policy 9.22*

If you are absent for one day, you should get your assignments from another student. Be prepared to make up missed tests or participate in regularly scheduled tests on the day you return. In the event of a three-day or longer absence, assignments may be requested through the office 703-720-5702. (Work assigned/given prior to a prearranged absence is due the day the student returns.)

Tardies

Students are expected to be to school on time and ready to go. Students who are habitually late are subject to warning letters, conferences, after school detentions, Saturday school, In-School Suspension, or other consequences that administration deems necessary.

Excused Early Dismissal - Parent/Guardian

If you must leave early for an excused appointment, a parent must come into the main office to officially sign you out. Please bring in a note (indicating the time of pick-up) to give to the teacher so you will be ready for pick-up.

Pre-arranged Approved Absences:

Occasionally students may need to be absent for reasons other than those listed in the policy. On a case by case basis, these absences will be given consideration for approval which will be granted by the principal. The [Approved Absence Form](#) must be filled out and handed in prior to the absence **no fewer than three school days prior to departure.** (available in the attendance office) After review of student progress and attendance record, the principal will make the determination to approve. **It is your responsibility to obtain information about what you will miss: tests, quizzes, & homework. Missed class work cannot be made up.**

CAFETERIA

Food Service

Lunch is provided daily at MEHMS, and consists of one entrée, three sides, and a milk (whole, skim, and lowfat chocolate). Students are able to bring in money daily to purchase lunch or set-up a lunch account for their own convenience. If the account balance continues to fall and/or enters the negative range, a gentle reminder phone call will be made by our food services department.

Food Service Contact Info:

Richard Kane 703-248-5534 rkane@fccps.org FCCPS Food Services Supervisor

Helen Tam 703-720-5771 sortot@fccps.org MEH Food Service Manager

**Standard Lunch
(Includes 1 Entrée*, 3
sides, and 1 milk)**

*Entrée can be substituted with salad or sandwich

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Your school counselors are here to help. If your counselor is unable to see you when you come in the office, see the counseling secretary who will schedule a time for you to come back. Students will receive an appointment pass when the appointment has been scheduled.

Parents may want to talk with teachers or the counselors about grades, adjustment problems, course requirements or other things. They may make an appointment with the counselor by calling the guidance secretary at (703) 720-5706.

Parents may elect in writing to have their child not participate (to “opt out” of) academic, career, or personal/social counseling of a generic nature at any time.

Counselors are available to help students:

- ▶ Develop and establish person, social, academic, and career goals.
- ▶ Discuss feelings and needs: This helps ensure students’ decisions are based on their values.
- ▶ Explore Options: Listen to student challenges from an unbiased point of view and give support in understanding different perspectives.
- ▶ Reach Decisions: Students can learn skills for making future decisions on their own.

Counselors use the following to implement the school counseling program.

- ▶ Individual & small group counseling
- ▶ Consultation with parents, teachers, and other educators
- ▶ Peer mediation or conflict management
- ▶ Oversee classroom counseling lessons through grade level advisories
- ▶ Assist with making referrals to other services

Your counselors will be running several different groups throughout the year. If you are interested in any of the following groups, come on in to the counseling office for a sign up/permission form. The counseling groups will be offered based on student interests. Groups we have done in the past or are considering doing, include: New Beginnings (New Students to School District), Girls & Guys Groups (Gender & Grade level specific), Leap Frogs (Transitions), Hassle Free Huskies (Stress), Keeping Your Cool (Anger), Test Taking, Banana Splits (Divorce/Separation), Study & Organization Skills, and Family Puzzles (Adoption).



DISCIPLINE

As a school, our priority is to assure a safe learning environment, free from disruptions. Rules and regulations are established for the safety and well being of all students in our school. Behavior that interferes with the teaching and learning or safety of our students will not be tolerated. Failure to abide by Falls Church City Public School Student Code of Conduct, Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School rules, or to maintain appropriate conduct can result in disciplinary consequences. While the following rules are emphasized, they may not be all inclusive.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

Students who choose to violate school rules will be subject to consequences. The severity of the violation and the student's individual discipline record will be considered when assigning consequences. Because of the various influences that affect the disposition of discipline cases, it is difficult to codify offenses/consequences. Alternative consequences deemed appropriate by the administration may be assigned.

If a student has violated a school rule within the classroom, the teacher will initiate certain procedures to correct the observed behavior. The teacher will work cooperatively with the student, parent, administration and counseling staff to assist the student in understanding his/her responsibility for a change in conduct. Teacher and Administration can/may assign the following consequences for inappropriate behavior:

- ▶ Teacher/Student private parent contact
- ▶ Conference with student and/or parent and/or team
- ▶ Classroom lunch detention, after school detention, or meeting with the teacher
- ▶ Time-Out (notice is mailed home each time a student is sent to Time-Out)
- ▶ Privileges revoked
- ▶ Saturday School
- ▶ In School Suspension (ISS)
- ▶ Out of School Suspension (OSS)

In School Suspension (ISS)

Students assigned to In-School Suspension are excluded from participating in regular classes for a day(s) or a portion of the day assigned and parents are notified. Any misbehavior or failure to meet the requirements will result in Out-of-School Suspension. **A student assigned ISS may not participate in after school activities or take the Late Bus home.**

Suspension from School (OSS)

A student may be suspended by a school administrator for no more than ten consecutive days. Parents will be contacted and notified in writing via U.S. Mail. **During the time of suspension, the student is not permitted on school grounds or to attend any school related activities.**

For further details please see: [School Board Policy 9.26/Regulation 9.26](#) on Suspension and Expulsion

SCHOOL RULES

1. ATTEND ALL CLASSES ON TIME AND COME PREPARED TO LEARN

- ▶ Be in your assigned place or seat when class begins with necessary supplies and materials - back packs are not permitted.
- ▶ Period attendance is taken for all classes, and class tardies as recorded by the teacher
- ▶ Students must always have a hall pass when unaccompanied by an adult

2. RESPECT THE RIGHTS, SPACE, AND PROPERTY OF OTHERS

- ▶ Handle Textbooks, Library books, and other school materials with care
- ▶ Never open anyone else's locker & don't share your locker combination with others
- ▶ Show pride in MEHMS by helping to keep classrooms, halls, rest rooms, Cafétorium and grounds clean

3. RESPECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- ▶ Show respect towards staff, teachers, substitutes and classmates - at all times
- ▶ Take care of your personal belongings, those of your classmates, and those of your teachers

4. LEAVE DISTRACTIONS TO LEARNING AT HOME

- ▶ Gum, candy, breath mints (of any kind) are NOT permitted at school
- ▶ Open beverages may NOT be stored in your locker or be carried in the hallways or removed from the cafeteria.
- ▶ Electronic devices are not permitted at school. If necessary, cell phones must be kept in the locker. **The school is not responsible for valuables brought to school.**

5. BE PROUD, DO YOUR OWN WORK

- ▶ Students are expected to do their own work and not share with others. Students who do not follow the academic honor code are subject to lowered grades and the FCCPS Guide to student conduct.

6. DRESS FOR WORK, NOT PLAY TO RESPECT THE SAFETY AND MODESTY OF ALL

- ▶ Hats, head-bands/gear, sunglasses, bandannas, accessory chains, or shirts with offensive messages will not be permitted - this includes references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, sex, or gangs on clothing or accessories
- ▶ Students are asked to dress modestly - no revealing or see-through attire including tank tops, halter tops, midriff baring tops, undershirts, cut-off-shirts, low-cut blouses, short shorts, short skirts, short dresses or jumpers, or exposed underwear. Generally accepted middle school standards defines short as shorter than fingertips when arms are extended at sides. Belts must be worn to support baggy pants.
- ▶ No clothing worn in a way that poses a safety hazard ([School Board Policy 9.32](#))

7. MAINTAIN A SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT, THINK AND ACT SAFELY

- ▶ Please review ([School Board Policy 9.28](#), [9.36](#) & [9.37](#)) - it is our goal to provide a safe environment for all students. These regulations outline the appropriate behaviors for students.

8. BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY IN OUR CAFÉTORIUM and ON THE PLAYGROUND

- ▶ Report to the Cafétorium on time and sit at your designated table
- ▶ Please maintain an orderly environment by not playing with food, engaging in horseplay, speaking loudly, or calling from table to table
- ▶ Recycle or dispose of trash in appropriate containers - students are expected to keep their own areas clean.
- ▶ Obtain a pass from staff to travel to clinic, restroom, school store, or library and wait to be dismissed.
- ▶ Students should demonstrate safe play on the playground with non contact sports and no horseplay.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

The Falls Church City Public Schools Technology Acceptable Use Policy ([School Board Policy 9.40](#)) is handed out the first day of school. Students who violate this policy may lose technology privileges.

Agendas

All students will be given an agenda at the beginning of the school year. The agenda is an important tool to help students record assignments, keep track of homework, as well as a communication tool between school and home. Students are expected to use their agenda for these purposes to help with organization and assignment completion. Teachers will assist students in recording and monitoring assignments. If the agenda is lost, the replacement fee is \$5.00 and can be purchased through the school store.

Change of Address/Phone Number

If you or your family moves to a new address, it is the responsibility of a parent/guardian to notify and provide updated documentation to the school about the change of address by contacting the guidance secretary at **703-720-5706**. If your new address is not within the City of Falls Church, you may apply to continue attending Falls Church City Public Schools on a tuition basis. Otherwise, student records will be transferred to your new school.

Students need to know or have written in their agenda parents/guardians work phone number(s). Parents, please notify the middle school guidance office (**703-720-5706**) promptly if home or work telephone number(s) change.

Citizenship

Students are expected to exhibit citizenship at all times and all school events. This is the foundation of our principal of Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for our Shared Environment.

Emergency School Closing

Under adverse weather conditions or other emergencies, Falls Church City Public Schools may open late, close early or be closed the entire day. In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, school delay or closing information is made available to the public via television and radio stations, Cable Channel 12, www.fccps.org, mass email or, The FCCPS Parent Information Line: (703) 248-5550 X3113

**We request that parents have an advance understanding with their children as to what they should do in the event of an early closing.*

Evacuation/Safety Drills

Evacuation/Safety drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. You must quickly and quietly evacuate the building under the supervision of your teacher.

Student Code of Conduct

[School Board Policy 9.34](#) includes the Falls Church City Public Schools Student Code of Conduct. These policies can be retrieved from the school division web site @ www.fccps.org.

Safety on School Buses

The Transportation Department provides all students with a list of bus regulations. Parents and students are asked to review these regulations. All MEHMS students should remember that riding the bus is a privilege and that violation of bus regulations may result in loss of transportation. If it is necessary to ride another bus, a bus pass will be issued through the office after receiving a note with parent signature - this must be pre-arranged.

**Our transportation department sometimes encounters delays in arrival time, particularly in the afternoon. This could be caused by a number of factors, including traffic jams. If your child's bus is late, you may contact the school office at (703) 720-5700 until 4:15 for an update.*

School Board Policies

A complete School Board Policy Manual is available for review in the Mary Ellen Henderson Media Center. On-line access can be found at <http://www.fccps.org/policies.htm>.

School Visitors

All visitors to MEH are required to sign in at the main office. Student visitors must be pre-approved by school administration. As a professional courtesy, please give teachers 24 hour notice when scheduling a conference or visit.

Student Hours

Students must not arrive at school earlier than 7:20 a.m. School personnel are not able to provide supervision until that time. All students will be dismissed at 2:30 p.m. and should report immediately to their assigned destination. Students who are riding the late bus should sign in with the activity sponsor and indicate how they will be getting home. The late bus picks up at 4:00. Students riding the last bus must be involved with a school sponsored activity and are not allowed to leave school property and return to ride the bus.

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) notice, as required by [School Board policy 9.8](#), is available for viewing on the school division web site (www.fccps.org).

STUDENT SERVICES

Activities

One of the exciting things about middle school is having the opportunity to be involved in a number of school activities outside the classroom setting. You are encouraged to participate in a variety of middle school activities. **Students who are absent during the school day cannot participate in after school activities.**

Co-Curricular

- ▶ Band/Choral Performances
- ▶ Math Competitions
- ▶ Grade Level Team Activities
- ▶ Middle School Assemblies



Extra-Curricular Activities

- ▶ Student Council Association (SCA)
- ▶ Yearbook
- ▶ Middle School Extravaganza
- ▶ Theatrical Productions
- ▶ Stage & Technical Crew
- ▶ Odyssey of the Mind
- ▶ Intramural Sports
- ▶ Grandparents Club
- ▶ Husky Humanitarians
- ▶ Chess/Game Club
- ▶ School Store

Clinic

The clinic is staffed by a full time clinic aide and supervised by the Falls Church Public Health Nurse during normal school hours. The aide is permitted to dispense medication after the proper medical release forms are completed. **All medication must be kept in the clinic, with exception of asthma inhalers, provided the proper release forms are filled out.** Students may **NOT** keep medication in their possession nor self administer or provide to another student ANY medication. ([School Board Policy 9.38](#)), included in *Back to School Packet*) Clinic aides act in a first aid capacity and make necessary decisions and recommendations involving students' health care and well being. When you become ill in class, the teacher will send you to the clinic with a pass. If a student must be sent home or if a doctor's attention is required, the student's parents or guardian will be notified. **Please keep your emergency forms and phone numbers up to date.** In the event emergency medical attention is required, the student will be taken to the nearest hospital. Every effort will be made to contact the parent and/or guardian and/or emergency contact.

Lockers

Students are assigned hallway lockers to store coats, backpacks, books and school supplies. Lockers are property of the school system, and assignment to individuals does not indicate a transfer of ownership. As the property of the school system, lockers are subject to inspection at any time deemed appropriate by the school administration. ([School Board Policy 9.57](#))

Lost and Found

Articles of clothing or items that are misplaced during the school day are placed in the lost in found located in the Cafetorium. Students and parents are encouraged to check this regularly as it is emptied every quarter and the items are donated to charity.

Media Center

The Media Center offers students a pleasant place to study, research or read for pleasure. A library pass is required to visit the Media Center. A maximum of 3 books may be checked out for 2 weeks. Magazines and some reference books may be checked out overnight. Fines for most overdue books are \$0.10 per school calendar day and \$0.25 for magazines and reference books checked out overnight. You may not check out a book until any overdue books are returned and fines paid. A repair fee will be charged for a lost bar code or spine label, or date due sticker. Full replacement costs will be owed for lost or damaged materials.

Telephones

School office telephones are for business purposes. Students may be allowed to use an office or classroom telephone with teacher permission. **Students are encouraged to leave a message when calling.**

HUSKY SONG

Huskies
We are the huskies.
M-E-H-M-S
Our spirit's showing
Colors -
Blue, green and silver.
We feel a pride we cannot hide.
Show colors proudly.
Cheer our school loudly.
We are Mary Ellen Henderson.
Enthusiastic,
We are fantastic.
So, MEHMS is number one

