

Our Mission

We, the faculty and staff of William James Middle School, believe it is our responsibility to provide in a safe and orderly environment, opportunities for academic and social growth for all students.

Beliefs

1. Each student is a unique individual.
 2. A positive relationship with respect between teachers and students promotes positive self-esteem and enhances learning.
 3. All students have the ability and opportunity to learn.
 4. Teachers, parents and community share in the student's responsibility for the education of all students.
 5. High expectations result in high achievement levels.
 6. Accountability for actions rests with the individual student.
2. Students will not go to other classrooms during class periods unless they are designated to do so.
 3. Students will remain in class at all times during regular class time. If a student must be in the hallway for any reason during class, he/she must have his/her agenda. The last two pages of the agenda are for hall passes.
 4. Students held over from a class for disciplinary reasons may not ask a teacher for a tardy slip to get into their next class. Every student is expected to properly conduct themselves in each class so as not to have to be late to their next class.

Goals

There are five goals that direct our school. The student will:

- Demonstrate ability to use technology
- Practice critical thinking skills and apply this knowledge to produce quality work
- Improve skills in the testable achievement areas
- Apply concepts attained in subject areas to daily life
- Work cooperatively with others

Code of Conduct

All students are expected to conduct themselves with responsibility and appropriate behavior at all times. Students are expected to conduct themselves as to reflect favorably upon themselves, their families, their community, and their school. Students are expected to:

- Come to school on time
- Respect themselves and others
- Be a responsible person or accept the consequences for not being a responsible person
- Be prepared for class
- Be willing to listen and participate in class
- Respect adults, classmates and their belongings

General Information

1. The doors of the school open at 7:00 am. All students must go to the bus room (gymnasium) and remain seated until they are dismissed with their teachers to class at 7:50 am. Students who choose to eat breakfast will be dismissed at 7:20 am to go to the cafeteria.

Car riders: Students who are picked up by their parents are dismissed from the building at 2:55 pm. Cars will park in four lines in the front parking lot to wait for students to be dismissed. A faculty member will bring the students out and around the parked cars so students can find their cars. When cars are loaded, the cars may leave.

Walkers: Students who walk home from school will be dismissed from the building at 3:00 pm after vehicles picking up students have cleared the car lines.

Bicycles: Bicycles are to be parked and chained to the bicycle rack in front of the school. Locking the bicycle to the rack is at the discretion of the student. WJMS is not responsible for theft or damage to the bicycle. Students riding bicycles will be dismissed from the building with walkers. Bicycles are to be walked, not ridden, on school grounds.

Skateboards: Skateboarding is not allowed on school property. Skateboards may not be brought into the building and should be left outside by the bicycle rack. WJMS is not responsible for theft or damage to the skateboard.

Bus: Riding the bus is a privilege extended to students of Dickson County. Any disobedience, disturbance, or misconduct on the bus could result in suspension or loss of the privilege to ride the bus. The bus driver and principal are responsible for the conduct of students on the buses. All students being transported are under the authority of the bus driver and are expected to obey his/her requests. Students are not allowed to get off the school bus except at school or their home. If a parent needs his/her student to ride another bus, a note from the office must be obtained before riding the other bus.

Students riding buses will be dismissed to the cafeteria at 3:00 pm to await the arrival of their bus to take them home.

Attendance Policy

1. A note or phone call explaining the nature of the absence is required when a student returns to school.
2. The office may notify parents of absences daily.
3. A student is allowed ten excused absences. All absences thereafter must have a doctor's statement. The principal may require a doctor's statement for absences at any time.
4. When a student has accumulated three unexcused absences, the school sends the guardian a letter. Upon the fourth unexcused absence, the student is reported to the attendance director. Upon the fifth and sixth unexcused absence, the director speaks to the guardian. Upon the sixth unexcused absence, the attendance director will petition the student to juvenile court.
5. If a student is tardy to school, leaves during the school day, or is checked out early, the time missed counts as time absent on the student's attendance record.
6. Unauthorized absence from school is considered truancy and will be treated as such. This includes absences from any class or any activity during the day.

Leaving School During School Hours:

- A note or a phone call from a student's guardian will be required for a student to leave school property for any reason. No student is allowed to call home to get permission to go home with another student.
- Middle school students are not permitted to go to the elementary school, senior high school, or any other school in the county during school hours. If it is a school day at WJMS then you are expected to be in attendance.
- If a student must leave school grounds during the day, he/she must sign out in the office and upon return sign in at the office.
- A parent/guardian may pick up their own child but no other child without written permission from the guardian of the other child.

Tardies

Tardy to School: A student is considered tardy to school when the student arrives to school after the 7:50 am bell has rung. Students arriving past the 7:50 bell must sign in at the office. These tardies will add up and accumulate to the total number of days absent. After being tardy ten times, the student will be issued a Tardy Infraction each time he/she is tardy to school. The student will be assigned After-School Detention after accumulation three Tardy Infractions. Parents will be notified by phone or notice. The student is given a three-day window in which to attend detention. If the detention is not attended, a day of In-School-Suspension will be assigned.

Tardy to Class: It is important for all students to enter the classroom, sit in their seats, and be ready for class to begin. Students must be in their seats when the teacher indicates the beginning of class or the student may be considered to be tardy. **No loitering in the hallways.**

Make-up Work

Students are responsible for getting their assignments for the days they are absent. If a student misses one day and it was a scheduled test day, then the student should make up the test the day he/she returns to school. A student is given a grace period of three days to make up work missed from an absence.

Academics

Report cards are sent home every nine weeks, four times a year. Progress reports will be sent home at mid-nine week intervals. The bottom portion of the report card containing the student's name should be signed and returned to school.

Grading Scale:

- A-----93-100
- B-----85-92
- C-----75-84
- D-----70-74
- F-----below 70

Textbooks will be issued to each student as soon as the parent/guardian agreement form has been signed and returned to the school office. Any loss, damage or destruction of these books will result in a charge to the student. Teachers will check books periodically for proper identification.

Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader, AR, is a reading management software program that increases literature-based reading practice easily and effectively. Students read books on determined reading levels, take a quiz on the computer and receive instant feedback. Students receive a grade for points achieved and comprehension mastery. Students who meet the yearly point goal with an 80% comprehension will be rewarded with a field trip at the end of the year. The yearly point goals are as follows:

- 6th grade – 70 points
- 7th grade – 80 points
- 8th grade – 90 points

To help maintain the atmosphere of trust and confidence in the Accelerated Reader program, and to ensure that each student is graded solely according to his or her own merits, WJMS teachers have established an Honor Code. Each student will be given a copy of the Honor Code the first time they visit the school library. A willful violation of the Honor Code will result in suspension of the student from participating in the rewards of the AR program at William James Middle School.

Band: Any student may become a member of the band. Students must have the approval of their parent/guardian and meet with the Band Director. Instruments are kept in the band room during the day. Band meets during the related arts time every day all year long. Band students will still have one related arts period free each day to participate in other related arts. It is important that students realize if you are a member of the band, you are making a commitment to meet every day with band for the entire year.

Guidance: The guidance program offers students opportunities for personal and academic growth by providing individual and group counseling as well as classroom guidance. Also available are consultations with parents, teachers, outside agencies, referral services for special education, development of intervention plans for personal or academic problems, review of records and testing results and access to career information.

Curriculum

Each student will attend the following classes each day:

- ❖ Language Arts
- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Math (6th); Math or Pre-Algebra (7th); Pre-Algebra or Algebra I (8th grade)
- ❖ Reading in the Content Area
- ❖ Two Related Arts on a Rotating Schedule (Band students will have Band every day all year long.)
 - Art
 - Music
 - Computers
 - Health
 - Physical Education
 - Foundations of Technology (8th grade)
 - Careers (8th grade)

Each student will also have a FLEX period each day for individual skill remediation.

Clubs: 4-H Club, Book Club, (other clubs may be organized as staff is available)

Student Council: A student council will be established at the beginning of each year to represent each grade level and help plan grade level and school-wide activities.

Athletics: The following athletic activities are offered:

- Volleyball
- Football
- Baseball
- Softball
- Boys' and Girls' Basketball

Students who involved in athletics are expected to maintain passing grades throughout the school year and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is an asset to WJMS. Coaches and teachers work together to maintain the goal of passing academic subjects and promoting good behavior.

Cheerleading: Cheerleaders are chosen in the spring. Cheerleaders are expected to maintain passing grades and to conduct themselves in a manner that is an asset to WJMS. We expect cheerleaders as well as all students involved in athletic sports to exemplify the high standards of our school.

Eligibility Rules for Cheerleaders:

- Must have and maintain a passing grade in each subject
- Must be approved by the faculty before the selection process
- Must agree to abide by the general cheerleading rules and TSSAA/TMSAA rules for cheerleaders

TSSAA Sportsmanship Rules for Cheerleaders:

1. Remember that your most important responsibility is one of leadership.
2. Set the tone for what is acceptable behavior on the part of the cheer section.
3. Display only signs that are positive and welcoming and not antagonizing or disrespectful to visitors.
4. Cheer the right cheer for the appropriate time. Eliminate cheers against the other team and never cheer an opposing player's mistake.
5. Stimulate and control positive crowd response. Cheer positively. Demand excellence!

Athletic Eligibility Requirements for Middle School Athletics:

- A student must not be 16 years of age on or before September 1.
- The student must pass 3 of the 4 academic subjects the previous semester.
- To remain eligible and free from probationary status, a student must maintain passing grades in the four (4) academic subjects and maintain proper conduct at school games.

Athletics substance Abuse Council: The Athletics Substance Abuse Council at William James Middle School shall be comprised of the following members:

- Principal of WJMS
- Head coaches of all sports at WJMS
- Two female students
- Two male students

In the best interest of all concerned, the following policies have been developed to deal with infractions involving alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco products. These policies apply to all cheerleaders, managers, football players, basketball players, volleyball players, baseball and softball players, and /or any other student directly associated with any athletic team at WJMS.

Drug and Alcohol Offenses:

- ✓ First Offense: The council will first await the decisions/punishment made by the proper authorities. After reviewing these decisions, the Council will make decisions on a case by case basis.
- ✓ Second Offense: The student athlete will be permanently suspended from participation in athletics at WJMS.

Tobacco Products Offenses (Possession or Use):

- ✓ First Offense: The student will be suspended from play for one week's contests. This is to be the following football game or the next two basketball, softball, baseball or volleyball games. The coach of the affected sport will

determine what physical training or punishment will be required for reinstatement to the team.

- ✓ Second Offense: The student will be suspended for a half season of play. This penalty will be carried over to the next season if that student returns to WJMS the following year. The coach of the affected sport will determine what physical training or punishment will be required for reinstatement to the team.
- ✓ Third Offense: The student will be permanently suspended from participation in athletics at WJMS.

Behavioral Expectations

1. **Respect** the rights and responsibilities of others.
2. **Follow directions the first time given.** Students are expected to follow directions given from anyone on staff. Students may ask for clarification, if needed.
3. **Cheating** will result in a zero on the assignment and an office referral. Students who knowingly supply answers or papers to copy are included in the cheating offense and penalty. If a zero on the test or assignment causes the student to fail that class, the student will be assigned After-School-Detention to make up the test/assignment.
4. **Personal cell phones** are not to be used during the school day on school property. Any student possessing a cell phone must keep it turned off and out of sight while at school. A student may be granted special permission to call a parent by the person in charge in an emergency or after school activity. If a student uses his/her cell phone, allows someone else to use the phone, or uses someone else's phone for any reason during the school day, the Dickson County Board of Education policy will be followed.
5. **Toys and other electronic equipment/items should be left at home.** This includes radios, IPODs, MP3 players, tape and CD players, tape recorders, video games, laser pointers/pens, cameras, beepers, or ANY other item(s) causing a disruption. Inappropriate items will be collected and arrangements made with the parents for collection. A detention may be assigned by the administration.
6. **Cursing or obscene language** will result in an automatic office referral. This includes gestures and inappropriate drawings or written expression.
7. **Fighting or any acts of violence** may result in In-School-Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, or requesting a Disciplinary Hearing at the Central Office. It is the policy of this school that both parties involved in a fight are disciplined.
8. **Physical demonstrations of affection are not appropriate for school.** Hands are to be kept off other students. No hand holding, hugging, or kissing in school or anywhere on school property will be allowed.
9. **Harassment, intimidation and other conduct that may be considered bullying will not be tolerated.** Students shall not engage in conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with another student's academic development

or that creates a hostile or offensive learning environment. It is the responsibility of a student who witnesses bullying or is a victim of bully to report to a teacher, counselor, or administrator.

10. **Chewing gum** is prohibited on school property during the school day including activities inside and outside the school building.
11. **Food, candy and drinks** are not allowed in the classrooms. Water may be purchased from the machines between classes.

Dress Code

Dress and grooming of students should be in good taste and not detrimental to the educational environment and public image of the school. The following dress code has been developed:

- The following articles of apparel are not to be worn in the school: hats, caps, gloves, scarves, bandanas, sunglasses, clothes that are frayed or have holes or tears, pajamas, muscle shirts, vest tops, tank tops, stretch suits, lycra, spandex, or swim trunks. **Wearing tights or leggings under jeans or pants with holes is not acceptable.**
- Sleeveless shirts or tops or shirts must have a width of three (3) inches or more at the shoulder.
- Girls and boys may wear shorts that come to or below the knee; however, NO elastic waist athletic shorts (string or no-string) may be worn except in gym class.
- No sweat pants (string or no-string)
- Girls' dresses or skirts must be of knee length or longer.
- Midriffs should never show.
- Clothes must be worn that are sized to fit appropriately. Excessively tight or baggy "low riding" clothing is unacceptable. Undergarments must not be visible.
- Clothing with offensive or suggestive messages, profanity, or that make reference to drugs, alcohol or tobacco in any way will not be worn at any time.
- Multi-colored or unnatural hair color, styles or makeup which is considered distracting is not permitted.
- Scoop necked shirts that show cleavage are to be worn with a shirt underneath to cover the cleavage.
- Bedroom slippers, shoes with skates, and pajama pants are not to be worn.
- No body piercing (except ears) or visible tattoos are permitted. No body painting, marking or facial coloring.

The WJMS Dress Code will be enforced. The dress code is subject to amendment at any time at the discretion of the administration. Students having dress code violations will be sent to the office by their teacher. The following consequences will apply:

- First offense: Warning, correct the problem, parent contact.
- Second offense: Contact parent, In-School-Suspension until appropriate clothing is brought to school.

Classroom Expectations

1. Enter and be seated as soon as you arrive. You may not leave the classroom unless your teacher gives you permission to do so.
2. Students are expected to go to the restroom between classes.
3. Be in your seat and quiet, with all necessary materials ready, before the teacher begins class. Students not in their seat when the teacher indicates the beginning of class are considered tardy.
4. Drinks, food, or chewing gum are not allowed in the classroom.
5. Keep your hands and feet in their proper place, out of the aisle and to yourself.
6. Notes are not allowed. This includes writing one, passing one, reading one, or holding one. It will be taken up by the teacher.
7. Grooming items are not to be used in the classroom.
8. Be neat and orderly in the classroom.
9. Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
10. You are expected to participate in class every day. Be alert and attentive, have homework current, and be a positive influence on the class.

Hallway Expectations

1. No running in the hallways: travel to and from class and activities in an orderly manner.
2. Keep hallway noise to an appropriate level- the quieter the better. No yelling.
3. Avoid physical contact in the hallways. Keep hands and feet to yourself. Keep to the right when walking down the hallway.
4. No loitering in the hallways. There is plenty of time to get to your classes if you do not waste it.
5. Be where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be there.

Discipline

The focus of the entire program of discipline and rewards is to promote and encourage an environment conducive to learning. Special emphasis is placed on the idea that effort toward positive behavior by all students will accomplish this goal.

Student Behavior Referral: Teachers will maintain documentation of student behavior that is in violation of classroom, school or district rules. Teachers will inform students of each infraction, and students will be instructed to reflect on the incident and consequences. When a student has three infractions, he/she will be referred to the office.

Severe offenses are those behaviors which result in automatic office referral. These behaviors include but are not limited to:

- ❖ All violations of the law (including but not limited to possession of drugs or tobacco products including lighters)
- ❖ Profanity/abusive language, gestures, or writing
- ❖ Leaving the classroom without permission
- ❖ Continuous disruption unaffected by teacher interventions
- ❖ Inappropriate physical contact, severe displays of affection (teacher discretion)
- ❖ Aggressive behavior
- ❖ Theft
- ❖ Bullying/harassment/extortion
- ❖ Skipping school/class
- ❖ Disrespect toward teachers or staff
- ❖ Vandalism or property destruction

Lunch Detention: A student may be assigned lunch detention for violation of school rules, or any other misconduct or misbehavior requiring disciplinary action. Students assigned lunch detention will eat their lunch in the In-School-Suspension classroom. A notice will be sent home to the parent.

In-School-Suspension: A student may be placed in In-School-Suspension for persistent violation of school rules (three infractions), or any other misconduct where the student is sent to the office requiring disciplinary action.

Placement in ISS is the removal of a student from his/her regular class/classes for a period of time. Students are counted present for school attendance and are provided assignments from their regular classroom teachers as well as ISS assignments. Students who fail to abide by the rules of ISS may receive additional ISS days or be suspended from school.

After-School Detention: A student may be assigned After-School Detention as a consequence.

Procedures

A WJMS Agenda is given to all students at the beginning of the school year. Every student is instructed in the use of and maintenance of this book. It is a link between school and home. Students are encouraged to use the agenda every day. Teachers write assignments on the board everyday for the students to copy. The agenda is also used as a student hall pass and library barcode. Any student who leaves the classroom should carry his/her agenda.

Locks and Lockers: A locker will be issued to every student. A locker is a privilege. If a student abuses his/her locker or hallway privileges, other arrangements will be made rather than the student having the privilege of using a locker. Students are not to share lockers. Students are responsible for all belongings brought to school. Lockers should be kept neat and arranged so the door will close and stay closed. Students should not write on their lockers or place stickers inside or outside their locker.

Office Telephone: In case of emergency or sickness, a student may use the office telephone with permission. Students will not be

called to the office for a phone call except in the case of an emergency. A message will be given to the student. Please plan ahead and make arrangements for after school before coming to school. The phone may not be used to make arrangements to go home with someone else.

Medications: School personnel are not permitted to administer medications. Any medicine a student must take during the school day must be turned in to the office and placed in the medicine box kept in the office. When a student must take his/her medicine, the student will come to the office. All medicines are self-administered. An authorization form for self-administering prescription medication must be completed by the doctor to be kept on file at school. If a student needs a non-prescription medication while at school, the parent is to bring a new, unopened bottle with the student's name on it to be left in the office.

Supplies: Supplies may be purchased in the office before school and between classes. If a student finds himself/herself without paper or pencil for the day, ask in the office. Supplies are kept in the office for just such emergencies.

Insurance: Insurance can be bought through the school, but is not required. It is advisable all students have insurance coverage. An insurance waiver form for each student must be completed by a parent and kept on file in the school office.

Lost and Found: Any unclaimed clothing will be collected at the Christmas break and the end of the year and taken to the Goodwill Industries in Dickson. Please put your name in your clothing with permanent marker or laundry pen so they may be returned to you.

Emergency Plan: WJMS has developed an Emergency Response Plan as directed by the Director of Schools and Dickson County School Board.

Fire Drills: Fire drills will be held at regular intervals as required by law. It is necessary that when the alarm is sounded everyone follow instructions and exits the building by their proper route as indicated on the wall of the classroom. Students and teachers must remain outside until the all clear signal is sounded.

Tornado Drills: Tornado drills will be held as a safety precaution. Safe areas for each room are posted on the wall in each classroom, and teachers will instruct students on procedure. No one is to leave his/her position until told to do so by the principal or the assistant principal.

Cafeteria: We want the lunch period to be a safe and enjoyable time for students. Failure to meet the cafeteria expectations may result in assigned seats or lunch detention.

Cafeteria Expectations:

- Students will enter and exit the cafeteria in a single file line, walk quietly, keeping noise to a minimal level-no yelling to other tables, loud talking or singing.
- Students are not allowed to break line or save places in line.
- Students are to take the first available seat as instructed by the cafeteria teacher and remain seated. No changing places.
- Students will not throw food or any other objects in the cafeteria.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Show respect to all students and adults.
- Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves, leaving the table neat for the next student.

Meals: Meals may be paid for in the cafeteria by the week or daily. Students are requested to pay lunch money by the week on Mondays. Change is not given from meal checks and the cafeteria manager may not give students cash from their meal account. A parent must send the cafeteria manager a note if the student is allowed to purchase extra food or snacks from their account. Meals may not be charged in the cafeteria. If you find yourself without money for a meal, the office will lend it to you. The debt must be paid before you can borrow again. The writer of any checks returned from the bank for insufficient funds will be charged a twenty dollar returned check fee and the school will no longer accept checks from that writer. Parents bringing lunch to school need to deliver it to the office. Parents are welcome to have lunch with their students.

Meal Prices:

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| • Breakfast (student-full paid) | \$1.00 |
| • Breakfast (staff) | \$1.25 |
| • Breakfast (reduced) | \$0.30 |
| • Lunch (full paid student) | \$2.25 |
| • Lunch (reduced student) | \$0.40 |
| • Lunch (staff) | \$2.75 |
| • Lunch (visitor) | \$3.25 |

Out-of-Zone Students: According to School Board Policy, the principal may revoke an out-of-zone transfer at any time for good and sufficient reasons after consultation with the Director of Schools. If absenteeism, tardiness, or behavior becomes a concern, the out-of-zone student may be returned to their zoned school.

Items Not Covered the Handbook: As all situations can't be predicted, it should be understood by all students that the administration reserves the right to administer consequences for inappropriate behavior not covered in this handbook.

