

**2023 - 2024**

**Unicoi County Middle School**  
**Parent/Student Handbook**



599 S. Mohawk Drive Erwin, TN 37650  
(423) 735-0236

Dr. Kevin Graham, Principal

Mr. Johnathan Kenney, Assistant Principal

## **Principal's Welcome**

Dear Students and Families,

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to Unicoi County Middle School. Our goal is to ensure that UCMS's long standing traditions of academic excellence and community engagement continue. In order to best meet the needs of our students and families we have prepared this handbook as a guide for the upcoming year. We believe that our stakeholders should have the necessary knowledge and opportunities to actively support our school community.

This family/student handbook has been designed to provide students and families with facts about Unicoi County Middle and our daily procedures. We strongly encourage you to take the time to read this information and share it with your student. As you read this handbook you may note some changes from the prior year, if you have additional questions or need more information please feel free to contact the school.

Additionally, you are encouraged to actively participate in our school community. Each family member is invited to become a participating member of the PTO and our volunteer programs. The more families that we have investing in our school, the more we will be able to accomplish.

On a personal note, I am excited to begin my third year as principal of Unicoi County Middle School. I came to UCMS from Rock Creek Elementary School. I am married (Brooke) and have two sons (Kip & Knox) who will be sixth graders at UCMS. I have degrees from ETSU (BS, MPH), Milligan College (MEd), Lincoln Memorial University (EdS.), and Carson-Newman University (EdD.). My personal goal is to ensure that all students receive a quality education in a safe learning environment that's conducive to academic and personal growth. I look forward to serving the students and community of Unicoi County.

Again, welcome to Unicoi County Middle School!

Sincerely,

Dr. Kevin Graham Principal

Dear Students and Families,

It is with great excitement and pleasure that I introduce myself as the new Assistant Principal of Unicoi County Middle School. As we prepare for the upcoming academic year, I wanted to take this opportunity to extend my warmest greetings and share a bit about myself and my commitment to your children's education.

First and foremost, let me express how honored I am to be a part of the UCMS community. I firmly believe that the role of educators, parents, and administrators is pivotal in shaping the lives of our young learners. Together, we have the remarkable opportunity to nurture their potential, foster a love for learning, and provide a safe and supportive environment for their growth.

I have arrived at UCMS after obtaining a Masters and Ed.S Degree from LMU in Instructional Leadership, and serving as the Principal of Both Temple Hill and Rock Creek Elementary schools. I am deeply committed to creating an inclusive and inspiring educational experience for all students. My educational philosophy centers on the belief that every child has unique talents and abilities that must be recognized and celebrated. I am dedicated to ensuring that each student receives the personalized support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

I am a strong advocate for open communication and partnership between school and home. Your involvement and support are integral to the success of our students, and I encourage you to actively participate in school activities, parent-teacher conferences, and other opportunities to engage with our school community.

Throughout the year, I will make it a priority to be accessible and approachable to all parents and guardians. Please feel free to reach out to me via email ([kenneyj@unicoischools.com](mailto:kenneyj@unicoischools.com)) or phone (423-735-7905) if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas you would like to share. Together, we can work towards the continued success of our students and the school.

Thank you for entrusting us with the education of your children. I am confident that with our collective efforts, we will make a significant and positive impact on their lives.

Wishing you a wonderful and productive academic year ahead!

Sincerely,  
Johnathan Kenney  
Assistant Principal  
Unicoi County Middle School

## **AFTER SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS**

Arrangements with your child about being picked up or riding the bus **MUST** be made prior to the school day starting. Students are not permitted to change afterschool procedures without written permission from a parent/guardian. Students staying after school for extra-curricular activities must remain in designated areas under adult supervision at all times. Students who do not follow this guideline may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Bad Weather Reports**

In case of inclement weather, please do not call the school. Our phones must be kept open for emergencies. All students will have an inclement weather form on file, we will follow the instructions on this form. For any special instructions please listen to the local radio stations or local television newscasts. This information will also be available on school and district websites and social media (Facebook & Bloomz).

### **Bus Loading Zone/Parent Drop Off and Pick Up**

The middle school loads and unloads buses at the gym entrance to the school. Cars are not allowed in the bus loading zone during school hours or during drop off and pickup times. Walker/rider students enter and leave through the front entrance. If you bring your child or pick them up at the end of the day, you will pull to the furthest spot on the covered walkway to do so. Students should get out of cars all along the covered walkway, not just in front of the entry doors. We must keep the traffic flowing to allow parents to drop students off without having long lines backed up onto Mohawk Drive, impeding entry to not only our campus, but all of the surrounding schools. Please use great caution when driving in our parking lot. Watch for students entering or exiting the building.

### **Check-In and Check-Out**

A parent or guardian whose name appears on the emergency form must come into the school office and sign the student out of school. After checking out through the office, the student must leave the building. If the student needs to go with someone else, the parent or guardian should send written permission allowing the student to leave the school or ride the bus home with another student. That note should be brought to the office upon the student's arrival at school. A telephone number where you can be reached should be included on the note. Office personnel will call to verify the authenticity of the note if necessary. When you arrive at the school to check in or check out your student, please remain in your car and call (423) 735-0236 and we will give instructions on how to proceed.

### **Early Dismissals**

There is a possibility that students will be dismissed early due to inclement weather. Please discuss with your child what he/she should do if this occurs. Calling home for directions is not a viable option for a school of our size. Please have a plan in place.

### **Emergency/Security/Safety Drills**

Safety is of the utmost concern for our students. Fire, lockdown, reverse evacuation, off site evacuation, and tornado drills are held at regular intervals throughout the school year. Remember these basic rules: 1. Check the instructions in each classroom indicating how to leave the building in the case of fire. 2. Walk. No Talking. Move quickly and quietly to designated areas. We also practice additional safety drills throughout the year to prepare our students for emergency situations. We have an SRO officer who conducts regular building safety checks throughout the day and is present during arrival and dismissal

### **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

All students are required to meet any financial obligations, such as the cost of lost or damaged books, material, equipment, unpaid library fines, fees, balance on pictures, announcements, etc. ordered through the school.

### **HOMEWORK MAKE-UP POLICY**

Students may be given the opportunity to make-up class and homework assignments. Students will be responsible for making the arrangements to successfully complete their assignments. The responsibility for making up assigned work is an important learning experience for life. Our standards result in high accomplishments if we all work together. Additional guidelines for missing assignments can be found in our discipline plan.

### **ILLNESS**

UCMS has a full time nurse that is available to the students. If a student becomes ill at school, they may see the nurse who will examine the student and facilitate information to the parents and guardians. It is very important that you give the school several emergency phone numbers in the event of an emergency.

## **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY**

The school day begins promptly at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. That is students in seats and ready to learn at 7:45 a.m. We open the doors at 7:15 a.m. each morning.

## **MEDIA RELEASE FORM**

Any parent/guardian signing the approval of the media release form grants permission for the student's image to appear in the yearbook, newspaper, brochures, newsletters, video and digital images.

## **SCHOOL EXCURSIONS**

Any student leaving the campus for a school sponsored excursion must have written permission from a parent. Field trips require student behavior appropriate to school standards. The administration team will evaluate participants prior to the trip to determine eligibility based on discipline, attendance, academics, etc. The administration team reserves the right to exclude students from non-academic school trips at any time prior to departure based on the above-named criteria. When possible, refunds, minus any deposits that have already been paid, will be given to students who are determined by administration to be ineligible for the trip.

## **SCHOOL PUBLICITY**

To publicize any school activity using television, radio, or newspaper, permission must be obtained from the school office. Any organization desiring to place posters or other advertising media in the school or on school social media sites for school or outside activities must have the approval of the school office.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are furnished by the local school system and the students and parents are responsible for the care of these books. Lost or damaged books must be paid for prior to the following: 1. Release of transcripts, 2. Other books furnished, or 3. Report cards given at the end of the nine weeks or school year.

## **Emergency Care Forms**

These forms will be filled out online by the custodial parent(s). **We cannot overemphasize the importance of these forms.**

We use these forms to contact parents or other contacts you list when we need someone for the child. We want to make sure we are contacting the appropriate person when the need arises. We need up-to-date facts on the emergency forms in case your child becomes ill or gets hurt. If at any time during the year a change in the custody, phone number, address or information concerning people allowed to pick up your child occurs, the parent/legal guardian must come to

the school or go online into Skyward to update the necessary changes. If a change in custody occurs, court documents must be presented and kept on file in the student's permanent record.

**Please notify the school immediately if your phone number, address, custody situation, or any other important information changes in the course of the year.**

The following forms will be available online and need to be completed immediately so that we have the necessary information if we should need it:

- Emergency Care Form (Everyone)
- Free Textbook Agreement (Everyone)
- Request for a Waiver of School Fees (If Applicable)
- Application for Free or Reduced Meals (If Applicable)
- Media Release Form
- Home Residency Form
- Technology Agreement

### **Report Cards**

Students are given grade cards at the end of each nine week grading period. A mid-term report will be sent home half way through each grading period as well.

The school grading scale:

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

Report cards will be computer generated and only officially printed on the last day of school and sent home.

## **MEDICINE POLICY 6.405**

All prescription medications given at school shall be prescribed by a licensed physician on an individual basis as determined by the child's health status.

A. Prescription medications must be brought to school in the original, pharmacy labeled container. The container shall display:

- o Child's name
- o Prescription number
- o Medication name and dosage
- o Administration route
- o Date
- o Licensed physician's name
- o Pharmacy name, address, and phone number

B. Prescription medications require written instruction, information and possible side effects with a physician's signature on a permission form supplied by the school. Beginning and ending dates must also be provided.

### **All non-prescription medications given in school shall:**

A. Be brought in with the original retail label listing the ingredients and dose schedule on the packaging. The child's name is to be written on or in some way affixed to the container.

B. Require a written parental/guardian request which shall include:

- o Child's name
- o Name of medication, dose, route, time of administration
- o Discontinuation date o Reason medication is needed
- o Current parent/guardian phone number in case of emergency

A written request/permission form is required for all prescription and non-prescription medication to be given during school hours or during school sponsored activities. No medication can be taken until this form is completed and returned to the school with the medication. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the written request/permission form and the medication are brought to the school. The parent/guardian shall be responsible at the end of the treatment regimen for removing any unused medications from the school. When the duration of a



medication is complete or out of date, the parent/guardian shall be notified by letter to pick up the medication. All medication will be removed from the schools and delivered to the office of the supervisor of health and safety on the last day of school. Any medications not picked up after 14 days will be destroyed by the school nurse with documentation and a witness. In accordance with the Zero Tolerance Policy for drugs and medications, the parent/guardian is required to transport all medications, prescription and non-prescription, to and from school. The medications are to be delivered to appropriate personnel.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

The Board of Education sets aside two days a year for scheduled conferences. See the school calendar for dates. Notices will be sent home with times the teacher would like to meet with parents. Parents are welcome to schedule meetings with teachers. Please call the school to schedule a meeting with the teacher if the need arises.

Scheduled conference dates are:

September 14, 2023

March 14, 2024

### **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION--P.T.O.**

Our school has an active and productive P.T.O. Parents are encouraged to join our organization and attend the regular meetings. P.T.O. meetings are an excellent opportunity for parents and teachers to meet and get acquainted. Parents who wish to get involved or have questions are encouraged to call the UCMS office or get in touch with our PTO Board of Officers.

### **PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE) POLICY 6.4031**

Pediculosis, or head lice, is a common condition that has become a major school and community problem. It results in millions of cases, hundreds of millions of dollars of consumer costs and lost parental wages. The impact on school systems dealing with pediculosis is also very significant.

School system employees spend a great deal of time managing pediculosis in addition to the revenue lost because of children being excluded for school attendance. Persistent, or chronic, pediculosis also impacts student's academic performance when they are frequently absent from school, missing valuable instruction time. Finally, the negative social impact of persistent head lice is also important to consider for these children. Development of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the management of pediculosis provides an effective method for reducing the risk of transmission in the school setting with early detection and treatment. Since the greatest incidence of head lice is seen in children between the ages of 5-12, the Board has developed a Pediculosis Management Program for each elementary and middle school. **The Pediculosis Management Program includes routine school-wide screenings for head lice and their egg sacs (nits), scheduled lice case tracking and follow-up. The program also**

**promotes education among school children, school officials, educators, and parents. Once a child has been excluded from school for head lice, only the day sent home will be excused. Any absences thereafter will be unexcused. Once a student is cleared and returns to school, there will be NO excused days if there is a recurrence within two weeks of the initial exclusion.**

## **PHONE POLICIES**

### **PHONE CALLS**

To minimize classroom disruptions, students will not be allowed to use the phone or receive calls (with the exception of EMERGENCIES ONLY) during school hours. Students may use the student phone, located in the office, before school begins (7:45 a.m.) and after school ends (2:45 p.m.) when necessary. Students must obtain permission from a teacher and from office personnel before using the student phone.

**STUDENTS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR REMEMBERING TO BRING THEIR BOOKS, ASSIGNMENTS, LUNCH MONEY, UNIFORMS, ETC., AS THESE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED EMERGENCIES FOR PHONE CALLS.**

### **CELL PHONES and SMART WATCHES**

1. Cell phones and smart watches must remain **TURNED OFF AND PUT AWAY BETWEEN 7:45 a.m. AND 2:45 p.m.** Any student calling and/or texting during school hours **WILL BE HELD** to the cell phone penalties as listed in the UCMS discipline policy.
2. In a drill or emergency situation, electronic devices are not allowed due to the potential to create a safety issue. Violation of this rule may cause referral for disciplinary action.
3. **The taking of photos or the recording of videos in places where privacy is a reasonable expectation is strictly prohibited. This includes recording altercations on school grounds or at school events. Recording and/or sharing/posting of videos/photos under these circumstances at school or during any school-sponsored event (athletics, fine arts presentation, etc.) will result in disciplinary action. Anyone posting a video/photo of people or incidents at school wherein an expectation of privacy is warranted could face possible disciplinary action as well.**
4. Any lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices are not the school's responsibility. Students are responsible for their own devices.

5. Any Internet usage by the students needs to run through the Unicoi County School System server. Access to the Internet by any other means is prohibited.
6. Students may not “post” on social media sites while at school during the school day.
7. Students may not use electronic devices to bully or harass classmates during the school day.
8. Any refusal to immediately hand over the entire electronic device and its contents will result in additional disciplinary charges including but not limited to ISS.

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Offense</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense</b>
Electronic Devices/Cell Phones (includes smart watches)	Parent Notification Device collected, returned to student at the end of the day	Parent Notification Student signs in/out device at front office for 10 school days	Parent Notification Student signs in/out device at front office for 30 school days
Inappropriate Use/Possession of Technology	1 Day ISS Parent Notification	2 Days ISS Parent Notification	1 Day OSS Parent Notification
Deactivation of Computer Monitoring (Linewize) or any program used by the school	3 days ISS Parent Notification	5 days ISS Parent Notification	3 Days OSS Parent Notification

**NOTE: The use of any electronic device for cheating or dishonesty will result in: grade of zero on assignment, ISS, and confiscation of the electronic device. Additional consequences may apply if the student has previous violations.**

### **Visitors**

In order to request entry to Unicoi County Middle School, please come to the main entrance near the flagpole. Once parked, please remain in your vehicle and call the office at 423-735-0236 for instructions on how and when to proceed entering the building. We use these safety measures to ensure that our students’ health and their educational experience are protected to the best of our abilities.

All persons visiting the school should enter the building in the main entrance and contact the office. All other doors are locked for the safety of the students. A check in at the main office is required to visit any part of the school. A visitor’s pass must be obtained and worn when inside the building. All visitors must check out at the main office when they are ready to exit the building.

### **Withdrawal to another school system**

In the event of moving, please come and meet with the school personnel as soon as possible to fill out necessary withdrawal forms. This will help us gather all necessary records and information for the student and will make entering a new school much easier. Records will be mailed to the new school upon receiving a transcript request and clearance of any fees. Make

sure all textbooks and library books are returned and any fines have been paid.

## **ATHLETICS**

The school offers the following athletic teams: Football, Basketball, Baseball, Volleyball, Track, Cross Country, Softball, Soccer, Golf, and Cheerleading. In order to tryout/participate, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The student must not have reached the 15th birthday before September 1st of this school year.
2. The student must have passed at least 3 of 4 academic subjects which met five times a week during the preceding nine weeks. (No F's in more than 1 subject). A student must academically pass to the next grade.
3. The student must have, and maintain a highly acceptable standard of conduct.
4. **All student athletes must pass a physical examination that is dated after April 15, 2021 before trying out for or playing a sport in the 2023-24 school year.**

Students interested in participating in athletics should contact UCMS Athletic Director Stephanie Howard, 735-0236. Interested students can also contact the coaches of the individual sports.

Athletics is a PRIVILEGE-NOT a RIGHT

UCMS encourages participation in our athletics programs however no one is guaranteed a place on any team. These activities are considered extra-curricular and should be viewed as a privilege.

Student athletes must adhere to the standards of conduct and academic expectations set forth by the school administration and the individual coaches. These standards of conduct include both on-field/court actions as well as actions outside of the sport (i.e. in public settings, in the classroom, on social media). If these standards are not met the student athlete faces possible removal from the team.

Playing time and selection to athletic teams are solely at the discretion of the coach of each sport.

## **TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964**

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Unicoi County Board of Education prohibits the following discriminatory practices:

1. Preventing a person from enrolling in a school, class, or extracurricular school activity
2. Arbitrarily placing a student in a school or class with the intent of separating the student from the general population of students because of the student's race, color, or national origin.

3. Setting higher standards or requirements as a prerequisite before allowing minorities to enroll in a school, class, or activity.
4. Unequally applying disciplinary action based on a student's race, color, or national origin.
5. Failing to provide the necessary language assistance to allow limited English proficient students the same opportunity to learn as English proficient students.
6. Administering test or other evaluative measures which by design or by grading do not allow minority students the same opportunity to present a true measure of their abilities.
7. Providing advice or guidance to minority students with the intent to direct minority students away from school, classes, or educational activities based on the race, color, or national origin.

#### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The Board has set, in compliance with the State Department of Education requirements, a daily student attendance goal of 95%. The attendance supervisor/director of schools oversees the entire attendance program which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student parent/guardian. Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or his/her designee. Excused absences shall include:

1. Illness documented by a doctor's excuse;
2. Death of immediate family member;
3. Medical appointments w/documentation
4. Religious observances
5. Court appearance w/ documentation

6. Medical appointments should be made after school. If made during the school day, the child will be excused for a reasonable amount of time for the appointment. Students should return to school with a doctor's excuse.

**Chronic absenteeism has shown to negatively impact student academic progress. Students who are chronically absent (for any reason) are less likely to be “on grade level” or even graduate high school. Make every attempt to attend class unless absolutely necessary.**

### **Attendance Related Information**

1. School-sponsored trips are not counted as an absence.
2. Extreme weather conditions with no bus service will not count as an absence.
3. Students will be allowed 3 Excused Absences using Parent Notes

### **Attendance Awards**

Students who are present everyday for the entire day will receive perfect attendance awards. **Students must be at school from 7:45 to 2:45 every school day and cannot have any tardies or check-outs for the entire school year to receive a perfect attendance award.**

### **Tardies**

First period classes will begin promptly at 7:45. Students are to be in their seats and ready to learn by this time. After the 5th unexcused tardy to first period, a student will receive one day of ISS. Once the student accumulates 10 total unexcused tardies, he/she will receive two days of ISS. Each unexcused tardy after the 10th will result in a day of ISS.

In the case of excessive tardies (5+), the school may require Doctor's excuses to count tardies as “excused.” After passing that threshold, parent notes for tardies will not be accepted.

## **TRUANCY POLICY**

### **Unicoi County Schools will be using a Tiered Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan**

#### Tiers 1 (ALL Students)

- a. Promote and reward good attendance
- b. Monitor unexcused absences 1 - 4

#### Tier 2 (After 5 Unexcused absences)

1. Conference with a parent
2. Attendance contract
3. Formal assessment and documentation of reasons for absences
4. Online truancy course for parents to complete

#### Tier 3 (If no improvement in Tier 2)

1. School based restorative justice program
2. Possible tutoring services focusing on improvement
3. Truancy Education Program

#### Referral to Court

1. Prior written notice to parents
2. Documentation of progressive truancy interventions

## **Bus Conduct**

“A pupil shall become ineligible for transportation when his behavior is such as to cause dissension on a school bus, or when he disobeys state or local rules and regulations pertaining to pupil transportation.” This quotation is from **State Rules, Regulation and Minimum Standards**.

The following Rule and Regulations for students that ride a school bus have been developed to insure a safe, economic and orderly operation.

1. Students are under the supervision of the school bus driver from the time they board the bus in the morning until they reach school, and from the time they leave school until they arrive at home or someplace designated by their parents/guardian.
2. Drivers may assign students a permanent seat on the bus if they wish.
3. Once a student is seated, permission from the driver is required to change seats.
4. Students will not be excessively noisy while on the bus.
5. Students will not be permitted to throw any objects while on the bus.
6. Students will not use any vulgar or profane languages while on the bus.
7. Students will not use tobacco in any form while on the bus.
8. Students will not be permitted to have any dangerous toys or other items that might cause injury on the bus. This would include water squirt guns, etc. Science specimens which are to be taken to school in glass jars will also be closed in cardboard or wooden boxes. No food or drinks will be permitted on the bus without the bus driver's permission.



9. Students will be let off a bus only at their designated destination unless written permission from their parents, signed by the school officials, given authority to the bus driver to go otherwise.
10. Buses will not stop at stores and other sites for students to make purchases or visit.
11. All incidents of misconduct will be reported by the driver to the principal. If a student misbehaves on the way to his home and refuses to obey the driver, the driver when he delivers the student home may refuse to haul the student again until the parents go to the school and get the matter settled.
12. Students will pay for any damage done deliberately to the bus. High school and middle school students who are required to wait at an elementary school for a bus shall be under the supervision of the elementary teachers standing bus duty.

A student may be denied the privilege of riding the bus if determined by the principal that his/her behavior is such as to cause disruption on the bus, or when he/she disobeys state or local rules and regulations pertaining to student transportation.

**These rules are to ensure the safety of ALL students riding the bus and will be strictly enforced.**

### **BREAKFAST AND LUNCH INFORMATION**

Students may purchase a healthy lunch at the school food serving area, for a cost of \$2.65 per child (Free or reduced area amounts are available pending application approval). Breakfast will be provided to all students FREE of charge and a second chance breakfast will be offered at 9:00 am each morning. Students may bring their lunch if they do not wish to purchase it. Those carrying their lunch are to eat in the cafeteria with all other students. During lunch period students accompanied by the teacher go to and from the cafeteria as a group. Any deviation from this schedule will have to be approved by the principal.

A la carte items will be available this year. UCMS will have \$0.50 and \$1.00 ice creams (students who are charging lunch will not be allowed to charge A la carte items. Other snacks and drinks will also be available for purchase.

Students who have withdrawn or graduated from Unicoi County Schools can request a refund of the credit balance in their lunch account within 30 days of graduation or withdrawal . Please contact School Nutrition at 423-743-1612 for assistance.

### **CAFETERIA CONDUCT RULES:**

1. Walk; do not run, to and from the cafeteria.
2. Do not make excessive noise.
3. Do not step ahead of or push others in line.
4. When students enter the lunchroom, they are to remain seated unless otherwise given permission by principal, assistant principal or designated lunch monitor.
5. No food or drink is to be taken from the eating area to be eaten elsewhere.
6. Pick up and dispose of all trash from your area. Return the tray to the proper place.
7. Students must leave the cafeteria silently EVERY DAY because others are having class

## **CAFETERIA REGULATIONS**

Unicoi County School Food Service receives funding through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA regulations monitor the consumption of competitive foods in the food service area.

The food service area refers to the areas of the school where meals are either “served” or “eaten”. **To comply with USDA regulations and school board regulations, no food or drink from commercial restaurants may be brought in the cafeteria to be consumed.**

\*\*Parents or others should not bring food from outside agencies (restaurants, delis, etc.) for students to eat during lunch. If this occurs, students will not be allowed to eat in the cafeteria with the other students and will have to eat in the office or other designated area.

I request your cooperation with adhering to these policies and regulations. You are welcome and invited to visit our cafeteria to have lunch with your child, but please follow the restrictions concerning food from commercial establishments.

### **Lunch Charges**

Students will be able to charge if they forget their lunch money. This service is intended to make sure each student has a meal; however students will NOT be able to charge for extra helpings or desserts. Charges should be paid back the next day. Students will be given a charge ticket in the office to take home for parents to sign and return the next day with money. If charges are not paid in a reasonable time, the parent will be contacted. **Charges must be paid back to the office in cash. Students are not permitted to take money out of their lunch accounts to pay charges in the office. Checks cannot be cashed to pay office charges and put money into their accounts. For accounting purposes both accounts must be kept separate.**

## **Resilient Schools Project**

An innovative partnership between East Tennessee State University, Ballad Health, and the Unicoi County School System will provide a framework to support students who have experienced trauma and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

The goal of the five-year initiative, called the Resilient Schools Project, is to guide administrators in identifying what tools, resources and practices the Unicoi County School System can provide to help these students overcome barriers to being successful in school.

ETSU's ELPA department, Strong BRAIN Institute (SBI), and Ballad Health are teaming with Unicoi County Schools on this project to offer training, coaching and assessment tools. Unicoi County Middle School is proud to be a part of this initiative.

The ELPA department and SBI are providing resources and working closely with the UCS Leadership Team to teach students how to respond to challenging life events. These university partners will make resources available to design and implement a continuum of support from elementary through high school that will serve as a model for other school districts in Tennessee.

Researchers with ETSU's Strong BRAIN Institute are involved in this partnership. The institute, which promotes the awareness and empirical study of ACEs, was established in 2020 through a gift from Ballad Health.

ETSU faculty member and Strong BRAIN Institute member Dr. Megan Quinn has provided information on the connection of neuroscience and the physiological impact of trauma on students. Dr. Christian and Dr. Virginia Foley spent the spring semester providing training to Unicoi County principals on ways to put strategic plans in place for learning and assessment. Dr. Christian added, "We are honored to partner with Unicoi County Schools and work collaboratively to support school leaders as they pioneer new innovative systems. The tools and evidence-based practices will connect the power of multiple resources working together for students. An educator's role is to understand and engage the brain much like a neurologist. "This work embodies the idea of teaching the whole child's heart and mind and links the medical research to educational practices," she added. "The Resilient School Project seeks to understand how to build strong brains while we capture students' hearts for a bright and productive future. There is no limit for students and schools in our communities.



**DISCIPLINE POLICY :**

It would be extremely difficult to list all infractions. The following chart is meant to assist administrators, teachers, parents, and students in recognizing the importance of appropriate and just disciplinary action. **The principal and assistant principal will use their own discretion concerning any matter.** The administration also may find it necessary to adjust penalties due to the severity of the violation. Chronic abuses or additional offenses are to be handled by the administration at their own discretion.

**Unicoi County Middle School  
Discipline Plan 2023 - 2024**

**\*\* All Consequences are Subject to Administration Discretion\*\***

**\*\*Any Behavior Not Noted in this Plan will Consequence at Administration Discretion\*\***

<b>LEVEL I:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Minor Infractions</b></li> <li>● <b>Classroom Managed Behaviors</b></li> <li>● <b>4th + Offense will be Administration Discretion</b></li> </ul>			
<b>Behavior</b>	<b>1st Offense</b>	<b>2nd Offense</b>	<b>3rd Offense</b>
Missing Assignments, Failure to complete homework: same class	Missing Work: 1-2 Option 1: Zero for the assignment - Grade level strike can be given Option 2: 1 day extension to complete the missing assignment - points may be deducted for being late  Teacher notifies parents - after 3 missing assignments (lunch detention) & after 5 missing assignments an in-person conference will be required with the Teacher/Student/Parent/Guardian.		
Dress Code Violations	Parent Notification and Warning – Options: Change into other clothing they may have or provided by the school, sent home	Parent Notification and Warning – Same as 1 <sup>st</sup> offense and 1 Day of ISS	Parent Notification and Warning – Same as 1 <sup>st</sup> offense and 2 Days of ISS 4 <sup>th</sup> Offense could result in OSS
Chronic Minor Infractions: General Disruptive Conduct (profanity, rudeness, dishonesty, gossip, passing rumors, instigating, etc.) <i>3 documented instances for the same disruptive conduct, not in same day/class</i>	Conference with Counselor to develop an action plan - that addresses the root cause of the behavior and future consequences.  ** 2 days lunch detention	Teacher Intervention 1 Day of ISS Parent Notification	Teacher Intervention 3 Days of ISS Parent Notification
Cheating	Conference with Counselor to develop	Loss of Assignment Credit (No option to complete assignment)	Loss of Assignment Credit (No option to complete assignment)

	and action plan - that addresses the root cause of the behavior and future consequences  ** 2 days lunch detention	for late credit) Parent Notification 1 Day ISS	for late credit) Parent Notification 2 Days ISS
Disrespect to Staff/Noncompliance <i>(Admin Discretion if offense warrants a more severe consequence)</i>	Conference with Counselor to develop and action plan - that addresses the root cause of the behavior and future consequences  ** 2 days lunch detention	Teacher Intervention 1 Day of ISS Parent Notification	Teacher Intervention 3 Days of ISS Parent Notification
Public Display of Affection	Verbal Warning	Parent Notification and 1 Day of Lunch Detention	1 Day of ISS and Parent Notification
Rough Housing	Teacher Intervention and Parent Notification	2 Days Lunch Detention / 1 Day ISS Principal Discretion	2 Days ISS
Cafeteria Conduct	Verbal Warning & No Recess	3 days of lunch detention	1 day of ISS
Out of Class without Permission	Verbal Warning	2 day of lunch detention	1 day of ISS

**LEVEL II**

- **More Serious Behavior Infractions**
- **Office-Managed Behaviors**
- **4th + Offense will be Administration Discretion**

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Offense</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense</b>
Electronic Devices/Cell Phones (includes smartwatches)	Parent Notification Device collected, returned to student at the end of the day	Parent Notification Student signs in/out device at front office for 10 school days	Parent Notification Student signs in/out device at front office for 30 school days
Disrupting a School Activity	Removal from Event Parent Notification	Removal from Event 1 Day ISS Parent Notification	Removal from Event 2 Day ISS Parent Notification
Bus Disruptions	Parent Notification and Verbal Warning or Admin Discretion	Parent Notification and 2 Day bus suspension or Admin. Discretion	5 Days bus suspension or Admin. Discretion Parent Notification
Bullying/Threats/Harassment	3 Day ISS Parent Notification	5 Days ISS or Admin. Discretion Parent Notification Student Behavior Plan	3 Days OSS or Admin. Discretion Parent Conference Student Behavior Plan
Aggressive/ Hostile Behavior	2 Days ISS Parent Notification	3 Days ISS Parent Notification	3 Days ISS Parent Notification

Inappropriate Use/Possession of Technology	1 Day ISS Parent Notification	2 Days ISS Parent Notification	1 Day OSS Parent Notification
Videotaping or Photographing nonconsenting students or teachers- sending images electronically or posting to social media.	5 Days ISS Device collected. Parent must pick up device from school.	3 Days OSS Device collected. Parent must pick up device from school.  Cell Phone Policy: Level 2	5 Days OSS Device collected. Student Behavior Plan Parent must pick up device from school. Cell Phone Policy: Level 3
Possession of Inappropriate Material	2 Day ISS Parent Notification	4 Days ISS Parent Notification	2 Day OSS Parent Notification
Insubordination, Defiance of Authority or Showing Disrespect; Failure to Report	3 Day ISS Parent Notification or Admin. Discretion	5 Days ISS Parent Notification or Admin Discretion	3 Day OSS Parent Notification or Admin Discretion

**LEVEL III**

- **Office Managed Behaviors**
- **SRO involvement may be initiated on all Level III Infractions**
- **4th + Offense will be Administration Discretion**

Behavior	1 <sup>st</sup> Offense	2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense	3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense
Alcohol, Drugs, Narcotics: Sale, Use, Possession, or Distribution	Zero Tolerance	Zero Tolerance	Zero Tolerance
Damage or Misuse of School Property	3 Days ISS Parent Notification Restitution Possible Court petition	5 Days ISS Parent Notification Restitution Court Petition	3 Days OSS Restitution Court Petition
Leaving school campus without permission	5 Days ISS Parent Notification	7 Days ISS Parent Notification Student Behavior Plan	5 Days OSS Parent Notification Student Behavior Plan Possible referral to alternative school
Skipping Class- Full class period or majority of class period.	3 days ISS Parent Notification	5 Days ISS Parent Notification	3 Days OSS Parent Notification
Forgery/Lying to School Staff	2 Day ISS Parent Notification	3 Days ISS Parent Notification	3 Days OSS Parent Notification
Assault/Battery (Physical) of a Staff Member	Prosecution in Court Recommended expulsion for the rest of the year.	Prosecution in Court Recommended expulsion for the rest of the year.	Prosecution in Court Recommended expulsion for the rest of the year.
Assault (Verbal) of a Staff Member (including intimidating or threatening remarks	3-5 Days ISS or Admin. discretion Parent Notification	3 Days OSS or Admin. discretion Parent Notification	5 Days OSS or Admin discretion Possible referral to alternative school Student Behavior Plan

and/or directed profanity)			
Derogatory Statements and/or written phrases. To include (but not limited to): hate speech, disrespectful comments about another person or group's sexual orientation, cultural background, or appearance. Can be verbal or written	5 Days ISS Parent Notification Referral to counselor	3 Days OSS Parent Notification	5 Days OSS Student Behavior Plan Parent Notification
Bomb Threats, Explosives, Dangerous Weapons (possession of or threat of) Including but not limited to: knives, guns	Recommend expulsion for one year. Police & parent notification Court Petition	Recommend expulsion for one year. Police & parent notification Court Petition	Recommend expulsion for one year. Police & parent notification Court Petition
Assault / Battery / Fighting (including instigating, pushing, physical contact) Aggressor may be treated more severely	Possible court petition Parent Notification 3 Days OSS	Possible court petition Parent Notification 5 Days OSS Student Behavior Plan	10 Days OSS, referral to law enforcement. Possible recommendation of expulsion and/or alternative school Student Behavior Plan
Deactivation of Computer Monitoring (Linewise) or any program used by the school	3 days ISS Parent Notification	5 days ISS Parent Notification Student Behavior Plan	3 Days OSS Parent Notification
Possession/Use of Vapes, Tobacco, Rolling Papers, or Incendiary Devices at School or School Sponsored Event	Confiscation 3 Days OSS Possible citation & court petition Parent Notification	Confiscation 5 Days OSS Citation and Court petition Student Behavior Plan	Confiscation 10 Days OSS Parent Conference Citation & Court petition Student Behavior Plan

## **BEHAVIOR IN THE HALLS**

Please keep our hallways open to traffic by walking to the right side. WALK through QUIETLY, staying to the left hand side of the hallway at all times; DO NOT RUN. Be polite to others in the halls and classrooms. Students should always be quiet when in the hall because others are having class.

## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT--GENERAL**

Harassment does not always happen face-to-face. It can happen on the internet, by text messages on cell phones, and/or by written notes. Parents/guardians should be aware of their student's communications with others outside of school and monitor/adjust for appropriateness. Incidents of harassment, bullying, or intimidation that takes place off of school grounds or outside of the regular school day, including cyber-bullying, may be addressed by school personnel if those incidents affect the school day. Contact the school office or speak to an administrator regarding any issues of bullying and/or harassment.

Is it bullying? To help determine if someone is being bullied, it is important to remember that middle school is a difficult transition for many students. Sometimes students can be RUDE (inadvertently say or do something that hurts someone else's feelings), MEAN (purposefully say or do something to hurt someone else once...maybe twice), or BULLY (intentional, aggressive behavior that is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may be verbal (words), physical (unkind touch), relational (turning friends against each other), or cyber (social media). The plan to address bullying is individualized and consequences increase in severity if the bullying behavior doesn't change. Be patient and continue to notify the school administration, counselors, and/or teachers if it continues. We want to keep you safe!

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of the Unicoi County School System to provide all students with a learning environment free from sexual harassment which interferes with learning. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct or communications of a sexual nature may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. Sexual Harassment is unwanted, unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is any act or comment (of a sexual nature) which makes another person feel uncomfortable. Schools are required by law to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment. In a school or work environment flirtation is often inappropriate, but sexual harassment is always illegal.

Sexual Harassment takes many forms. Here are just a few:

- Displaying offensive items, photos, posters, etc.
- Inappropriate gestures, touching, or grabbing.
- Sexual remarks, suggestions, and spreading rumors.
- Pressure for unwanted activities or encounters.



- ❑ Offensive jokes, languages, or teasing; whistles or catcalls

## **DRESS POLICY**

The purpose of a student dress code is to stress decency, modesty, and appropriate taste in appearance. A dress code is enforced to promote safety and to prevent students from calling attention to themselves and/or interfering with school activities. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure students leave home dressed appropriately for school. Students not adhering to the dress code will be given a verbal warning for the first violation. On the second violation students will be provided with alternative clothing. If necessary, on the third violation, the student will be placed in ISS until the parent can be contacted and provide appropriate attire. The student may also be sent home to correct the violation(s) if they continue. **Administration has the right to determine if attire or appearance is inappropriate for school. ALL DRESS POLICIES APPLY FOR FIELD TRIPS, DANCES, BALLGAMES OR ANY SCHOOL ACTIVITY.** The following **WILL NOT** be allowed at UCMS:

1. For safety reasons, students may not wear any pierced jewelry other than earrings and “studs” in other facial areas. This policy is in effect any time that students are on our campus or attending a school function, including buses, before and after school and on field trips. If in violation, students will be asked to remove the jewelry. Further offenses will result in confiscation of the jewelry for parental pick-up and possible disciplinary action. In some courses at UCMS, students may be asked to remove all facial jewelry due to safety concerns. Failure to comply will result in possible disciplinary action.
2. Emblems denoting inflammatory intent, clothing with writing or characterization denoting obscenity, vulgarity, or the occult and clothing advertising drugs, alcoholic beverages, or tobacco are not appropriate.
3. Any hair color or style that is or becomes disruptive to the school day will not be allowed.
4. No inappropriate holes in clothing. Modest holes in pants and jeans below the fingertip will be allowed. Leggings should be worn under large holes, or holes that are above the fingertips when arms are placed straight down in front of the body.
5. Waistbands of clothes must be worn at waist level and cover underwear. Pants must not drag on the floor. Shorts and skirts must reach the longest finger with arms held by sides. For athletic shorts, they must come past fingertip length both in the front and in the back.
6. No wallet chains, spiked jewelry, neck key chains or other accessories that could be dangerous. Jewelry depicting drugs, violence, or sex is not allowed. No costumes, masks, or face paint allowed unless approved for a school-sponsored event.
7. Bandanas, hats, toboggans, hoods, sunglasses or any head covering are not allowed inside the building. Bare midriffs, transparent clothing, spandex shorts, and pajama/flannel pants are not allowed. Shoes must be worn at all times on school property.
8. Leggings may not be worn as pants unless covered by a shirt, skirt, or shorts that cover the lower body to a modest length. Leggings must not be transparent.
9. No spaghetti strap tanks, low cut tops, or muscle shirts will be acceptable. Tank tops must have a strap equal to the width of three fingers. Shirts that fall off of the shoulder without tank tops underneath are not appropriate. Shirt length must come below the waistband of the pants when arms are raised.

10. Underclothing should not be visible at any time.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Certain items should be left at home. These include but are not limited to: playing and trading cards, handheld gaming systems, radios, recording devices, iPods, MP3 players, matches, lighters and any type of fireworks or ammunition. Excessive amounts of money, valuable jewelry, and other personal items should be left at home. UCMS will not be responsible for these items if brought to school. Faculty members have been requested to collect any of these items and turn them into the office. Parents are requested to come to school for the return of these items. NO STUDENT is allowed to bring a knife or other dangerous object to school. These violate zero tolerance board policy and could result in expulsion for up to one school year.

### **Prohibited Items**

No student may have in his/her possession such items as drugs, tobacco, vapes, matches, lighters, razor blades, knives, sticks, or any other item judged to be dangerous, capable of inflicting harm to self or others, or capable of causing property damage. These items will be confiscated and held for parental pick-up, turned over to law enforcement, or, if appropriate, destroyed.

### **RESPECT FOR PROPERTY**

Students who destroy school property are subject to legal action and are expected to pay for the damage. The student may be suspended until payment is made. This is punishable by state law.

### **STUDENT ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING K-12 6.3071**

Students will be notified in writing at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment that they shall be subject to testing for drugs and alcohol during the school year. Principals are authorized to order drug tests for individual students where there is a reasonable cause to believe that:

1. The school board policy on alcohol and drug use has been violated;
2. A search of lockers produced evidence of the presence of drugs and/or alcohol;
3. A search of persons and containers produced evidence of a presence of drugs and/or alcohol;
4. A search of vehicles produced evidence of the presence of drugs and/or alcohol; or
5. Through observation or other reasonable information reported by a teacher, staff member, or other student that a student is using drugs and/or alcohol on school property.

Upon receiving reasonable information, the principal shall take the following steps:

1. Call the student into the principal's office or another private place;
2. If needed, summon an appropriate witness to the proceeding and to assist in furtherance of the proceeding;
3. Inform the student of the substance information available to him/her which is basis for the determination that a test is necessary;

4. Inform the student of the procedures which shall be followed in administering the test.
5. Give the student an opportunity to decline the test and inform the student that if the test is not taken the penalty shall be suspension from school and a hearing before the disciplinary authority;
6. Notify the parent or guardian of the student of the impending test.

The appropriate witness shall take the student to a designated place in the school and collect a specimen from the student. The specimen shall be taken in a manner which will protect the privacy rights of the students and which will assure that the integrity of the specimen itself is not compromised. The type of specimen taken shall depend on the substance in question and the test performed on the specimen shall be appropriate for accurate detection of the substance in question. Once taken, the principal shall give the specimen an identifying number which in no way will reveal the identity of the student.

Upon receiving a written, certified copy of the analysis from the laboratory, the principal shall do one of the following:

1. If the results of the analysis are negative, all evidence of the individual test, including all records in the school that the test was ordered and the reason therefore, shall be destroyed.
2. If the results of the analysis are positive, the student and parents or guardian shall be given written notice of the result. In addition, they shall receive referral information which shall include in-patient, out-patient, and community-based drug and alcohol treatment programs.

In case of positive results of the analysis, the principal shall suspend the student and refer the matter to the disciplinary hearing authority for further action.

### **STUDENT GANG ACTIVITY**

The Board of Education has the responsibility to provide a safe, non-intimidating environment in schools to allow for uninhibited learning to take place. Gangs which initiate, intimidate, or promote activities which threaten the safety or well-being of the school environment are considered harmful to the educational process.

#### **The following policy will apply to gang activities**

##### **A. Dress**

Gang dress or gang symbols on lockers, notebooks, or anything brought to school will not be tolerated. Students wearing clothing denoting gang affiliation will not be allowed to attend classes.

- o 1 st Offense: Parents informed; student to leave school to change clothing or go to ISS.
- o 2 nd Offense: Five (5) days OSS.
- o 3 rd Offense: Expelled for the rest of the year.

##### **B. Harassment, Intimidation, and Threats to students**

- o 1 st Offense: Ten (10) days OSS.
- o 2 nd Offense: Expulsion for the rest of the year.

**C. Gang Related Fighting**

- o 1 st Offense: Ten (10) days OSS.
- o 2 nd Offense: Expulsion

**D. Gang Harassment to School Official or Defacing School Property**

- o 1 st Offense: Expulsion for the rest of the year.

**ZERO-TOLERANCE OFFENSES 6.309**

The Board of Education agrees in order to ensure a safe and secure learning environment free of drugs, violence and dangerous weapons; any student who engages in the following behaviors will be subject to suspension requirement on a case-by-case basis. Nothing in this section shall be constructed to prohibit the assignment of students to an alternative school.

1. Students who bring or unlawfully possess a drug or dangerous weapon onto a school property or to any event or activity.
2. Any student who while on a school bus, or on school property or while attending any school event or activity.
  - a. Unlawfully possesses a drug or dangerous weapon; or
  - b. Commits battery on a teacher, or other employee of the school. Note: Due process stops with the Superintendent Ref.: TCA. 49-6-4018

**Student Technology Policy**

Unicoi County Schools have access to computers, network, and the Internet. This technology is the most effective way we have found for introducing students to the global nature of information. It allows us to find, synthesize, and share information in a variety of unique ways. The Internet has come about because groups of individuals have chosen to network their computers in order to share information. A small minority have made objectionable materials available over the Internet. The Unicoi County School System takes every precaution to restrict access to this information. However, an industrious user may discover it. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on the Internet far outweigh the possibility that users may obtain unsuitable material. Disciplinary action will be taken against users found sending or acquiring objectionable material over the Internet or any part of the school system network.

Terms and Conditions of Use:

- Passwords if issued will not be shared among users.
- All network communication must be polite, kind, and free from inappropriate language.
- Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private.
- Personal work and electronic mail shall be deleted regularly due to space limitations.
- No personal address, phone numbers, full names, or financial information will be included in any network communication. No attempt to tamper with other people's data or gain unauthorized access to accounts or files is permitted.
- It is the user's responsibility to seek guidance from the system administrators if questions of proper use arise.

- The Unicoi County Schools do not condone and specifically forbid the unauthorized duplication of software.
- Users will abide by the copyright law.
- Students will be monitored.

**STUDENTS AND PARENT/GUARDIANS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SIGN A USER'S AGREEMENT.**

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires all students be taught by fully certified teachers. Tennessee's state licensure requirements still require a bachelor's degree and demonstrated content knowledge. Verification of licensure and certifications is maintained at the school system central office.

You as a legal parent/guardian, have the right to request information regarding professional qualifications of your child's teacher(s). Upon your request, the school system will provide you with the following information: whether a teacher is teaching under emergency status for which certification has been waived, and the degree major of a teacher and any other graduate degree or certification the teacher may hold. Under ESSA, you will be promptly informed if for any reason a non-highly qualified teacher teaches your child for four or more consecutive weeks.

ESSA also requires that instructional paraprofessionals in Title I schools demonstrate highly qualified status by passing a test to demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to assist in the instruction, having completed two years of higher education, or having obtained an associate's or higher degree. All instructional paraprofessionals at Unicoi County High School have demonstrated highly qualified status. You have the right to request information about the paraprofessionals that may work with your child. Verification of highly qualified status is maintained at the school system central office. .

## **SAFE SCHOOLS**

All Unicoi County Schools have been deemed "safe schools" under the guidelines of our state and ESSA. However, should your child become the victim of a violent crime at any Unicoi County School, you have the right to request a transfer to the nearest county school, pending their enrollment. The Tennessee State Board of Education Unsafe School Choice Policy states that the district may choose to facilitate a requested transfer to another school; however, such transfer shall not be required. Unicoi County Schools' faculty and staff are making every effort to prevent any situation in which your child may not be safe. If you have any questions regarding safety policies or procedures, please contact the central office at (423) 743-1600.

**Unicoi County Middle School (REFERENCE COPY--HARD COPY WILL BE SENT HOME)**

**LEARNING COMPACT: HOME - SCHOOL AGREEMENT**

**PARENT AGREEMENT** I want my child to achieve the high standards set forth by the State of Tennessee. Therefore, I accept my responsibility to do the following. (Please check the items you agree to follow.)

- See that my child is on time, has needed supplies and attends school regularly.
- Communicate frequently with my child's teacher to determine how my child is doing.
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain proper discipline
- Establish a time for homework, review it regularly, and monitor its completion.
- Provide a quiet well lighted place for study.
- Encourage my child's efforts and be available for questions.
- Stay aware of what my child is learning.
- Read with my child and let my child see me read.
- Check with my child for information sent home, read it promptly and sign and return.
- Volunteer when opportunities arise.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT AGREEMENT**

It is important that I work to the best of my ability. Therefore, I shall strive to do the following:

- Attend school regularly.
- Come to school each day with pens, pencils, paper, and other necessary tools for learning.
- Complete and return homework assignments. - Observe regular study hours. – Conform to rules of student conduct which includes displaying respect for all.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER AGREEMENT

It is important that students achieve and that we as teachers set high expectations of ourselves, students, and other staff. Therefore, I shall strive to do the following:

- Provide homework assignments that best fit the student's specific needs.
- Provide necessary assistance to parents so that they can help with the assignments.
- Encourage students and parents by providing information about student progress
- Use special activities in the classroom to make learning enjoyable.
- Communicate with parents on an ongoing basis through a multitude of avenues that will keep them informed and involved in their child's education. Ex: (progress reports, report cards, assessment and achievement reports, Phone calls, newsletters, notes, letters, e-mail, web-site, etc.)
- Hold conferences to discuss the Learning Compact as it relates to individual student's achievement and other information that will aid the parent in building their capacity to support their child's learning.

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## PRINCIPAL AGREEMENT

I support this form of parent involvement and acknowledge the responsibility of providing a safe environment and high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the child to meet the State's student academic achievement standards. Therefore, I shall strive to do the following:

- Provide an environment that allows for positive communication between the teacher, parent, and student and ensures that all understand the importance of communication in the child's education.
- Encourage teachers to regularly provide homework assignments that will reinforce classroom instruction and maintain an open line of communication with the parents.
- Provide Parents reasonable access to staff, and opportunities for them to volunteer in, observe, and participate in their child's classroom. (s).

Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

The Home – School Learning Compact is developed to outline how parents, the entire school staff, and students will **share the responsibility for improving student academic achievement** and how the school and parents will be partners in helping children achieve the State's high standards. ENROLLMENT POLICY 6.203 Unicoi County Board of Education



---

## Enrollment

In accordance with Unicoi County Board of Education Policy 6.203, any student entering school for the first time must\* present

1. A birth certificate or officially acceptable evidence of date of birth at the time of registration;
2. Evidence of a current medical examination. There shall be a complete medical examination of every student entering school for the first time. This applies to kindergarten, first grade and other students for whom there is no health record; and
3. Evidence of state-required immunization.

\*Enrollment of students who qualify as immigrants, migrant, and/or homeless, under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, may not be delayed due to lack of availability of the above requirements. Students will be enrolled and appropriate district personnel will provide assistance to the families in meeting the requirements in a timely manner.

The name used on the records of a student entering school must be the same as that shown on the birth certificate unless evidence is presented that such name has been legally changed through a court as prescribed by law. If the parent does not have or cannot obtain a birth certificate, then the name used on the records of such student will be the same as that shown on documents that are acceptable to the school principal as proof of date of birth.

A child whose care, custody, and support have been assigned to a resident of the district by a power of attorney or order of the court shall be enrolled in school provided appropriate documentation has been filed with the district office.<sup>4</sup>

A student may transfer into the school system at any time during the year if his/her parent(s) or legal guardian moves his/her residence into the school system.

Parents, guardians, or legal custodians of students who enter school who have been judged delinquent for an offense involving murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, aggravated assault or reckless endangerment shall notify the principal by providing the abstract of record required by law or other similar written information. This information shall be shared only with school employees who have responsibility for classroom instruction of the student. Such information is otherwise confidential and shall not be released to others except as required by law. The written notification shall not become a part of the student's record.<sup>5</sup>

### Legal References:

1. TCA 49-6-3008(b)
2. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.08(2)(a); TCA 49-6-5004(a)
3. TCA 49-6-5001(c)
4. TCA 49-6-3001(c)(6); TCA 37-1-131(a)(2)
5. TCA 49-6-3051

School Admissions

Monitoring:

Review: Annually,  
in November

600.02 04/19/01

## **Zero Tolerance Offenses 6.309**

In order to ensure a safe and secure learning environment, the following offenses shall not be tolerated:

### **WEAPONS & DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS**

Students shall not possess, handle, transmit, use or attempt to use any dangerous weapon in school buildings or on school grounds at any time, or in school vehicles and/or buses or off the school grounds at a school-sponsored activity, function or event.<sup>1</sup> Dangerous weapons for the purposes of this policy shall include, but are not limited to a firearm or anything manifestly designed, made or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious bodily injury or anything that in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.<sup>2</sup> Violators of this section shall be subject to suspension and/or expulsion from school. *Firearms (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921)*<sup>3</sup> In accordance with state law, any student who brings or possesses a firearm on school property shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year. The director of schools shall have the authority to modify this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. <sup>4</sup>

### **DRUGS**

In accordance with state law, any student who unlawfully possesses any drug including any controlled substance or legend drug shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year. The director of schools shall have the authority to modify this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.<sup>5</sup>

### **ASSAULT**

In accordance with state law, any student who commits aggravated assault as defined in § 39-13-102 upon any teacher, principal administrator, any other employee of the school or school resource officer shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year. The director of schools shall have the authority to modify this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.<sup>5</sup>

### **ELECTRONIC THREATS**

In accordance with state law, any student who transmits by an electronic device any communication containing a credible threat to cause bodily injury or death to another student or school employee and the transmission of such threat creates actual disruptive activity at the school that requires administrative intervention shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year. The director of schools shall have the authority to modify this expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.<sup>6</sup>

## NOTIFICATION

When it is determined that a student has violated this policy, the principal of the school shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian.

### **Discrimination/Harassment and Bullying/Intimidation and Cyber-bullying 6.304**

The Unicoi County Board of Education has determined that a safe, civil, and supportive environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. In order to maintain that environment, acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, hazing or any other victimization of students, based on any actual or perceived traits or characteristics, are prohibited.<sup>1</sup> This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parents. This policy shall cover employees, employees' behaviors, students and students' behaviors while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, this policy is in effect if the conduct is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process. Building administrators are responsible for educating and training their respective staff and students as to the definition and recognition of violations of this policy.

## DEFINITIONS

*Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment* - An act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and the act has the effect of:

- Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
- Knowingly placing a student or students in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- Causing emotional distress to a student or students; or
- Creating a hostile educational environment. Bullying, intimidation, or harassment may also be unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, nationality, origin, color, gender, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment.

*Cyber-bullying* - A form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, text messaging, emails, social networking sites, instant messaging, videos, web sites or fake profiles.

*Hazing* - An intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health or safety. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone or tolerate hazing activities.<sup>3</sup> "Hazing" does not include customary

athletic events or similar contest or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization

## **COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS**

Alleged victims of the above-referenced offenses shall report these incidents immediately to a teacher, counselor or building administrator. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal/designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy.

While reports may be made anonymously, an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation or to take necessary actions to resolve a complaint, and the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. The principal/designee at each school shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints.

The principal/designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy, and such act shall be held to violate this policy when it meets one of the following conditions:

- It places the student in reasonable fear or harm for the student's person or property;
- It has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Upon the determination of a violation, the principal/designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. Within the parameters of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, a written report on the investigation will be delivered to the parents of the complainant, parents of the accused students and to the Director of Schools.

## **RESPONSE AND PREVENTION**

School administrators shall consider the nature and circumstances of the incident, the age of the violator, the degree of harm, previous incidents or patterns of behavior, or any other factors, as appropriate to properly respond to each situation. A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including suspension. An employee disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator or the Director of Schools. Any student disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision in accordance with disciplinary policies and procedures.

## **REPORTS**

When a complaint is filed alleging a violation of this policy where there is physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a student or a student's property, the principal/designee of each middle school, junior high school, or high school shall report the findings and any disciplinary actions taken to the director of schools and the chair of the board of education. By July 1 of each year, the director of schools/designee shall prepare a report of all of the bullying cases brought to the attention of school officials during the prior academic year. The report shall also indicate how the cases were resolved and/or the reasons they are still pending. This report shall be presented to the board of education at its regular July meeting, and it shall be submitted to the state department of education by August 1. The director of schools shall develop forms and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this policy and TCA § 49-6-1016.

## **RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS**

Retaliation against any person who reports or assists in any investigation of an act alleged in this policy is prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act. False accusations accusing another person of having committed an act prohibited under this policy are prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension.

## **Child Abuse or Neglect**

### **REPORTING**

All personnel shall be alert for any evidence of child abuse or neglect. Child abuse is defined as any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition which is of such nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect or which on the basis of available information reasonably appears to have been caused by such. Staff members having knowledge or suspicion of any child who is suffering from abuse or neglect shall report such harm immediately.<sup>1,2</sup> The report shall be made to the judge having juvenile jurisdiction, the office of the chief law-enforcement official where the child resides, or to the Department of Children's Services in a manner specified by the department, either by contacting a local representative of the department or by utilizing the department's centralized intake procedure where applicable. The report shall include:

1. The name, address and age of the child;
2. The name and address of the parents or persons having custody of the child;
3. The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect; and
4. Any evidence to the cause or any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect.

The person reporting shall be immune from liability and his identity shall remain confidential except when the juvenile court determines otherwise. The director of schools shall develop reporting procedures, including sample indicators of abuse and neglect, and shall disseminate the procedures to all school personnel. However, nothing in the reporting procedures shall eliminate the staff member's legal responsibility to directly make a report to the authorities stated above.

## INVESTIGATIONS

School administrators and employees have a duty to cooperate, provide assistance and information in child abuse investigations<sup>7</sup> including permitting child abuse review teams to conduct interviews while the child is at school; the principal may control the time, place and circumstances of the interview, but may not insist that a school employee be present even if the suspected abuser is a school employee or another student. The principal is not in violation of any laws by failing to inform parents that the child is to be interviewed even if the suspected abuser is not a member of the child's household.<sup>8</sup>

### **How do I contact the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline?**

Phone: 1-877-237-0004

Web: <https://reportabuse.state.tn.us/> - Non-emergent situations only

Fax: 615-361-7041 - Non-emergent situations only.

### **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**

Your child will use the school system device(s) and will have access to the Internet. The school system will share your child's information with 3rd parties including but not limited to textbook manufacturers, eBackpack, Google (Google Apps), and Food Service Applications. Federal Law requires 3rd parties to provide protection and restricts how the information may be used. 3rd parties may store your student's information as long as they remain enrolled in our district and/or the service is used by the school system. If you would like copies of how the companies use the data, please contact your school district central office.

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal Law that protects the privacy of student education records and applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records and these rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible students has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, with a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA, which is the intent of this notice.

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

## **Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that Unicoi County Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain a parent's written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a child's education records. However, Unicoi County Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent has advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of director information is to allow the Unicoi County Schools to include this



type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent.

If you do not want Unicoi County Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing. Unicoi County Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

Footnotes: 1. These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c)

**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM (REFERENCE COPY--HARD COPY WILL BE SENT HOME)**

The Unicoi County Middle School Student Handbook is available at [www.unicoischools.com](http://www.unicoischools.com) and your child's homeroom teacher has also gone over the content with his or her class. Additionally, the handbook has been pre-loaded on your child's assigned Chromebook for your reference and convenience.

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER.**

I am aware of the disciplinary rules and consequences and other general information in the UCMS Handbook and have discussed these items with my child. We understand that we are responsible for the guidelines and policies contained in the handbook.

---

Date

---

Print Student's Name

---

Student's Signature

---

Parent's Signature