

AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL

HOME OF THE COUGARS

2022-2023

165 GORDON'S FAIRGROUND ROAD
AMHERST, VIRGINIA 24521
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BLAIR PAYNE, SCHOOL NURSE
TERRI CAMPBELL, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

THIS STUDENT PLANNER BELONGS TO:

NAME _____

Locker #/Combination _____

PHONE # _____

GRADE _____

HOMEROOM/ADVISORY _____

Amherst Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, handicapping conditions or national origin in its policies, procedures, educational programs and activities.

Welcome to Amherst Middle School

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to Amherst Middle School, home of the Cougars! We are looking forward to working with our parents and students as we begin what we know will be a successful and rewarding school year. We are very excited to have our students back for the 2021-2022 school year and we will work diligently to always be respectful, responsible, and resilient.

The information contained in the handbook section of the planner has been developed to help you become familiar with the facilities, activities, and guidelines concerning our school. Please take some time to read each section so that you become aware of items that pertain to you. The planner section will be used to help the students keep up with their assignments.

Our challenge and hope for our students is that they leave Amherst Middle School more successful and more prepared for the future than when they arrived. We will make every effort to ensure that they reach this goal and hope they will strive to be the best that they can be.

ACTIVITIES

At Amherst Middle School, students are encouraged to become involved in extracurricular and interscholastic activities. School rules and regulations are in effect for all activities, including assemblies and field trips. Students must attend school all day on the day of an activity in order to participate. Exceptions may be granted in cases such as medical appointments with an administrator's approval. Students who have violated school or team regulations or who have not completed their school work may be restricted from activities.

AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES

The following procedures have been developed to ensure the safety and well being of all our students. Your cooperation and support in implementing these procedures will be appreciated.

1. Students may not remain after school for games or other events unless the event begins immediately after dismissal. Students must go home as usual and return at the appropriate time.
2. Students must not be inside the school building after school hours unless being supervised by school personnel.
3. Students will not be supervised after school hours unless they are attending or participating in a school sponsored activity. Parents are requested to pick up their child on time from such activities, as they cannot be left unsupervised. Pick up times will be announced in advance. Students who are picked up late may be restricted from participation in after school events.
4. Students who do not abide by these procedures will be denied the privilege of staying after school.
5. Students with poor discipline records will not be permitted to attend after school activities.

AMHERST COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Middle school students are encouraged to attend sporting events at Amherst County High School. Students are required to be accompanied by a parent or by a sibling who is enrolled at Amherst County High School

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies will be scheduled throughout the year. Students must sit with their class in assigned sections at the assemblies. Teachers will accompany their classes to the auditorium or gym and sit with their classes. Appropriate student conduct is always required.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Attendance Tracking and Procedures for the 2022-2023 School Year

Amherst County Public Schools believes that school attendance is directly related to academic achievement and to the development of good attendance habits that are important as students enter adulthood. Optimum student attendance is a collaborative effort, and Amherst County Public Schools expects parents and students to take active roles in accepting that responsibility. One of the characteristics of a good school program is that students want to come to school. We hope each day's instructional program is rich enough that if a student misses one day then they have missed some important learning. Two of the most important times during the instructional day are first thing in the morning when the day's plans are being established and the end of the day when learning is being solidified.

- For each day the student is absent, the parent must provide a written note. Excused absences will only be granted for specific reasons:
 - medical or mental health concern or appointment verified by a doctor's note
 - an approved school-sponsored event (example: 4-H events)
 - death or serious injury in the immediate family
 - personal required court appearances with documentation from the court
 - approved pre-planned absences (must be approved by the Principal in advance)
 - extenuating circumstances approved by the Principal
- **Students may only miss ten school days with a parent's note. After the tenth excused absence, a doctor's note will be required for each time that a student is absent.**
- Vacations while school is in session will not constitute justification for an excused absence. In order to be considered excused with permission to make up missed assignments, absences must be pre-arranged a minimum of 10 school days in advance with the principal and will be considered very carefully on an individual basis. Please plan vacations during school holidays.
- Absences will be **unexcused** if notes signed by the parent, guardian, or medical professional are **NOT RECEIVED** by the school within **three days** of returning to school.
- Notes for student absences may be sent via email or fax:

- hdavilla@amherst.k12.va.us
- (434) 946-0258 (fax)
- Notes received late **will not** change the absence from an unexcused absence to an excused absence.
- When a student accumulates three unexcused absences, the school will contact the parent/guardian to make them aware of the absences and discuss the importance of attendance.
- When a student accumulates five unexcused absences, an ATTENDANCE REVIEW MEETING will be held at the school. At this meeting an Attendance Plan will be established to improve the student's attendance.
- At the next unexcused absence, a referral to the division attendance team will be made and a conference will be scheduled with the parent/guardian and student.
- Additional unexcused absences will require an INTERAGENCY TRUANCY REVIEW TEAM MEETING be held. This team consists of members from Amherst County Social Services, Amherst County Court Services, Horizon Behavioral Health, Amherst County Sheriff's Department, and the Children's Services Act Coordinator. This meeting will be held at the court services unit of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. The purpose of this meeting is to decide if a CHINS Truancy petition will be filed with the court.
 - Recipients of TANF are required to have good attendance and will be reported to DSS at this meeting, per Code of Virginia requirements.
- All subsequent unexcused absences from this point forward will be handled in the **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court**.

The Virginia Department of Education Standards of Accreditation include attendance rates. Students who miss more than 10 percent of the school year, EXCUSED or UNEXCUSED, will impact the accreditation of Amherst Middle School.

BULLYING

Virginia School Law defines bullying as “any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma.” Cyber bullying is included in this definition. “Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, arguments, or peer conflict”. Acts of bullying will not be tolerated at Amherst Middle School and students who bully others are subject to disciplinary action. Students are asked to report bullying to teachers, school counselor, administrators, or other school staff if they see or experience bullying.

CAFETERIA

Students are expected to enter and exit the cafeteria in an orderly manner. Students enjoying meals prepared by our cafeteria are asked to wait in the service line in single file, observing social distancing requirements. Students will receive their lunch from the cafeteria and return to their classroom to eat. Student eating breakfast will report to the cafeteria upon arriving at school and will report to their Advisory/Homeroom teacher to eat their breakfast. Parents may not provide food for other children.

Tardy Policy

The academic standards, which have been set by the SOL's make it very important that your child attend school all day every day. **One of the most important times during an instructional day is first thing in the morning, when students are settling in, preparing for learning, and receiving important announcements for the day/week.**

- Students are encouraged to arrive at Advisory/Homeroom at 7:30 a.m. With the instructional the instructional day beginning promptly at 7:45 a.m. If your child arrives after 7:45 a.m., they will need to report to the school counseling office to sign in and your child will be counted as tardy.**
- Students are expected to remain at school until 2:45 p.m. If a physician's appointment requires a child to be picked up early, the parent/guardian will be required for each occurrence to show a license or other photo identification and sign the student out on the computer.**
- Students should report to class with all required materials. If a student forgets materials and leaves to retrieve them and is not back by the bell they will be marked tardy.**

Students who are late to class will be admitted to class and will be subject to the following discipline procedures:

- First and Second unexcused tardies:** Warning
- Third and Fourth unexcused tardies:** Administrative conference with the student
- Fifth unexcused tardy:** Administrative reprimand AND plan put in place to eliminate tardies. Copy the tardy policy and have copy signed by parent/guardian. Students must return it the next school day or they will receive lunch detention until it is returned.

- D. **Sixth unexcused tardy**: 1 day of lunch detention
- E. **Seventh unexcused tardy**: 2 days of lunch detention
- F. **Eighth unexcused tardy**: 3 days of lunch detention.
- G. **Ninth unexcused tardy**: 3 days of lunch detention PLUS a mandatory parent conference with the student and administration PLUS a plan put in place to eliminate tardies and signed by the student, parent, and administrator
- H. **Subsequent unexcused tardies**: 1 day of In-School Detention

Tardies are cumulative. The tardy policy will be on a nine week basis. Students will have a clean tardy record at the beginning of each nine weeks. **Students will lose dance and field trip privileges due to extensive unexcused tardies and excessive absences. Please refer to page 4 and 5 for specifics.**

CLINIC

A well clinic and a sick clinic will be provided to assist in meeting the needs of our students. The clinics will be supervised by a registered nurse and trained ACPS Lay Responders. If a student gets sick when the nurse is not here, he or she may report to a member of the administrative team in the main office. Written permission should be obtained from the student's teacher prior to reporting to the office or clinic.

DANCES

Student participation in dances and other activities is a privilege. Students with any Out-of-School Suspension/Alternative to Suspension, two or more incidents of In-School Suspension, two or more bus suspensions, or a combination of (1) bus and (1) In-School Suspensions since the previous dance will not be permitted to attend the next dances. Any student with three or more separate incidents of OSS/ASC will not be permitted to attend any dance for the remainder of the year.

Students missing any class work assignments, quizzes, or tests will not be able to attend dances. Students will be informed of missing class work assignments, quizzes and tests one week prior to the dance. These missing assignments, quizzes, or tests will need to be completed and turned in three days prior to the dance to be able to attend the dance.

DISTRIBUTION OF OUTSIDE COMMUNICATIONS IN THE SCHOOL

Notices announcing events relating to non-school sponsored organizations must have the superintendent's approval before they will be allowed to be handed out in the school.

EARLY DISMISSAL – LEAVING EARLY

All students shall remain on the school premises until the appointed hour of school closing except in the case of illness or emergency or at the express and verified request of the parent or guardian. Students shall not be permitted to leave school early in the company of anyone other than a school employee, parent, guardian, or verified representative of the parent or guardian. In such cases, students may leave only with the consent of the principal. When one parent provides evidence of legal documentation from the court that the student should not be permitted to leave with the other parent, this request will be enforced. **Excessive early dismissals will result in parent/administrator conference as it hinders student success.**

ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION

Electronic registration is now available through Parent Portal for Amherst County Public Schools. Parent/Guardians can now update student information through a web portal that is accessed through the parent account and clicking on the eCollect forms icon on the left hand menu bar. In order to proceed with the electronic registration process, parent/guardians will need to have already set up an account on Parent Portal, you can contact the school office to receive instructions on how to set up your account and associate your student with that account. Parents/guardians will still be required to provide proof of residency for any address changes.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are used to enhance classroom instruction and as an incentive to students. All students will be encouraged to attend, however certain guidelines must be met in order to be eligible to participate in the field trips. **Academic performance and behavior will be considered when determining if students are eligible to participate in a field trip.** Chaperones on field trips will be requested as needed and will be limited to parents/guardians only.

To be eligible to participate on a school sponsored field trip:

- Any student who has received the following consequences will not be able to participate:
 - Five (or more) incidents of In-School Suspension/bus suspensions for the school year. **This includes ISS for unexcused tardies as well as discipline.**
 - Two or more separate incidents of Out-of-School Suspension/Alternative to Suspension for the school year or one Out-of-School Suspension/Alternative to Suspension of five or more days.
 - A combination of three or more incidents of In-School Suspension and one or more incidents of Out-of-School-Suspension/Alternative to Suspension for the school year.

- **Excessive unexcused absences which have resulted in an attendance review meeting. (Please review attendance procedures on page 3)**
 - **For end of the year field trips any student who has accumulated 16 or more absences (excused, excused by a physician, unexcused, or suspended absences) will NOT be able to attend these field trips.**
- **Students with any outstanding balances for cafeteria, fundraisers, or library would NOT be able to attend until accounts are paid in full.**

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

The School Counseling Department at Amherst Middle School is here to serve the students. The counselor is available to help with such things as personal problems, school problems and career choices. We request that if a student needs to talk with a counselor, they stop by the School Counseling Office before school and make an appointment. However, shall there be an emergency, students should have a hallway pass from his/her teacher. In all cases, it is necessary that students let their teacher know that they are in the School Counseling Office.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to provide academic feedback. The feedback is to be specific and immediate. All subjects may have homework assigned and averaged as part of a grading-period grade, at a maximum of 10%. Daily time limits for homework are based on the average student allowing 90 minutes for grades 6-8.

LOCKERS

Student lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school. Students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. School authorities for any reason may conduct periodic general inspections of lockers at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Students are provided lockers at the beginning of the school year. Hall lockers will have a combination lock. Students are asked not to leave anything of value in the hall lockers. If a locker does not work, report this fact to the office. Kicking or hitting the lockers only results in more expensive damage to the locker or the door. Offenders will be held responsible. Students should not put books or other belongings in someone else's locker. Combinations should not be shared and lockers should remain locked at all times. Book bags, cell phones, coats, and all items not needed for class will remain in lockers.

LOST AND FOUND

Any articles of clothing, books, etc., that is found should be taken to the Lost and Found areas. (Textbooks should be turned into the office; all other items should be taken to the cafeteria for Lost and Found.) Students may check daily in these areas for lost items. We strongly suggest that a student's name be put in coats, jackets and hats.

MEDICATION

1. **Over-the-Counter Medicines** – Over-the-counter medicines may be given to students only if accompanied by written parental consent with the dose and time to be given clearly stated. Over the counter medication must be in the original bottle, new and unopened. Dosages may not exceed the manufacturer's recommended dosage unless in writing by a licensed prescriber. Written permission from a physician is required if the medication is to be given for longer than five consecutive days. A parent must bring in the medication to the clinic and complete a Medication Administration Form. A student may not bring in or take home any medication.
2. **Prescription Medications** – Prescription medications may be given to students only with a licensed prescriber's written notice or current prescription and signed permission form from the parent or guardian. Prescription medication must be in the original bottle. A parent must bring in the medication to the clinic and complete a Medication Administration Form. A student may not bring in or take home any medication.
3. A medicine log is kept with the student's name, medication, dose and time given with the signature of the person giving the medicine. Parental notes and forms will also be kept on file.
4. No medication of any kind will be kept in the student's possession unless ordered by a physician with parental permission and authorization of the school nurse and principal.
5. The first dose of any new medication should be taken at home so that the parent can monitor the student for any side effects.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

In order to ensure the safety of pedestrians and control vehicle congestion, we are asking all individuals to follow these procedures when dropping off or picking up students in the front parking lot:

- Enter and leave the parking lot at a maximum safe speed of 15 mph.
- **Drive to the end of the lot and drop off passengers in front of the gym entrance, not the main entrance.**
- Make a wide U-turn at the far end of the lot and drive carefully to exit the lot.
- If you plan to leave your vehicle for any period of time, you must park in an appropriate space. Do not stop and park in the middle of the lot.

Please be aware of children and adults crossing the parking lot.

PHYSICAL ED. DRESS GUIDELINES

Students are required to change their clothes to appropriate PE clothes each day they are in physical education class. Appropriate clothes are a T-shirt, shorts, sweat pants or wind pants and tennis shoes. Students who forget their clothes may participate provided they have adequate shoes. The maximum grade a student will receive for that class will be a C. Other factors may lower the grade even further. Students who do not dress and do not participate at all will be required to work on an alternative written assignment, which will carry a maximum grade of C for the daily average. Students who have a note from a parent or doctor for a short exemption from class will be exempted from participating during that time. Students may be requested to complete an alternative assignment, which will be graded on a normal basis. Notes requesting exemption for longer periods of time should come from a physician.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

1. A student who passes all four SOL core content courses – English, Math, Science and History – will be promoted.
2. A student who fails all of the four SOL core content courses must participate in SOL remediation.
3. A student who fails two or more of the four SOL core content courses will not be promoted.
4. Any student who fails all of the grade level SOL assessments will be required to attend summer school.

REPORT CARDS AND INTERIM REPORTS

Report cards shall be prepared and issued to students after the end of each nine-week grading period. Interim reports will be issued at the mid-point of each nine week period. Parents/Guardians are requested to sign the interim report and return it by the student to school within three days of being issued.

SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Students are under the jurisdiction of the Amherst County School Board and its agents from the time they leave home for school until they return. Students who attend athletic events at any school are subject to disciplinary action for any misbehavior or infraction of the school's rules. Students charged with and/or found guilty of unlawful acts may be subject to disciplinary action by the Amherst County School Board even if this act did not occur on school property.

SCHOOL HOURS

School office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. School is in session from 7:45 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. Faculty and staff hours are 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., except for staff performing morning duties, which begin at 7:15 a.m. The building will be open for students at 7:30 a.m. Students should not arrive before 7:30 a.m. and students should be picked up by 3:00 p.m. Students are not to remain after school unless they are participating in an extracurricular activity sponsored by a school employee or by the school. **Students need to be picked up on time from these activities so faculty, coaches, sponsors, and other school personnel are not left to supervise your child long after the activity has ended. If students are left in this manner, the student may be barred from participating in future school activities.**

TELEPHONE CALLS

Students are not to use the telephone in the office except in the case of an emergency. **Please make arrangements for rides, parental permission, etc. prior to coming to school.** Students must have a pass from a classroom teacher in order to use the office telephone. Office personnel will sign the student's pass and indicate the time the student left the office. Phone calls to students will be screened in the main office. In case of an emergency, a parent's phone call will be directed to a school administrator or counselor.

TEXTBOOKS

Policies governing textbooks are as follows:

- Textbooks are provided to all students free of charge. Students will be held accountable for their textbooks issued to them.
- Damage Fee: Each book issued to a student will be graded as new, good, fair, or poor and this will be noted on the textbook loan sheet. Books returned by the student will be appraised and if the text is returned two or more grades lower in condition, students will be charged accordingly. The average life of a textbook should be four years.
- The replacement fee for lost books will be the price of the book for new books and half price for used books. All textbooks are numbered in advance and this number is used to identify the student to whom it was issued. Students should write his/her name in the appropriate place in the textbook to prevent having to pay for lost books.
- No heavy pencil marks or any ink marks are to be made in the textbooks. Reasonable care will normally result in a textbook being reduced one grade with each year of use. Throwing a book, allowing it to get wet, or other abuse will not be considered reasonable care and will result in a damage fee.

TRESPASSING

No persons shall be in the school building or on the school premises during or after school hours unless he/she is on official school business, is participating in a supervised school activity, is authorized by the administration, or is a spectator at an activity open to the public. Unauthorized persons loitering upon school property shall be treated as trespassers.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

NOTICE TO STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFF REGARDING THE USE OF CAMERA SURVEILLANCE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY: For the safety of our students, staff and visitors, the School District employs camera surveillance equipment for security purposes. This equipment may or may not be monitored at any time. Surveillance cameras will generally be utilized only in public areas where there is no "reasonable expectation of privacy." Public areas may include school buses; building entrances; hallways; parking lots; front offices where students, employees, and parents come and go; gymnasiums during public activities; cafeterias; and supply rooms. However, it is not possible for surveillance cameras to cover all public areas of District buildings or all District activities. District surveillance cameras will not be installed in "private" areas such as restrooms, locker rooms, changing areas, private offices, or classrooms. Recordings are not public information.

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

Schools in the division welcome visits by school patrons and other persons. In order to protect students, staff and property, visitors during the school day must report to the main office for authorization to be in the building or on the grounds. Visitors' passes will be issued. Students are never allowed to bring friends to school with them.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (PTO)

Parents and other community members are encouraged to volunteer to help in the schools. Helping tutor students, working in the library, setting up activities for the students, and helping coordinate special projects are only a few of the opportunities that are available. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact the school for more information.

AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL

CELL PHONE POLICY

Cell phones create a unique set of issues in the school setting. While cell phones can be a source of convenience, they are also a tool used in a myriad of behaviors that work to distract, disrupt and/or undermine the educational process. Our cell phone policy is written with this in mind. It is the expectation that students carrying cell phones to school have them turned off before they enter the school building. Once dismissed to their lockers at the start of the scheduled day, students are to store their cell phones in their lockers for the remainder of the school day. Students' cell phones are to remain off and in their locker until they exit the building at the end of the school day. Cell phone use on the bus must adhere to the following:

- a. Cellular phones may be used by students being transported on ACPS buses and vans. Students may use their phones to send text messages, access social media, access the internet, listen to music, or to watch videos. Students are required to utilize earbuds or headphones when viewing videos or listening to music. Students are NOT allowed to make phone calls, record images or sound, or take pictures. All content being accessed must be within the guidelines of the ACPS acceptable use policy. Students must NOT wear ear buds or headphones while boarding or disembarking the school bus or while crossing the road in front of the bus.

Students staying for after school activities are permitted to use their cell phones after 3:00PM at appropriate times as directed by the faculty/staff member who is in charge of their activity.

The use of cell phones is strictly forbidden at any time in private areas including locker rooms, restrooms, dressing areas, classrooms and offices. Such use may also be in violation of the criminal code. Students who refuse to give their cell phones to a teacher upon request will be suspended from school for failure to comply.

The following consequences have been established for students failing to follow the cell phone policy.

- 1st offense – Warning
- 2nd offense - The student will be assigned one day of in-school suspension and the cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of 7th period.
- 3rd offense - The student will be assigned two days of in-school suspension and the cell phone will be confiscated. A parent/legal guardian of the student will need to pick up the cell phone in the main office.
- 4th offense –The student will be suspended from school to ASC, requiring a conference with the parent/legal guardian before the student returns to school. The cell phone will be confiscated. A parent/legal guardian of the student will need to pick up the cell phone in the main office.

**The phrase "cell phone" refers to all communication devices including, but not limited to, pagers, walkie-talkies, smart phones, and instant message devices. Final interpretation of the cell phone policy rests with the building principal.*

AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Rules and regulations are necessary to assure self-control and to protect the rights of all teachers to teach and of all students to learn without disturbance. It is impossible to write an “all inclusive” policy. Therefore, these guidelines are subject to modifications as circumstances, evidence and discretion dictate.

Unlawful Acts:

Unlawful acts which may lead to police notification and may result in in-school suspension, suspension from school, or expulsion include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Possession or use of firearms, knives, or other dangerous weapons. This includes any facsimile such as cap pistols, toy guns, water pistols, etc.
- B. Assaulting any school personnel or student.
- C. Bomb threats.
- D. False alarms.
- E. Sexual assault.
- F. Stealing.
- G. Interference with or intimidation of school authorities.
- H. Possession or use of explosives (including stink bombs, caps, fireworks, or noisemakers).

Serious Acts:

Actions which may be cause for corrective action and if serious enough may result in exclusion from activities, in-school suspension, alternative to suspension center, and suspension from school or expulsion include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Profanity.
- B. Threatening or verbal abuse.
- C. Disobedience or defiance.
- D. Refusal to identify self to school personnel.
- E. Defacing or destroying school property.
- F. Inappropriate dress or appearance.
- G. Sexual harassment.
- H. Lying.
- I. Endangering other students.
- J. Cheating.
- K. Skipping school or class.
- L. Forgery.
- M. Class disruptions.
- N. Group disturbances.
- O. Possession of drug-related items (pipes).
- P. Gleeking (spitting) on another student.

Restricted Substances:

A student will not possess, distribute, purchase or consume any illegal, restricted or unknown substances. This includes what the student represents to be an illegal or restricted substance. Restricted substances would include, but are not limited to the following: alcoholic drinks, marijuana, narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, abusable glue, paint and similar materials and both prescription and non-prescription drugs.

Any student engaging in these activities will be subject to the following penalties:

Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage

Any offense: Will be recommended for a 364 days suspension and a referral to law enforcement made.

Any controlled substance or dangerous drug (i.e. narcotics, marijuana)

Any offense: Will be recommended for a 364 days suspension and a referral to law enforcement made.

Any abusable glue or aerosol paint or any other chemical substance, including but not limited to lighter fluid or other fluids for inhalation

Any offense: Will be recommended for a 364 days suspension and a referral to law enforcement made.

Any prescription or non-prescription drug, medicine, or other chemical including but not limited to the following: aspirin, stimulants, diet pills, cough medicines, sleeping pills, etc.

Any offense: Will be recommended for a 364 days suspension and a referral to law enforcement made.

Tobacco/Vape Substances:

Possession or use of any tobacco substances by students at school is prohibited. (This includes school grounds, buses and on any school-sponsored trip.) Students found to have in their possession tobacco products, **vaporizers**, matches, lighters, etc.

must give them to the school personnel requesting them. Students found smoking; chewing tobacco, in possession of tobacco products or where evidence would indicate the intent to use any tobacco product will be subject to the following action:

1. 1st Offense: 2 Days In-School Suspension.
2. 2nd Offense: 1 Day of Suspension to ASC.

*Referral to law enforcement after 2nd offense of use/sale/possession of tobacco products.

Tobacco products and vaping devices/supplies are not allowed on school property by students or adults at any time, including athletic events.

Fighting:

Fighting is considered to be a serious and disruptive behavior. After examination of the evidence, circumstances and provocation the following disciplinary options ***could** be used:

1. 1st Offense: 3 Day Out of School Suspension.
2. 2nd Offense: 5 Day Out of School Suspension.
3. Repeated Offenses: Suspension with possible recommendation for expulsion.

The number of days of OSS may be greater for the first or second offense depending on the severity of the incident.

DISCIPLINE REMINDERS

The following is a list of student expectations at Amherst Middle School. Failure to follow these rules may result in disciplinary action.

1. Students are to walk while inside the building. Running will not be permitted.
2. Every student is assigned to a specific class or activity during the school day. When it becomes necessary to be in some other place than the one assigned, a pass must be obtained.
3. There will be no throwing of objects in the building, around the school or on the buses. This includes rocks, snowballs, spitballs, paper, pencils, etc.
4. Chewing gum will be left to the discretion of the classroom teacher.
5. All school personnel are responsible for student behavior at any time or place on school property. Students are expected to cooperate with all school personnel at all times.
6. Students are not allowed to gamble on school property.
7. No student may stay after school unless they are being supervised by a teacher and have their parent's permission.
8. Students are not allowed to bring toys, games, trading cards, etc. to school unless given prior permission and are to be used for instructional purposes. This includes laser pointers, pagers, radios, tapes, cassette or CD players, MP3 players, iPods, E-Readers, Tablets, etc. **Amherst Middle School is not responsible if these items are lost or stolen.**
9. Students will not show affection in school. Students are not to touch or put their hands on any other student.
10. Students are not to start disagreements between or among other students. This includes name-calling, unnecessary comments, rumors, gossip, and writing inappropriate notes.
11. Students may not sell gum, candy or any other item to other students.
12. Students are not to leave the school grounds at any time without the permission of the school administration.
13. Students are not to pinch, hit, grab, roughhouse, scuffle, play fight, or have any form of physical contact with anyone.
14. Students may only leave school with or ride to or from school with their parents or individuals authorized in writing by the parent. Notes must be presented to the office in the morning for approval by an administrator.
15. The use of cologne, perfume, hair spray and other cosmetic items will be restricted to restrooms at appropriate times. These and other aerosol items should never be sprayed on other students.
16. Spiked bracelets, dog choke chains, and heavy wallet chains are not to be worn at any time. Other such items that could cause injury are not permitted.
17. Inappropriate materials such as pornographic or sexually explicit magazines are not permitted.

DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS

When violations of school rules occur, the student will be made aware of the accusations against him/her, have the opportunity to present his/her side of the story, and will be notified of his/her right to appeal. After an investigation has been conducted by the school administrators and it is determined that an infraction of school rules has occurred, students will be subject to the following disciplinary options. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of the options available.

1. Periodic In-School Detention:

The teacher or an administrator may assign students to periodic In-School Suspension. The student will be sent to the ISS room to work on assignments for minor behavior problems in class or if they need to do make up work.

2. In-School Detention:

Students will be assigned In-School Suspension by the Principal or Assistant Principal. Students must report immediately upon arrival at school, obey all rules and regulations, and complete all assignments. Time missed because of tardiness, appointments, etc. must be made up the next day. If you are assigned In-School Suspension, you may not participate in any after school activities on the day you serve In-School Suspension.

3. Suspension:

Students may be suspended from school for up to 10 days. Expulsions or suspensions for longer periods require action by the Superintendent and/or the School Board. While suspended, students are not allowed to be on Amherst County School property or to attend any activity at the school.

4. Alternative Suspension Center:

The Alternative Suspension Center (ASC) purpose is to provide academic supervision of students who, in the past, would have been suspended “out of school” due to their school discipline infractions. The goal is to hold students accountable for their inappropriate behaviors while providing intervention strategies to change social behavior in order to successfully focus the students on their academics.

5. Other:

- A. Conference with student
- B. Parent conference
- C. Student Accountability Referral (SAC)
- D. Exclusion from school activities
- E. STOP Program at AEC
- F. Lunch Detention
- G. Behavior Contract

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The Amherst County School Board will require students to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner that will permit the safest possible transportation for all passengers. The bus driver will report illegal or improper behavior to the principal in writing. The principal will inform parents and request their assistance in correcting behavior. Students who continue to cause problems on the bus will have their riding privileges suspended. In such cases parents are responsible for their safe transportation to and from school. Students are under the jurisdiction of the Amherst County School Board from the time they leave home for school until they return. Disorderly conduct by students at bus stops will be acted upon in the same manner as misconduct on buses. Students are required to wear a mask while riding a bus or other forms of transportation provided by Amherst County Public Schools.

SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS

1. Students will wear a mask while riding the bus.
2. Students will remain seated. Students are not to change seats unless requested to do so by the driver.
3. Students will not fight or use obscene language.
4. Students will keep hands, arms and belongings inside the bus.
5. Students will not eat, drink, smoke tobacco/vape products, or chew tobacco on the bus.
6. Students will not litter.
7. Vandals will pay for bus damage.
8. Students will be at loading places on time. This must be at the stop assigned by the Transportation Department.
9. Students must use the same loading and unloading places, unless they have a note from their parents co-signed by an administrator.
10. Students must cross the street 10-15 feet in front of the school bus.
11. Students may only ride the bus that they are assigned by the Division Superintendent or his duly authorized agent.

12. Students are not permitted to cross a dual highway when loading or unloading from a school bus.
13. Students will not obstruct the aisle or exits with any object.
14. Students are to follow the directions of the bus driver at all times.
15. Students must adhere to the cell phone/electronics policy on page 7.

Amherst Middle School Academic Dress Code

The school requires that each student dress in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment or distract others from the instructional process. Appropriate dress is considered to be clothing that covers the body sufficiently and does not disrupt the learning environment. **Students in violation of the dress code will be required to change clothes or report to ISD for the remainder of the school day. A second offense will result in one day of ISS.**

Students are expected to be neat and well-groomed. Attire should be suitable for school. Clothing that may be offensive to some or otherwise disruptive to the educational environment is not permitted. The following guidelines will be adhered to:

1. Sunglasses are not permitted and may not be worn on top of the head or around the neck.
2. Hats, caps, and hoodies are not to be worn in the building. Hats are to be stored in students' lockers during the day.
3. No halter tops, cut off shirts or see-through shirts are to be worn. All shirts and blouses must cover the midriff area and have shoulder straps that are **at least two inches wide**. Shirts and blouses cannot have large armholes or be cut too low in the front. No cleavage is to show. **Tops with scooped out backs are not permitted and all undergarment straps must be covered.**
4. Shorts are permitted. Short and skirt lengths must meet the following criteria: **The hem of the all shorts and skirts must be no shorter than four inches from the top of the knee.**
5. Low-riders are not permitted. Pants must be belted and worn at the waist. All undergarments must be covered.
6. Clothing with offensive or inappropriate writing/pictures is not permitted. Apparel or dress that may imply gang membership or that reflects adversely on persons due to race, gender, creed, national origin, physical, emotional or intellectual abilities or that is considered to be inappropriate attire is not permitted.
7. Excessively torn clothing is not allowed. Torn clothing that exposes skin four inches above the knee will not be allowed.
8. Shirt, sweatshirt and sweater length shall not extend beyond the area marked by the tip of the student's index finger along his/her leg when standing.
9. Coats and heavy jackets must be placed in the student's locker during the school day.

- ✓ **Parents are responsible for ensuring students are dressed appropriately for school.**
- ✓ **Students are responsible for following the dress code.**

Students are requested to use good judgment in selecting all clothing to be worn to school. Other items of clothing, which are inappropriate for school, will be dealt with on an individual basis. If there is any question about an item of clothing, students are asked to please check with an administrator before wearing the item.

School administrators reserve the right to change or modify the dress code as necessary.

Appropriate



Appropriate



Appropriate



Appropriate



Amherst Middle School's Big 3

- Respect
 - Treat others the way you want to be treated
 - Respect is the foundation to a meaningful and everlasting relationship
 - Respect is due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of others
- Responsibility
 - The opportunity to act independently and make positive decisions
 - As a cougar you have an opportunity to be a positive influence to others
 - The obligation to satisfactorily perform a task
 - Those that are responsible find a way to overcome, while those that act irresponsibly make excuses
- Resiliency
 - The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, and threats.
 - Live to fight another day!
 - Understanding that what happens can bring changes, but refusing to be reduced by it

SETTING	All Settings	Bathroom	Hallways	Meals	Assembly	Classroom	Bus	Remote Learning
Be Respectful	<p>-Use school appropriate language and voice level.</p> <p>-Practice the Golden Rule; be polite and kind</p> <p>-Listen to and follow directions the first time.</p> <p>-Use and wear face mask appropriately</p>	<p>-Plan to use facilities.</p> <p>-Use manners.</p> <p>-Respect school property.</p>	<p>-Walk on the right side of the hallway</p> <p>-Consider people at lockers</p>	<p>-Use manners/be polite and kind</p> <p>-Lights off=No talking</p>	<p>-Enter and exit assemblies quietly.</p> <p>-Be a good audience.</p>	<p>-Eyes on the speaker</p> <p>-Respond appropriately when spoken to.</p>	<p>-Listen to and follow directions given by the driver, the first time.</p> <p>-Use manners/be polite and kind</p> <p>-Be on time to stop and at dismissal.</p>	<p>- When on video, wear appropriate attire.</p> <p>-Mute your microphone.</p> <p>- Be an active participant, respond when addressed.</p> <p>-Use chat and discussion features appropriately.</p>
Be Responsible	<p>-Participate in school all day every day; be on time and prepared</p> <p>-Use school and personal property appropriately.</p> <p>-Maintain social distancing of 6 feet.</p>	<p>-Use your time wisely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flush ● Wash ● Leave <p>-Plan to use facilities during hallway breaks</p> <p>-Clean up after yourself</p> <p>-Limit of 3 people in the restroom at a time.</p>	<p>- Walk obeying hallway signage.</p> <p>-Use your locker at breaks and make sure it's neat and locked.</p> <p>-Keep personal items in lockers.</p>	<p>-Use time wisely, eat then talk.</p> <p>-Dispose of any meal related items using appropriate trash receptacle.</p>	<p>-Be a good audience.</p> <p>-Be on time and present.</p>	<p>-Pay attention to and be engaged with the lesson</p> <p>-Use backpack to bring your own supplies and personal items to class.</p> <p>-When classroom supplies are used make sure it is disinfected before being returned to storage.</p>	<p>-Stay seated in the assigned seat.</p> <p>-Maintain backpacks and personal items.</p> <p>-Maintain social distancing of 3 feet.</p>	<p>-Log-in, complete, and submit assignments in a timely fashion.</p> <p>-Check email daily.</p>
Be Resilient	<p>-Surround yourself with positive influences and be positive yourself.</p> <p>-Complete tasks to the best of your ability and be a problem solver.</p> <p>-Set high expectations for yourself and your peers.</p>	<p>-Report inappropriate behaviors to an adult.</p> <p>-Be mindful of time.</p>	<p>-Stay organized.</p> <p>-Be mindful of time.</p>	<p>-Be positive and ignore drama.</p> <p>-Make new friends, include others</p>	<p>-Be an example of a positive and mature audience.</p> <p>-Be engaged in the performance</p>	<p>-Complete tasks to the best of your ability.</p> <p>-Ask for help as needed.</p> <p>-Be a problem solver</p>	<p>-Ignore drama.</p> <p>-Pay attention to surroundings.</p> <p>-Report inappropriate behaviors to an adult.</p>	<p>- Ask for assistance as needed.</p> <p>-Practice good time management skills.</p> <p>-Use all resources available. (Google, classmates, VVA, parents, Student Portal, teacher websites, etc).</p>

AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Amherst County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices, as required by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, and Section 504. Mr. James Gallagher, Chief Human Resources Officer, is designated as the Compliance Officer responsible for assurances of non-discrimination. He may be reached at the following address: P O Box 1257, Amherst, Virginia 24521, and telephone number (434) 946-9376.

CODE OF CONDUCT INFORMATION

The entire student Code of Conduct can be found on the Amherst County Public Schools' website at www.amherst.k12.va.us under the parents/students tab. You can request a paper copy of the manual from your child's school.

FERPA INFORMATION

The entire FERPA Information can be found on the Amherst County Public Schools' website at www.amherst.k12.va.us under the parents/students tab. You can request a paper copy of the manual from your child's school.

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

Students who do not have money on account or in hand to cover the cost of a meal at the time of service may be permitted to charge the meal. The Amherst County Public Schools does not have a charge limit.

A student carrying a negative balance is only permitted to charge a meal, not ala carte items. Reasonable efforts are used to avoid calling attention to a student's inability to pay.

In compliance with the Code of Virginia §22.1-79.7 Notice of low or negative balances in a student's meal account are sent to parents and the school principal. Communication may be by a letter addressed to the parent to be sent home with the student.

Parents are expected to pay all meal charges in full by the last day of the school year.

If a parent regularly fails to provide meal money or send food to school with the student and the student does not qualify for free or reduced benefits, the child nutrition director will inform the principal, who will determine the next course of action, which may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges.

The superintendent or superintendent's designee ensures that federal child nutrition funds are not used to offset the cost of unpaid meals and that the child nutrition program is reimbursed for bad debt. In order to accomplish those goals, the following procedures are followed:

- At least one written notice is provided to a student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the student being denied reimbursable meals for exceeding the division's charge limit.
- If payment of the negative balance is not received within 4 months, the debt will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. If the debt is not paid within 30 days of notice being given, it is considered bad debt for the purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.