



Dacula Middle School

We are R.E.A.L. Falcons!

Respectful! Engaged! Accountable! Leaders!
Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Mrs. Kimberly Bussey, Principal

Mrs. Tasha Baumgardner, Testing Assistant Principal

Mrs. Charisse Deramus, Special Education Assistant Principal

Grade Level Teams

Dr. Bonnie Mondesir, 6th Grade Assistant Principal

Stephanie Smith, 6th Grade Counselor

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Registrar

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DACULA MIDDLE SCHOOL

137 Dacula Road

Dacula, Georgia 30019

<http://www.daculamiddleschool.org/home>

770-963-1110 (Main Office)

770-338-4632 (Fax)



VISION STATEMENT

Dacula Middle School will become a world-class school that provides a safe and nurturing environment where students acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and beliefs to be successful in college and careers in a diverse society.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Dacula Middle School is to develop each student into a highly literate critical thinker who can effectively collaborate, problem solve, and communicate his or her learning as evidenced by measured growth.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Dacula Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in programs, activities, or employment practices. Please contact the school's Title IX Coordinator, Mrs. Charisse Deramus or Mr. Blake Baldwin, if you have a complaint about the manner in which you are being treated.

DIGITAL LEARNING:

In the event of digital learning days, students are to abide by the same expectations for behavior as being at school face to face or at an off campus school-related function. Students should check their eClass page for any synchronous/asynchronous assignments.

MOBILITY IMPAIRED/HANDICAPPED ACCESS

Dacula Middle School wishes to meet the needs of all our students and families. If any member of your family needs assistance or has any questions regarding mobility impaired issues or

handicapped access, please contact the school @ 770.963.1110.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for a quality education. Time missed from class results in loss of valuable educational experiences. **Make 100% attendance your goal for this year.** We want students at school every day.

In case of a necessary absence from school, a student must bring a written excuse from a parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence. A student must be present at least half of the school day to participate in extracurricular/after school activities. In order for a student to be marked present, he/she must be in class by 12:45 pm and must not check out prior to 12:45 pm. A student's absence may be considered unexcused if a parent's note is not received within 3 days of returning to school.

The State Board of Education defines the following as excused absences:

1. Personal illness
2. Death in the student's immediate family
3. Recognized religious holidays observed by your faith
4. Absence mandated by governmental agencies
5. Incidents where attendance would be hazardous
6. Service as Page in the Georgia General Assembly
– student is counted present for the day

Early Arrival: Students are not to be on school grounds before 8:50 AM unless attending a supervised activity. **If students arrive at school prior to 8:50 AM, they must be dropped off at the cafeteria ONLY by using the bus lanes located off Auburn Road.** No student drop off is permitted in the front of the school prior to 8:50 AM. Students arriving before **8:50 AM** will remain in the cafeteria. If a student plans to attend morning tutoring, there will not be a monitor as early as 8:00 am. Students must arrive prior to 8:20AM if they wish to attend morning tutoring. A teacher will escort students from the cafeteria to the appropriate morning tutoring classroom. Morning tutoring days are as follows: Monday- Language Arts; Tuesday; Math; Wednesday- Social Studies; Thursday- Science; Friday- Connections.

Early Checkout: Missing instructional time is detrimental to a student's performance. Parents are urged to make dental, medical, and other appointments for students *before or after* school hours. If it becomes necessary for a student to check out during the day, parents must sign student(s) out in the front office. Office personnel will then call student(s) from class. **Parents will be required to show picture identification in order to check out their children. There will be no check-outs or transportation changes after 3:30 PM.** Students must have parent or guardian permission before early check out will be permitted. The staff cannot accept telephone authorizations to change transportation arrangements for students. Changes in transportation can only be accepted by email or fax that includes a picture id. We must have personal contact to verify that the request is from the parent.

Tardies to school: Students are required to be in homeroom by 9:10 AM. Students who arrive later are considered tardy and must obtain a pass to class from front office staff. Excused tardies include: illness, doctor's appointments, or late buses.

Tardies to class: Students should arrive to all classes in a timely manner. Tardies will count towards student consequences on the team discipline plan. Excessive class tardies may result in administrative intervention.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students are expected to ride the assigned bus and to get off at the assigned stop. If a student is going to ride a different bus home, then **a note must be given to the child's first academic teacher upon arrival on the day of the emergency.** Time must be allowed for phone verification by school personnel. **Drivers will not allow students to ride an unassigned bus or to get off at a different stop without written parental and administrative approval.**

Students not abiding by the rules and regulations of the School Bus Transportation Department will be subject to administrative intervention. Each bus driver has complete

charge of the students riding the bus. Failure to comply with bus rules may result in a bus referral.

- 1st offense: 1 day bus suspension
- 2nd offense: 3 day bus suspension
- 3rd offense: 5 day bus suspension

Students annually receive instruction on safe riding procedures. Bus drivers read the Bus Guidelines and Safety Procedures beginning the first day of school. Additionally, student view a bus safety video at the beginning of each school year. Monthly reviews are issued to enhance the safety of children being transported.

CAR RIDERS

We strongly encourage you to have your child ride the bus both to and from school; however, if that is not an option and your child will be a car rider, please abide by the following guidelines:

- Each car rider/family will receive a car rider number for pick up in the afternoon. Parents should display the car rider number in the front windshield of their car when picking up students during dismissal. Once their number is called/displayed, students will be dismissed to their car.
- Use the student drop off and pick up area located in upper front parking lot just outside of the media center.
- Student arrival does not begin until **8:50 am**. Students must remain in the car until staff members are on duty and signal for students to be released.
- There are directional signs and staff members located in the car rider lane to assist parents and supervise students.
- Do not pick up or drop off students in the bus lane area or in the front of the school during regular operating hours.
- During afternoon dismissal, parents are asked to turn off car engines while waiting on students.
- Students who are car riders need to be picked up at **4:00 PM**.

TRANSPORTATION FOR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Parents must provide transportation for before or after school activities. The school provides no transportation for before or after school club meetings and practices. **Please make arrangements for your student(s) to be picked up on time.** Students should be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of all activities. **Failure**

to pick up a student on time may result in loss of future after school activity privileges.

Students who are suspended either out of school or in school may not attend any extracurricular activity on day(s) of suspension.

CELL PHONES/OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Devices are provided by Dacula Middle School and it is NOT a requirement for students to have their own personal devices or cell phones. Due to the disruption that they can bring to a school day impeding the teaching and learning process, it is preferred that students not bring cell phones for use at school. It is important to know that if a student chooses to bring electronic devices, particularly cell phones, to school, he or she is doing so at his or her own risk. The school is not responsible for damage, loss, or theft. Electronic devices should be turned off (not on silent or vibrate) and properly stored away before school begins each morning. Devices should not be seen or heard during the school day.

Parents, we ask for your support by not texting or calling your child throughout the school day. If there is an emergency or a message that needs to get to your child, please call the front office or grade level office, and staff will deliver the message to your child.

Students who choose to disregard the expectations of cell phones and electronic devices subject themselves to possible disciplinary action. Insubordination issues related to these violations will result in disciplinary action. Our process to address cell phone use is as follows:

1. If a student is seen with a cell phone in visible sight, the student will be required to take his phone to the grade level clerk, who will secure it in a designated cell phone locker.
2. The student's parent will receive an email indicating that their child violated the cell phone procedures and was required to secure it in the cell phone locker in the grade level office. The student will be allowed to retrieve the phone from the cell phone locker at the end of the day. The clerk will give the

student a pass to return for their phone at the end of the day.

3. If this occurs 3 times with the same student, their phone will need to be picked up by a parent and the student will receive a school consequence.

CLINIC SERVICES

A clinic worker is available in the clinic each day to help with any serious medical problems that might arise. Teachers will use discretion in permitting visits to the clinic. A student may not remain in the clinic for an extended period of time. If a student becomes too ill to remain in class, the clinic will attempt to contact a parent/guardian to pick the student up from school. **Students should not attend school if they have had a fever over 100° within 24 hours of school or have thrown up within 12 hours of school.**

Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home. Students may not carry any medications on their person. In an effort to better ensure the safety of students, all medications (prescription AND non-prescription) must be delivered to the school **by the parent or guardian only.** In addition, medications must be accompanied by the GCPS "Administration of Medication Request" form completed by the parent. **Medications must be in the original, childproof container. Prescription medications must be in the labeled prescription bottle.** Any medication not picked up by the parent will be turned over to the SRO for discarding one day after the last day of the year for students.

DISCIPLINE

Gwinnett County Student Conduct Policy Statement (CODE JCD)

Please carefully read the Gwinnett County Student Conduct Behavior Code (Policy JCD) located in your GCPS Student/Parent Handbook. A student in violation of the Gwinnett County Student Conduct Behavior Code will receive disciplinary action

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Dacula Middle School follows a Positive Behaviors and Interventions (PBIS) approach to student behavior. Teachers will manage their classrooms under the guidelines of the school-wide behavior management plan in an effort to assist students in monitoring their own behavior thus encouraging them to make

appropriate decisions and demonstrate self-control in their actions and words. The DMS staff believes that behavior management is a learning process and that middle school students need consistent feedback and explicit instruction regarding the behavior expectations of DMS.

With successful implementation of the Dacula Middle School Behavior Plan, it is the desire of the DMS staff to intervene and assist students in correcting their behavior **before** making a referral to an administrator. Students are expected to follow all classroom, school, and district expectations. Should a student choose not to follow the expectations, the Dacula Middle School Discipline Plan will be implemented. All violations fall into one of the following categories; Classroom-Level, Minor, and Major.

The DMS Discipline plan for **Classroom Managed Behavior** infractions allow teachers, at their discretion, to assign the following consequences to students who do not meet the behavior expectation; Warning, Student conference with action plan, Silent lunch, AM detention, PM detention, or Saturday School. Examples of behaviors displayed at this level include, but are not limited to: Classroom disruption, Off task behavior, Not following directions, Unauthorized use of cell phones, etc. (See cell phone section for specific details).

The DMS Discipline Plan for **Office Managed** infractions are handled with an administrative referral. Examples of behaviors displayed at this level include, but are not limited to: Aggressive Behavior/Fighting, Harassment/Bullying, Profanity toward a teacher/student, Chronic violations of classroom managed behavior infractions, etc.

DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS

Dacula Middle School acknowledges that good grooming and personal attire positively affect student achievement and conduct. Dacula Middle's dress code is designed to reduce the likelihood of distraction or disruption and to maintain an academic focus in the classroom and on campus. Students will be expected to observe modes of dress, and personal grooming

that support the "First Comes Learning" atmosphere at Dacula Middle School. If a student violates the dress code, the parent will be called to bring the student appropriate clothing. A record of dress code violations will be kept, and consequences assigned for repeat violations of the DMS Dress Code.

1. Shirts/Blouses/Tops/T-shirts – Blouses/shirts should not expose any shoulders, midriff, or cleavage, and they should not be see-through.
2. Clothing with rips or holes above the knee will not be allowed. Should pants have holes at or below the knee, leggings must be worn underneath the pants. Boys are not to wear sleeveless shirts.
3. Clothing shall fit appropriately. Pants and shorts must be worn so as not to expose undergarments.
4. The following gear is not permitted: caps, hats, hoods, doo-rags, bandanas, wave caps, bonnets, sunglasses, or any other head covering. (*exceptions based on religious beliefs*). No combs, rakes, curlers or picks can be worn in the hair.
5. No student clothing shall display words or symbols that advocate or depict violence, drugs, alcohol, sex, racial slurs, demonic pictures or writing, illegal gang affiliation or other illegal activity expressed or implied. Clothing with student writing on it should not be worn.
6. Shorts, skirts, and dresses should reach below the fingertips when arms are placed to the side of the body with relaxed shoulders and fingertips.
7. Holes in ripped jeans should follow the same rule finger tip rule as well. If holes are above the finger tips, leggings or shorts should be worn beneath the jeans.
8. Shoes- Health regulations and safety factors require that shoes be worn at all times at school. The following are not permitted: bedroom shoes, flip-flops, or hee-lies are not permitted.)
9. No pajamas, sleepwear, or blanket of any kind are allowed to be worn/brought to school.
10. Students may not wear trench coats or other long coats that resemble the style of a trench coat to school.
11. Jewelry or accessories that may be used as weapons are not allowed to be worn at school. This includes, but is not limited to, wallet chains, mouth grills, jewelry such as spiked rings, spiked bracelets, two or three finger rings that are joined and bulky chains worn around the neck or waist. Sharp objects that could pose a danger, such as spikes or safety pins, are not allowed on clothing or book bags.

12. There are clothing or symbols that have been identified by the Gwinnett County Police Gang Taskforce as being commonly identified with gangs. Administrators will consider overall indicators to assess the appropriateness of the student's attire.

DRINKS

Students may bring water in a clear container from home to have during class. **Colored drinks are not allowed in the classrooms.** Juice boxes are allowed in the cafeteria during lunch only.

DELIVERIES

Door Dash or any other food deliveries are not allowed. Flowers and balloons will not be delivered to students nor should students bring them to school. They are a disruption in class, in the hallway, and cannot be transported on a school bus. Anything delivered to the school will be kept in the front office. Parents may pick them up at this location.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Parents/Guardians are welcome to come to school and have lunch with their child on his/her birthday. Please sign in at the front office prior to going to the Falcon Cafe. Birthday parties are not permitted. Parents may bring in cupcakes/treats for their child's class, but must communicate their intentions with their child's teacher at least 48 hours in advance. Any treats must be pre-packaged and not homemade.

VISITORS

Parents are invited to be involved in school activities; however, to ensure safety and security at Dacula Middle, all visitors **MUST** report directly to the main office to sign in. Once the visitor has shown proper ID, he/she will be issued a badge to wear while on school premises. Before leaving campus, visitors are asked to sign out. **Parents who wish to visit the classroom may request approval 24 hours in advance via the appropriate grade level administrator.**

Lunch visitation is permitted with proper registration via the front office staff. Parents are permitted to visit with their child in a

designated area during the child's scheduled lunch period. Parents must give written approval for any non-staff member other than themselves to visit with their child in the cafeteria prior to any visitation.

No visitor may park along the curb in the front of the school. Violators are subject to ticketing/towing.

SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO WINTER CONDITIONS

Inclement weather conditions may cause the school to be closed. School closings are determined by the Gwinnett County Public Schools Central office staff and not by the DMS staff. Announcements of closings will be broadcast via local news media (television and radio stations) as well as the GCPS SchoolMessenger system. **The basic premise to observe is that school is open or will remain open unless specifically announced otherwise.**

CLUBS & EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Eligibility for participation in basketball and cheer will be based on grades earned during the semester prior to the activity. Criteria to participate will include academic, conduct, and effort grades. A student must maintain satisfactory grades in all three areas in order to represent Dacula Middle School as a participant in extra-curricular activities. It is the student's responsibility to know the requirements for the various activities and organizations. A list of clubs and organizations can be found on the Dacula Middle School webpage at <http://www.daculamiddleschool.org/home>

GRADING/GRADE REPORTS

Students are expected to earn their grades on homework, classwork, and assessments based on their own performance. **Cheating is strictly prohibited.** Progress reports will be emailed weekly. A semester grade report will be issued at the end of each semester. Grades can be accessed daily in real time via the GCPS parent portal, ParentVue app, and the student's My eCLASS.

PARENT PORTAL

The Updated Parent Portal gives parents access to grades, assignments, and communication with teachers. The Parent Portal gives families a direct line to the classroom, with 24/7 real-time information and anytime, anywhere access, with in-portal translation in multiple languages. To set up

an account you will need contact our registrar, Jessica Curtis, 770.338.4630.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students will be given two days for each day missed to make-up work. **It is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for any missed assignments.** When it is necessary for a student to be absent from school, he/she should log on to My eCLASS and obtain assignments posted on the course content pages.

PARENT- TEACHER CONFERENCES

It is essential for parents, administrators, and teachers to work together cooperatively. Parents may write or email a child's teacher or administrator requesting a conference or may call the school and ask the teacher to call to set-up an appointment. **Parents wishing to visit the classroom may request approval 24 hours in advance via the grade level administrator.**

In October and February, GCPS middle schools have early release days to provide time for teachers to meet with parents.

USE OF ELEVATORS

Students who have injured themselves and cannot walk up the stairs should request an elevator pass via the school receptionist. Each pass is only valid for time prescribed by the students' doctor. Students should provide a note from their doctor indicating injury and length of time that they will need to use the elevator. Students will be assigned a same gender Falcon escort by their homeroom teacher. Students are not permitted to ride the elevator without their assigned Falcon escort.

USE OF TELEPHONES

The school phones are for business purposes. Phones are available to students only for emergency purposes. Emergencies do not include forgotten homework, projects, lunch money, or participation in after school activities.

Urgent telephone messages from a parent or guardian will be delivered to

the student by an office representative after the degree of emergency has been determined. Students will not be called out of class to receive phone calls.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

The mission of the Dacula Middle School Cafeteria is to pursue the education of nutrition and show the significance of how important nutrition is to the children of our community. All lunches are planned using a Food-Based Menu Planning Approach and contain 5 food components-Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Meat/Meat Alternate, and Milk. A reimbursable meal contains 3 of the 5 components at a minimum and a 5 of the 5 components at a maximum. A reimbursable meal also contains at least one serving of the fruit or vegetable component. We have a federal lunch program that offers free or reduced price meals for children.

LANYARDS:

Each student will receive a lanyard that includes his/her school identification. These are to be worn daily by students. Identification cards will include their transportation information, homeroom, and student id number, which will give them access to the cafeteria, media center, etc.

MEDIA CENTER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR USE

Because the media center is an important resource that is used by the entire school, it is necessary that all users are aware of the rules for using the resources in the media center.

- **Media center hours: 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM.**
- Always come to the media center with a clear purpose, such as finding an enjoyable book to read, finding answers to questions, or doing research. Since others are also in the media center with goals to accomplish, it is not the place to visit with friends.
- When using online sources, be sure to abide by the Acceptable Use Policy for GCPS. This policy states that students are to be responsible users of the internet. Use sites that are appropriate for acquiring school-related information. The first place to find information is the subscription databases provide by the

county. Google is not a first choice.

Personal email is not to be checked on DMS computers.

- If coming to the media center on a pass, please sign in when arriving and sign out when leaving.
- If a book is removed from the shelf and not checked out, please return the book to its proper location.
- Books may be checked out at the circulation desk. The student must have a teacher pass if not coming with the entire class in order to check out a book. Student books are checked out for 2 weeks. If a book is needed after this time, come to the media center to renew the book. The book must be with you in order to renew it.
- Reference books (encyclopedias and other books located in the reference section) may not be checked out. These books are identified with an R or REF on the spine.
- Students cannot check out books for other students.
- School projects may be printed in the Media Center at no charge.

COUNSELING

Counseling services are available to all students. Our counseling program, designed to be preventative and developmental, includes classroom guidance activities, small group counseling, individual counseling sessions, and crisis counseling. Counselors help students adjust to the demands and responsibilities of middle school, prepare for high school and the world of work, and learn to resolve conflicts with others. They encourage students to set academic goals, develop good study and work habits, and learn to make responsible decisions.

Counselors help parents understand the student's abilities, academic progress, and social, emotional, and educational needs. They also work with parents and students on communicating more effectively. School counselors are not able to work with individual students on a weekly basis but are available to meet with students upon request from the student, parent, teacher, or administrator. **If a parent chooses to exclude their child from any counseling activity, the counselor must have that request in the form of a letter.**