

Palmetto Middle School

2018-2019

Student Handbook

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Dear Student,

We welcome you to your school – “Palmetto’s Finest” middle school – definitely a “School to Watch”! Here at Palmetto Middle School the faculty, staff, and administration are excited about this year. You will be offered many challenging and stimulating opportunities. How you benefit from these opportunities will mostly depend on you. We encourage you to get involved in every part of the school program because the more involved you become, the greater your rewards and enjoyment will be. We want your time here to be rich, satisfying, and productive and we will do all we can to make that happen!

You will be assigned to a group of teachers who will be responsible for teaching you the core academic subjects. Your core content teachers will have a common planning time for conferring with you or your parents and for planning the best instructional opportunities for you. You will also benefit from a variety of exploratory courses in the arts, technology, etc.

Teachers will have decision-making power, flexibility, and creativity in planning their academic programs. They will provide exposure to new and exciting ideas in a variety of environments with different instructional strategies. Our goal is your academic success and preparation for high school and the world beyond. Palmetto Middle continues to build on a tradition of achievement and we are proud that you will be a part of making 2018-2019 your school’s best year ever.

“Forward we will go!”

Jason McCauley, Principal

Matthew Crawford, Assistant Principal

Nathan Croston, Assistant Principal

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

The true middle school concept was planned to provide a smooth transition from elementary school to high school while meeting the unique needs of early adolescents. In addition to core academics, middle schools strive to help students grow physically and emotionally by offering an enriched program that includes athletics, the fine arts, and character education. *At Palmetto Middle School we provide an environment that is student-centered and offers the opportunity for success to all students.* We provide the widest possible range of exploration and development of fundamental skills while also making allowances for individual learning patterns. Our teachers are educated specifically to work with middle level learners and trained to recognize and understand individual student needs, interests, backgrounds, goals, and motivations, as well as stresses, strains, frustrations, and fears. The middle school curriculum and structure is uniquely designed to give you, the student, the opportunity to grow and succeed.

WHAT DO YOU STUDY?

The academic program at Palmetto Middle School is divided into two broad areas:

- *Core Academic Courses*

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

- *Exploratory Courses*

These courses are available at designated grade levels on a semester or full-year basis: art, band, strings, chorus, drama, industrial technology, Gateway to Technology, keyboarding, digital learning, physical education/health, ProTeam, academic assistance, content mastery, and personal development.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Student discipline is governed by a *Demerit Code of Conduct*. A copy of this can be found on the school's website. This document will have been signed electronically through the registration process. Students and parents should note that not all disciplinary infractions will be dealt with through the issuing of demerits. The administration reserves the right to impose other consequences which are reasonable and consistent with the school's goals for student behavior.

PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN STUDENTS

A general "hands off" policy is in force with regard to physical contact between students. Such things as hitting, shoving, punching, slapping necks, etc., will not be tolerated. Public displays of affection are also considered unacceptable in the school setting. Consequently, embracing, kissing, holding hands, etc., will not be allowed at school or during school related activities.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

The possession of any type of weapon at school is a clear violation of both school board policy and South Carolina criminal law. Students should never bring any item to school that could possibly be considered a weapon. This would include knives, firearms, razors, etc. The typical punishment for possession of a dangerous weapon is expulsion from school. Criminal charges may be brought against students for weapons violations.

___If a student realizes that he or she has accidentally brought any type of weapon to school, a teacher or staff member should be informed immediately in order to avoid disciplinary action.

DRUG DOGS & METAL DETECTORS

Drug dogs will be used periodically on campus during the school year in accordance with board policy. Random scans with hand-held metal detectors may be performed on an unannounced basis.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Everyone at Palmetto Middle is expected to dress in accordance with school dress code and to be groomed in accordance with acceptable standards of cleanliness. All clothing must be worn according to its designed purpose. (For example, overalls should have straps up and pants must be pulled up to the waist.)

The following items may **NOT** be worn at school:

- Bandannas, headscarves, hats, hoods, sunglasses, etc., inside the buildings
- Mesh or "see through" garments as well as form-fitting apparel of any kind
- Spandex or leggings should be worn with mid-thigh coverage.(e.g. shirt, etc)
- Any item with suggestive/objectable lettering, pictures or symbols
- Skirts, dresses, or shorts that do not reach below the fingertips when the arms are dropped at the sides. (This also applies to the tops of all openings, slits, splits, etc.)
- Blue jeans with holes above the knees will be addressed in the same fashion as shorts, dresses, and skirts
- Blouses, dresses or shirts, which expose any cleavage or areas of the stomach, chest, side, or back. (Tops must reach the waist and be at least the width of three fingers at the shoulders. Sleeveless garments must fit snugly under the arms.)
- Items of jewelry or clothing that pose a concern for health and safety or are considered to be a distraction within the school environment (this includes but is not limited to: spiked bracelets, wallet chains, fish hooks on hats)
- Clothing, articles or other items which advertise, depict, or suggest alcohol, tobacco, drugs, weapons, or sex are prohibited. Any clothing that is profane or divisive is also prohibited
Clothing, articles, or other items which display symbols, messages or statements which would distract others, interfere with the instructional programs, or otherwise cause disruption are prohibited.
- The outermost layer of clothing must cover all underneath layers of clothing

In the event the administration determines a student's dress is inappropriate for the school in accordance with this policy, the administration will inform the student not to wear the garment to school again and will either require the student to correct the violation or face disciplinary action.

NOTE: The administration of Palmetto Middle School will make the final judgment on the appropriateness of student clothing, appearance and/or display of symbols, messages or statements on school grounds and reserves the right to prohibit students from wearing articles of clothing or other items or displaying any symbols, messages or statements which lead to or may foreseeably result in the disruption of or interference with the school environment.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The administration of Palmetto Middle School recommends that students do not bring personal communication devices to school. As a result, Palmetto Middle will not devote time and resources to recover lost or stolen personal devices. However, a student **may** possess personal communication devices (i.e. pagers, cellular telephones, etc.) while on school property and will be given opportunity to store those devices in lockers in accordance with board policy. Such devices may not be operated on school buses or on campus during the school day. During those times they must be turned off and stored in lockers. These devices may be operated on campus before and after the regular school day (i.e., 7:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) An abbreviated copy of the board policy regarding possession/use of communication devices will be given to each student. District-prescribed penalties for violation of the policy are stated in that handout. Copies of the full policy are available on request.

PROHIBITION AGAINST RECORDING STUDENT DISRUPTIONS

Any participation in a major disruption that places students, staff or the educational process at risk, or that results in destruction or damage to public or private property or causes or potentially causes personal injury to participants or others are strictly prohibited and may be deemed a level 2 or level 3 offense, as appropriate. Participating in a major disruption includes inciting, leading, encouraging, or promoting a major disruption through video recording of an altercation or fight. Students are prohibited from using electronic devices to capture, record, or transmit the words (i.e. audio) and/or images (i.e. pictures, video) of any student, staff member or other person in the school or while attending a school-related activity without express prior notice. Using an electronic device to take or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without his/her consent is not permitted and will be considered a serious offense, which will result in disciplinary action consistent with board policy, which may include, but is not limited to, temporary removal from class, placement in an alternative education program, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, transfer, referral to outside agency, expulsion, restitution of property and damages, and/or confiscation of the electronic device. If the electronic device is confiscated, it will be released to the student's parents/legal guardian only after the student complies with any other disciplinary consequences that are imposed. Electronic devices in district custody will not be searched or otherwise tampered with unless school officials reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of the law or other school rules. Any search will be conducted in accordance with district policy. If multiple offenses occur, a student may face additional disciplinary action consistent with board policy and will lose his/her privilege to bring an electronic device to school for the remainder of the school year.

TARDY POLICY

The academic day at Palmetto Middle School begins at 7:55 a.m. Students are expected to be seated in homeroom class by that time each day. Those who arrive at homeroom after 7:55 a.m. will not be admitted without a Tardy Pass from the Attendance Clerk. Repeated tardiness will result in disciplinary action. The school's tardy policy will be issued to students the first day of school.

Tardy # 1-5: Warning

Tardy # 6 and following: After school detention each occurrence (45 mins)

If a student does not report to after school detention, the consequence will be ISS.

*Tardies start over each semester

EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents must come to the main office at the time of early dismissal to sign students out of school. Early dismissals are counted as absences from class.

ATTENDANCE

The South Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law sets the standard regarding school attendance. Written notification of a mandatory attendance intervention conference is sent to parents when a student has three consecutive absences or a total of five unexcused absences. School officials and parents are required by law to develop an intervention plan in an effort to decrease student absences. Students are required to bring a written excuse on the first day back from an absence. All excuses must be submitted within seven days of return to school. Habitual absences, lawful and unlawful, will be referred to the Attendance Office of the Anderson County Board of Education.

Regular attendance is essential if students are to be successful in school. Legal excuses include:

- Parent note which accounts for the absence. **(Maximum of five per year. Additional parent notes will count as unexcused absences.)**
- Personal illness of the student with a doctor's excuse.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Observance of a religious holiday.

Perfect attendance is defined as “No absences, tardies, or early dismissals from school the entire school year” and faithful attendance as “Two or fewer absences, tardies, or early dismissals combined for the entire school year.” The county board presents a Perfect Attendance Award and Faithful Attendance Award to students who qualify. (Anderson County Board of Education)

MAKE-UP WORK

A student who has been absent or dismissed early from school is expected to make up all schoolwork. The student should make arrangements with the teacher for making up assignments within five days of his/her return to school. Students are expected to complete such work within ten days of their return.

MASTERY POLICY

Students are required to master / resubmit all major assessments which are scored below a 60%. Failure to do so will result in academic ISS.

GRADE WEIGHTING GRADES 6 – 8 2018-19

MINOR: Table lists a MINIMUM number of assignments with weightings for minor. The assignments listed are only examples or suggestions for minor grades. Please feel free to use your own ideas.

MIDDLE – for grades 6 to 8

	Minor	Major
Language Arts	(a minimum of 7) 50% Comprehension strategies and skills; language assessments (vocabulary); response journals; writing assessment; responses in literature	(a minimum of 2) 50% Unit tests; extended writing responses; multiple choice writing assessments
Math	(a minimum of 7) 50% Grades based on daily activities or assignments/including subject specific content knowledge; process skills; quizzes; performance assessments; math journals	(a minimum of 2) 50% Major tests; culminating projects; grades should be based on subject-specific content knowledge; process skills including problem solving
Science	(a minimum of 5) 50% Grades based on activities/assignments including subject specific content knowledge; process skills; quizzes; science lab participation; science lab/class journal entries; writing assignments; observation; checklists; presentations; performance assessments; portfolios	(a minimum of 2) 50% Major tests; culminating projects; performance assessments; grades should be based on subject-specific content knowledge; thinking/reasoning skills
Social Studies	(a minimum of 5) 50% Grades based on activities/assignments including quizzes, writing assignments; grades may be based on subject specific content knowledge; observation, presentations, portfolios; thinking/reasoning skills; communication skills	(a minimum of 2) 50% Major tests; culminating projects and performances; grades may be based on subject-specific content knowledge; thinking/reasoning skills; communication

MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY FEES

Materials fees are \$16.00 for the year. These fees are used to supplement the rising costs of supplies and materials used in our school. The Paid Protection Plan for coverage of damages to district owned iPads costs \$29.00 for the year. The fee must be paid before the school can issue an iPad to the student.

TEXTBOOKS

Students are expected to take proper care of textbooks. Parents or guardians are required to pay for lost or damaged books. Teachers have a list of the charges for lost or damaged textbooks.

INSURANCE

Accident insurance coverage is provided for all students through Anderson School District One at no charge. Specific information about the coverage will be available to students and parents at registration. Students who participate in interscholastic athletics are **required** to buy the athletic insurance that is offered through the school.

MEDICATION

All medications must be submitted to the school nurse along with doctor-written instructions for administration. The school nurse cannot deviate from the written dosage instructions. Classroom teachers are not allowed to administer medication to students. **Students are not allowed to keep medication of any type in their possession without special permission.** Failure to turn in medication to the office may result in suspension from school.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are **recommended not to bring** anything to school that is not directly related to academics. Such things as cell phones, iPods, trading cards, toys, skateboards, etc., are a distraction and, therefore, are not needed at school. If such items are brought on campus for use after school hours, they should be locked in lockers during the school day. **The school will not be responsible for loss of any such personal property.** For obvious reasons, valuables such as expensive jewelry and large amounts of money should not be brought to school. **Regular backpacks (i.e., of normal size) are used for carrying items to and from school. They are not to be taken into classrooms. Cinch sacks are allowed in the classrooms.**

LOCKERS

Lockers will be assigned to students during the first week of school. Homeroom teachers will issue the locker number and combination to you. Money, jewelry or other valuables should not be considered safe in lockers. The school is not responsible for loss of books, notebooks, gym clothes etc., from lockers whether they are locked or not. If students have locker problems, they should contact their homeroom teacher. Lockers are the property of the school and, therefore, graffiti, stickers, etc., are not to be placed on them. Any student who damages or defaces a locker will be disciplined and must pay for repairs.

Inside dimensions of lockers are approximately 9" x 11" x 27".

CAR RIDERS AND WALKERS

All passenger cars are to load/unload at the school's rear entrance. **All students arriving before 7:40 a.m. will report directly to their grade level hallway.** Dismissal time is 3:00 p.m. Parents should pull forward in the car line to allow room for cars behind them. Always load safely at the curb and leave the area immediately to allow others access to the loading zone. No one should be picked up on the grass and cars should remain in the car circle on the asphalt.

Students who are walking home should leave the campus immediately after dismissal. ***Supervision is only provided in the bus and car loading areas at the front and rear of the building.*** *Parents should be aware that students are not supervised if they meet rides in unauthorized areas or remain in unauthorized areas on campus after dismissal.* Students who do not adhere to these expectations may be subject to disciplinary action. This is for the SAFETY of ALL students!!!

SCHOOL HOURS

Regular supervision of students is provided between the hours of 7:20 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Students should be dropped off and picked up as close to these times as possible.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Students are expected to exercise proper care in the use of computers and other school-owned technology. Mistreatment or abuse of such items will result in disciplinary action.

Technology provided by the school is to be used for legitimate educational purposes only.

Students should never access inappropriate or restricted information such as pornography or other obscene material or information not directly related to the educational purposes for which internet access is being provided.

Please note the following:

- Students are not to access personal e-mail accounts (Yahoo mail, Hotmail, etc.) at any time.
- Social networking sites (such as Facebook) are not to be accessed from school-issued devices.
- Blogs, message boards, web forums and chat rooms should not be accessed from school-issued devices.
- The "Google Images" site is not to be used without direct staff supervision.
- Students should not attempt to bypass the Internet content filters.
- Students should not share their user names or passwords.
- Students should not set up web-based accounts from school devices or district accounts.

Students who choose to violate the above policies should expect to be disciplined by the administration. In addition, a student's user I.D. and password may be inactivated as a result of violating technology use policies.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

By action of the School District One Board of Trustees (Policies GBAA & JC(A)), sexual harassment by students or employees toward other students or other employees is prohibited. All persons must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment.

Any student who feels he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment may file a complaint with the principal, guidance counselor, or assistant superintendent for administration at the district office. Copies of Policies JC(A) and GBAA are available in the school office, media center, and the district office.

TELEPHONES, MESSAGES AND DELIVERIES

All telephones in the school are business phones for official use only. Students will not be called to the telephone. Phone messages will not be delivered to students during class. Students will be called to the main office at appropriate times to receive messages which are left for them. It will be each student's responsibility to pay attention to these announcements. **Food, flowers, and other deliveries should not be brought or sent to students at school.**

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to closely follow the progress of their child through Parent Portal. Grade level teachers have a common planning time that is available for meeting with parents about the student's progress. Appointments may be made through the office. Teachers may also be contacted by e-mail at the school's website: <http://asd1.schoolwires.com/pmms>. Choose the "Classrooms" button to view the directory.

CAFETERIA

- See cafeteria for pricing \$1.20 breakfast, \$.30 reduced; \$2.40 lunch, \$.40 reduced
- Meal assistance applications are available online via the website lunchapplication.com
- While in the serving line, stay in line, do not pass, do not bother others, and be polite to the servers.
- **Once seated, do not move to another table.**
- Food and drinks are not to be taken out of the cafeteria.
- Carry the tray to the disposal counter and then follow instructions given to you when it is time to leave the cafeteria.
- Practice good citizenship. Leave the table clean; pick up trash that you drop on the floor.
- Breakfast is served in classrooms during homeroom.

BUSES

To assure safety on school buses, it is essential that students and parents recognize the necessity for all bus riders to cooperate fully with the bus driver and to observe the rules.

When boarding the bus, students should wait until the bus stops before approaching the door. They are to remain seated until they leave the bus. The driver may assign a student a particular seat. Students must never extend arms, legs, or head out of the bus; nor throw anything from the bus. Students are not to open windows or tamper with the emergency door or any other bus equipment. No objects are to be placed in the aisle of the bus. Students are to be orderly at all times; there will be no shouting in or from the bus.

Boarding a bus is the same as entering school grounds. The bus driver reports students who create a disturbance. The principal, as authorized by state regulations, may suspend or deny bus transportation to a student whose conduct is persistently or flagrantly detrimental to the safety and order of the bus. Violation of district bus policies may result in the following disciplinary actions:

First Offense: A verbal warning.

Second Offense: Suspension from riding the bus for one to five days.

Third Offense: Suspension from riding the bus for two to ten days.

Fourth Offense: Suspension from riding the bus for at least three days and possibly for the remainder of the school year. (Some offenses may also result in suspension in/from school.)

No one is allowed to leave the bus at a stop other than his regular stop or ride a bus other than his regular bus. All students arriving before 7:40 a.m. will report directly to their appropriate hallway.

STATEMENT REGARDING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT

Students taking courses for a Carnegie unit (i.e., Algebra I and English I) prior to their ninth grade year may retake any such course during their ninth-grade year. In this case, only the ninth-grade retake grade will be used in figuring the student's GPR and only the ninth-grade attempt will show on the transcript. This rule will apply whether the grade earned is higher or lower than the pre-ninth grade attempt.

ASSAULT OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

A student who commits an assault and battery, other than one that is aggravated, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event against any person affiliated with the school in an official capacity including, but not limited to, administrators, teachers, faculty, substitute teachers, teachers' assistants, student teachers, custodial staff, food service staff, volunteers, law enforcement officers, school bus drivers, school crossing guards, or other regularly assigned school-contracted persons is guilty of assault and battery against school personnel which is a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars, or imprisoned not more than one year or both. This is in compliance with state law 16-3-612.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Students should make their parents aware of the following:

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") authorizes Anderson County School District One to release "directory information" of students to individuals who request such data. Directory information includes your child's name, address, telephone number, photographs (as related to school or district sponsored events, activities, and special recognitions), date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and most recent previous school attended, and other similar information. Information about your child may be requested by the local media for appearance in newspaper activities, on television, in radio broadcasts, on displays, on the World Wide Web (WWW) – a part of the Internet, or may be used in District or school promotional pieces.

If you object to the release of the above-referenced information, complete the *Release of Directory Information* form available at the school. Forms must be submitted within 15 days of attendance or the school will be free to release or use information on your child as appropriate.

