

Forest Middle School

Family Handbook 2017-2018



100 Ashwood Drive
Forest, VA 24551
Phone (434) 525-6630
Fax (434) 525-1284
<http://bedfordfms.sharpschool.net>

Scott Simmons, Principal

ssimmons@bedford.k12.va.us

Paul Nazigian, Assistant Principal

pnazigian@bedford.k12.va.us

Melissa Palmer, Assistant Principal

mpalmer@bedford.k12.va.us

Bedford County Public Schools Central Office (540) 586-1045
School Closings and Announcements (540) 586-1045 *333

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INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

This handbook contains important information about Forest Middle School (FMS). Each family is expected to become familiar with the contents. Please call your child's teacher, a counselor or the school administration if you have any questions. Be advised that the Board of Education may revise or create policies over the course of the school year. State laws, State Board of Education Bylaws, and Bedford County School Board Policies and Regulations that are enacted after the publication of this document shall supersede those statements and references contained in this publication.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its programs, activities, or employment practices, as required by Title IX, Section 504. The person responsible for coordination of the School Division efforts to meet its obligations under Title IX, Section 504 and their implementing regulations is Dr. Douglas Schuch, Division Superintendent, PO Box 748, Bedford, VA 24523, (540) 586-1045, Ext. 258.

SCHOOL HISTORY

Forest Middle School opened its doors in 1989 in the lower level of Jefferson Forest High School. It served 200 seventh and eighth graders from four elementary schools: Forest, Otter River, Boonsboro and New London Academy. During the next school year, enrollment topped 800 students, and a separate middle school facility was built.

This year we celebrate 23 years in our current facility, which opened in September 1994. FMS serves students in grades 6-8, with a current enrollment of approximately 930 students.

THE FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION

The vision of Forest Middle School is to become an institution that inspires intellectual and personal discovery in every student, every day.

MISSION STATEMENT

Forest Middle School strives to be a learning community dedicated to individual growth and success through the development of independence, character, technological skill, and a desire for life-long learning.

GOALS

Our goals at Forest Middle School are to:

- To inspire discovery in students through a strong instructional program with an emphasis on 21st century skills and opportunities to use these skills through oral and written communication and through the use of technological support systems.
- To offer learning opportunities that are personalized in nature, acknowledging and accommodating the unique characteristics of young adolescents.
- Enhance the development of a positive self-concept in students through achievement in academics along with opportunities to develop emotionally, socially, and physically.
- Encourage students to display characteristics of self-direction and responsibility in their community.
- Teach each student decision-making and problem-solving skills and provide opportunities to develop these skills in a safe and non-threatening learning environment.
- Build a meaningful bond between home and school, thus providing students with the best possible partnership for their achievement and success.
- Establish Forest Middle School as a total learning community where students, teachers, administration, staff, and parents learn and grow together.

Bell Schedule(s)—Forest Middle School-2017-2018

6th Grade Schedule – Regular							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4/lunch	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7 Connections
8:45 – 8:51	8:55 – 9:45	9:49 – 10:39	10:43 – 11:33	11:37 – 12:53	12:57 – 1:47	1:51 – 2:41	2:45 – 3:35
6th Grade Schedule--2 hour delay schedule							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4/lunch	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7 Connections
10:45 – 10:51	10:55 – 11:28	11:32 – 12:05	12:09 – 12:42	12:46 – 1:44	1:48 – 2:21	2:25 – 2:58	3:02 – 3:35
6th Grade Schedule--2 hour early dismissal schedule							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4/lunch	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7 Connections
8:45 – 8:51	8:55 – 9:28	9:32 – 10:05	10:09 – 10:42	10:46 – 11:44	11:48 – 12:21	12:25 – 12:58	1:02 – 1:35

7th Grade Schedule – Regular							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5/Lunch	Period 6	Period 7 Connections
8:50 – 8:55	8:55 – 9:45	9:49 – 10:39	10:43 – 11:33	11:37 – 12:27	12:31 – 1:47	1:51 – 2:41	2:45 – 3:35
7th Grade Schedule--2 hour delay schedule							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5/Lunch	Period 6	Period 7 Connections
10:50 – 10:55	10:55 – 11:28	11:32 – 12:05	12:09 – 12:42	12:46 – 1:19	1:23 – 2:21	2:25 – 2:58	3:02 – 3:35
7th Grade Schedule--2 hour early dismissal schedule							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5/Lunch	Period 6	Period 7 Connections
8:50 – 8:55	8:55 – 9:28	9:32 – 10:05	10:09 – 10:42	10:46 – 11:19	11:23 – 12:21	12:25 – 12:58	1:02 – 1:35

8th Grade Schedule – Regular							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3/lunch	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7
8:50 – 8:55	8:55 – 9:45	9:49 – 10:39	10:43 – 11:59	12:03 – 12:53	12:57 – 1:47	1:51 – 2:41	2:45 – 3:35
8th Grade Schedule--2 hour delay schedule							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3/lunch	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7
10:50 – 10:55	10:55 – 11:28	11:32 – 12:05	12:09 – 1:07	1:11 – 1:44	1:48 – 2:21	2:25 – 2:58	3:02 – 3:35
8th Grade Schedule--2 hour early dismissal schedule							
Home base	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3/lunch	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7
8:50 – 8:55	8:55 – 9:28	9:32 – 10:05	10:09 – 11:07	11:11 – 11:44	11:48 – 12:21	12:25 – 12:58	1:02 – 1:35

Important information regarding Forest Middle School’s Bell Schedules:

Frequently Asked Questions:	Regular Schedule:	2-Hour Delay Schedule:
What time do the doors open for students? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should report to the gym 	8:15 A.M.	10:15 A.M.
What time does breakfast begin to be served?	8:15 A.M.	10:15 A.M.
What is the earliest time that I may drop off my child?	8:15 A.M. (Unless the student has a pass to participate in a morning program)	10:15 A.M.
What time is the school store open?	8:15 A.M. – 8:45 A.M.	10:15 A.M. – 10:45 A. M.
When are students released from the gym to home base?	8:35 A.M.	10:35 A.M.
What time do the morning announcements begin?	8:45 A.M.	10:50 A.M.
What time does the tardy bell ring?	8:50 A.M.	10:50 A.M.

INSTRUCTIONAL INFORMATION

Please be sure to read the Bedford County Program of Studies and the Bedford County Code of Student Conduct (http://bedford.sharpschool.net/parents_students) for specific information regarding course preparation leading to graduation. The following contains general information pertaining to Forest Middle School.

ACTIVITIES and ATHLETICS

Academic competitions are offered to students throughout the year, such as Math Counts, Spelling Bee, Science Fair, etc. Students are encouraged to share their talents and good ideas through these local, state, and national contests. The PTA sponsors the Reflections Contest for visual arts, literature, photography, and music. All students are encouraged to enter the competition(s) of their choice.

Seventh and eighth grade students are eligible to participate in Jefferson Forest High School (JFHS) B-team sports programs. Participation in interscholastic competition is strictly governed by regulations of the Virginia High School League (V.H.S.L.). The JFHS Athletic Director can supply a complete list of rules pertaining to individual eligibility for a particular sports program. Generally, the following requirements must be met:

- Students must remain in good academic and character standing. At the discretion of the principal, students may be prohibited from participating in athletic events due to disciplinary problems in school. Additionally, Students who have performed poorly on an interim or quarterly grade may have their participation restricted. Additional information will be disseminated through coaches and/or the Activities Director.
- An annual completed “Virginia High School League Physical” form is a requirement for participation in all JFHS athletic events. This includes cheerleading and all other athletic teams, as well as all off-season strength and conditioning programs. A physical form can be picked up in the main office. According to V.H.S.L. policy, the physical can only be administered by persons licensed to practice medicine, osteopathy, or a licensed nurse practitioner. Valid forms for the 2017-2018 school year may be dated May 1, 2017.
- Late arrivals or early dismissals may jeopardize the student’s participation in practice or contests on that day unless prearranged by the principal. Students must be in attendance for a minimum of half of the school day to be eligible for participation on that same day.

Students who have late practices or games after school must go home by their usual transportation and then be transported back to school for the practice or game by a parent. **Students may not remain unsupervised on school property after school hours for any reason.**

ASSEMBLIES and SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Assemblies and special activities, such as guest speakers, field trips, and planned special events to correlate with a unit of study are part of the instructional program. Students are expected to participate and exhibit the same behavior as in the regular instructional setting. If a student opts out of a field trip or special event, the teachers will provide alternate assignments. Missing school on a field trip or a special activities day is considered an unexcused absence unless the absence is due to an illness or another excusable reason. No child will be denied access to any field trip or special event because of the family's inability to pay any related costs. **No refunds will be made for field trips or special events two (2) weeks prior to or after the event date**, because fees for the trip or event have been paid and /or buses have been chartered.

CHARACTER COUNTS / KNIGHT'S CODE

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires all school divisions to provide a character education program for its students. Forest Middle School emphasizes the six Pillars of Character from the "Character Counts!" program as well as our own "Knight's Code". The Knight's Code encourages students to be respectful, trustworthy, responsible, honest, and diligent.

FAMILY LIFE PROGRAM

Bedford County Public Schools implemented the Family Life curriculum developed by the Virginia Department of Education in 1989. A copy of the Family Life Education Guide for Bedford County Public Schools is available in the main office. Please refer to the guide for procedures. Students may be opted out of the program by parental request. Forms for this procedure will be sent home at the appropriate time (usually March or April).

GRADING and REPORTING TO PARENTS

Classroom teachers are responsible for recording each student's grades and reporting these to parents. These reports include both academic achievement and conduct. Report cards are sent home after each **nine** weeks grading period. In addition to report cards, each week, students will bring home a collection of class work in the Tuesday Folder for parents to review. All students will receive interim progress reports in the four core subjects of English, math, science, and history after the **fourth** week of each grading period. Students who are performing below a "C" average will receive a second interim progress report at the end of the **seventh** week. **All interim progress reports are to be signed and returned to each individual teacher.** Related arts and elective classes will only send an interim if the student is earning a "D" or "F".

If you seek online access to your student's academic grades, you may sign up for a **Parent Portal** account. Parent Portal will give you access to an online a database containing your student's current grades in each subject. To sign up for your Parent Portal account, visit the Forest Middle School office. Make sure to bring one form of photo identification. Parent Portal ID's and access codes cannot be given out over the phone. Parent portal accounts will allow users to receive electronic grade reports delivered by email. If desiring this option, parents should be sure to enter their email address and set up scheduled grade report delivery.

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The guidance program offers instruction specific to student needs such as decision-making, problem-solving skills, career choices, study skills, and drug and alcohol abuse. The school counselors are available to talk with students and parents as needed. Parents and guardians are invited to call the school office to speak with one of the school counselors.

Parents may choose to opt-out of guidance services. However, this is only for advisement on personal or social issues and does not cover classroom activities or academic / disciplinary intervention.

HOMEWORK and MAKE-UP WORK

Homework is an important part of the instructional program. Students will have homework almost every night. Homework can be in many forms: written, reading, projects, studying, etc., and

are designed to give the student an opportunity to practice and use a skill that he/she is learning. It is the student's responsibility to do homework and make up the work when he/she is absent. Work that is not submitted on-time is subject to a reduction in points per the BCPS grading policy. Students also need to be clear on teacher expectations when missing school on a prior absence notice. In such cases, work may be given in advance and be due upon the students return to school. Many teachers are also utilizing web based resources such as a Google classroom, which provide parents and students access to course assignments. Tests and/or exams will not be administered early.

Students are encouraged to select a "study buddy" in each class. When a student is absent, the "study buddy" will get the homework assignments and the "buddies" can contact each other. Students and parents should also monitor teacher web pages or Google pages for assignments. Due to the high volume of daily requests we receive for homework assignments, we ask that parents call the school office to receive homework information only when the absence **is three (3) or more days**. The office must receive requests for assignments by 9:00 A.M. in order to have the materials available by 3:35 P.M. the same day. Teachers post homework assignments on the web and/or their Google classroom sites (http://bedfordfms.sharpschool.net/our_staff/staff_listing) – please refer to course syllabi and/or contact your child's teacher for more information.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The Library Media Center (LMC) is supportive of our school's curriculum and serves as an extension of the classroom. In addition, the LMC provides a setting where students develop the research and decision-making skills they will use to further their education as adults. Library staff partner with teachers to promote the joy of reading through reading incentives, book talks, and maintaining a current collection that meets the needs and interest levels of all our students. Students may search using their reading and interest level in our online catalog. Reading levels are obtained through STAR testing in language arts classes in the fall and spring. All students have a scheduled circulation but may come with a pass as needed. Library materials may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed if not needed by anyone else. Students are responsible to pay for lost materials. Forest Middle School and/or Bedford County Public Schools subscribe to several online databases for students to access from home. These homework resources provide students reliable information to search when completing homework assignments, writing research papers, etc. These databases and ebooks may be accessed through Forest Middle School website under student and LMC Research.

FMS Student Resources:

SOLpass - - www.solpass.org

PASSWORD: fms

United Streaming - - www.unitedstreaming.com

USERNAME: forest.ms **PASSWORD:** bedford

FMS Research Files (www.bedford.k12.va.us/fms/index.html) *Passwords needed for home use

Big Chalk - - **LOGIN:** 19-5517 / **PASSWORD:** bigchalk

Expert Space - - **USER NAME:** fms24551 / **PASSWORD:** school

Virginia Collection Database (Gale Resources) - - **PASSWORD:** schools

World Book Online - - **USER NAME:** bcswbo **PASSWORD:** Bedford

Follett Shelf—**USER NAME:** lunch number **PASSWORD:** Your last name

The library is open Monday – Friday from 8:35 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent contacts will be made throughout the school year. At least two (2) conferences days for parents are scheduled during the school year to share information concerning a student's progress and to plan for a student's program. Please refer to the BCPS calendar for the specific dates established for parent conferences. Parents may request a conference at any time to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress or concerns. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a conference as needed. Teachers are not able to meet with parents while students are under their supervision. Parents are asked to call or e-mail to make an appointment to speak with teachers. It is the policy of FMS to respond to parent phone calls and/or e-mails within 24 hours.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The physical education program is designed to promote overall health and fitness through a variety of exercises and sports. Students are encouraged to progress at their own ability levels. Each student is required to wear athletic shoes and shorts or long pants for instruction. Nonparticipation will adversely affect a student's grade. Grades are based on effort, participation, cooperation, and an awareness of the importance of physical fitness. Generally, students who are physically fit also have higher achievement in other areas of their life.

Each student is required to participate in the state mandated physical fitness tests that will be given in the fall and spring semesters. Students who have medical reasons not to participate are to provide their instructor with a physician's note or a note for a parent/guardian. Parents can now access student physical fitness scores online. Go to <http://www.focusedfitness.org/> and login. In the username put your student's ID number and in password, use your child's last name.

All physical education students are encouraged to complete 225 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each week outside the physical education classroom. The students are instructed as to what moderate activity is as well as the physical and mental benefits of consistent exercise as a part of a lifetime routine.

STUDY SKILLS

How to Be a Successful Student:

1. Believe in and follow the "Knight's Code"
2. Keep your mind on your work, don't be afraid to ask questions, and take advantage of extra help opportunities.
3. At home, have a definite routine and a well-lit place to study.
4. If the assignment is a long-term project, do a little of it each day. It will be easier and you will do a better job. Use your agenda to schedule out your work load.
5. Fully utilize resources like parent portal, teacher webpages and Google classroom to stay up on your grades and assignments.

How to Take a Test:

1. Prepare before the test. Study a little each day. Don't wait until the night before.
2. During the test, relax and forget other people around you.
3. Read the directions carefully and then follow the directions completely.
4. Read the whole test first to see what is asked and to know how to spend your time.
5. Think before you write.
6. Read over your paper carefully after you have finished.

How Parents Can Help:

1. Make sure your child has good attendance.
2. Provide your child with the needed supplies and a place to study at home.
3. Keep close communication, first with your child, and then with the teachers.
4. Visit the school. Attend parent-teacher conferences. Join and attend PTA meetings.
5. Make your child's success in school a priority. Academics must take precedence over extra-curricular activities.

TESTING PROGRAMS

Spring Testing Program

	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
6 th Grade Reading SOL	*		
6 th Grade Math SOL	*		
7 th Grade Reading SOL		*	
7 th Grade Math SOL		*	
Civics/Economics SOL		*	
7 th Grade Science SOL		*	
8 th Grade Reading SOL			*
8 th Grade Writing SOL			*
8 th Grade Math SOL		Students enrolled in Algebra Concepts	Students enrolled in Algebra Concepts
*** World History SOL			*
*** Algebra 1 SOL	Students enrolled in Algebra 1	Students enrolled in Algebra 1	Students enrolled in Algebra 1
*** Pre-AP Geometry SOL		Students enrolled in Pre-AP Geometry	Students enrolled in Pre-AP Geometry
*** Pre-AP Algebra II SOL			Students enrolled in Pre-AP Algebra II
*** Earth Science SOL			*

*** Students passing both the course and the End of Course tests earn verified high school credits. Refer to the [Bedford County Program of Studies](#) for an explanation of verified credits and other high school graduation requirements.

TEXTBOOKS

Each student is provided textbooks, traditional or online, for all core classes **to keep at home for the duration of the school year at no charge**. Students are responsible for maintaining the condition of the book. Those who lose their books should check the lost and found bin located in the main office. If students fail to find their lost book in a reasonable amount of time, they will be charged a fee for the replacement cost. Students who return a damaged a book at the end of the year, will also be charged for the repair or the replacement. Students are recommended to store books in a safe location, a non-adhesive book cover has been helpful for many students in the past. Students are still expected to write their names clearly on the inside front cover of each textbook at the beginning of the year. These procedures will assist in locating and returning misplaced textbooks. Any student that is found to be in possession of another student's textbooks may be subject to disciplinary action.

GENERAL INFORMATION

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM

Breakfast and lunch are served each day in the school cafeteria. Students are expected to maintain good order, display good manners, and keep the cafeteria clean for those who follow. Students are responsible to clean all trash off the table and off the floor before leaving the cafeteria. Teachers on lunch duty will dismiss a couple of tables at a time. Students are not to be dismissed until the teacher on duty directs them. Students are to sit in their assigned location. Students sit with the class with whom they come to lunch.

No food or drink may be taken out of the cafeteria following breakfast or lunch.

Student Breakfast	\$1.25	Juice	\$0.40
Reduced Breakfast Price	\$0.00	Milk (extra/separate)	\$0.60
Student Lunch	\$2.55	Adult Breakfast	\$1.60
Reduced Lunch Price	\$0.40	Adult Lunch	\$3.30
Ice Cream	\$0.75		

Cafeteria meals may be paid by the week, month, or year with a check made payable to Forest Middle School or in cash. Students may not charge breakfast. The Bedford County School Board has contracted with the Federal Automated Recovery System (FARS) for the electronic collection of checks returned for insufficient funds. The school cafeteria will gladly accept your checks; however, in the event your check is returned, your account will be debited electronically for the face amount and fees allowed by the state of Virginia. Checks that are sent in to the school cafeteria must contain a valid phone number. Checks written to the school cafeteria that are returned for insufficient funds are sent directly to FARS for collection and are no longer handled by the School Nutrition Program.

Students who wish to bring lunch from home may not have glass containers. Carbonated soft drinks are not permitted in classrooms and are discouraged at lunch. If available, drink and snack machines would only be available for use after school. No food or drinks may be consumed in the gym.

Students who are allergic to certain foods should have a physician's note on file in the school's clinic. The cafeteria manager and parents may work together to substitute food items. If a student is allergic to milk, juice will be substituted at no extra charge provided a physician's note is on file.

More information about the BCPS Nutrition Program, as well as links to the Café Prepay (an internet-based service where you can pay for your child's breakfast and lunch purchases using your Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or American Express Card), may be found at http://www.bedford.k12.va.us/menus/school_nutrition.htm. Please be advised that the company charges a pre-determined fee for this service.

CHARGING CAFETERIA ITEMS

The School Nutrition Program is totally self supporting and relies on the funds generated each day in the school cafeteria. In an effort to assist with uncollected breakfast and lunch charges, the school nutrition program does have a meal charge policy. Middle school students are allowed to charge up to the equivalent of three lunches. Students are not allowed to charge extra items such as bottled water or ice cream, only lunch meals.

If a student comes to the cafeteria to eat lunch and has reached their charge limit, cafeteria staff will offer the student a peanut butter & jelly sandwich or cheese sandwich and milk for lunch. This will ensure that the student does receive something to eat and does not go hungry. When parents send in money for their child's account, if the child has any charges on the account, those charges will be satisfied first and the remainder of the money will be added to the child's account. It is imperative that parents keep track of their children's account balance and keep it in good standing. Students will have to use their seven digit student ID number to access their cafeteria account.

The cafeteria staff does not enjoy having to offer a student an alternative meal but allowing unlimited charging in the school cafeteria hurts the financial status of the program. If you have any questions regarding the meal charge policy, you may speak with the school cafeteria manager or contact Karen Arthur, School Nutrition Supervisor at (540) 586-1045 ext. 224.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT and SCHOOL SAFETY

Forest Middle School is committed to providing a safe and secure learning and working environment for all students and staff. To fulfill that commitment, a comprehensive school safety and crisis management plan has been developed to comply with and enforce state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. The plan includes preventive measures and procedures to handle emergency situations that include severe weather and traumatic or catastrophic events. The “Forest Middle School Crisis Plan” includes periodic drills to instruct students on safe and proper procedures in the event of an emergency. An annual audit of the school facility and programs is conducted to recommend updates to the school safety and crisis management plan.

Evacuation Drills

Evacuation drills are held regularly and according to regulations. All personnel, volunteers, and students are expected to leave the building in an orderly and quiet manner. Evacuation maps are posted at each classroom doorway. Students are to leave the building immediately by the nearest exit, depending on their location at the time of the evacuation notice. If a drill occurs at a transition time, students should immediately go outside by the nearest exit and line up on the soccer field with the teacher from their prior class. Cars should not enter the parking lots when students are evacuating the building.

Lockdown Drills

Lockdown drills are held in accordance with state and local regulations and may be unannounced. The Lockdown drill will be utilized to train students and staff how to respond in an emergency situation, such as when an intruder may be in the building or on the property.

Weather-related Drills

Weather-related drills occur periodically throughout the year. These drills are utilized to train students and staff how to respond in the event of a threatening weather.

FEES

While there will be no fees associated with textbooks, special events such as after-school socials, may require a fee. Costs associated with field trips or special events should be made payable to Forest Middle School. If a parent is not able to pay an instructional activity cost, the parent should contact the child's home-base teacher or an administrator. No child will be kept from participating in a special event due to his/her inability to pay a fee. **No refunds can be made for field trips or special events two (2) weeks prior to or after the event date**, because fees have been paid and /or buses have been chartered.

PICTURES and YEARBOOKS

Each year in the fall, individual student pictures will be made for the student's scholastic record and the yearbook. Parents will have an opportunity to buy these pictures in a variety of packages. This event is a fund-raiser for the school. Students absent on picture day will be photographed at a later date. Spring pictures are also taken and offered to parents for purchasing.

For the yearbook, candid and school activity photographs will be taken throughout the year. Yearbooks will be sold on a prepay basis. There may be specified weeks during the school year for students to purchase yearbooks and specialty items directly through the school. Students purchasing yearbooks typically receive them in May. If there are any remaining, they will be sold after distribution of the pre-purchased yearbooks. 8th grade parents also have the opportunity to purchase recognition ads similar to the senior ads found in a high school yearbook. 8th grade recognition ads will be sold on a first come, first serve basis. Flyers will go home in Tuesday folders throughout the school year that give more details. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Dean directly at adean@bedford.k12.va.us or call the school and leave a message.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

The Bedford County Sheriff's Department provides a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) based at Forest Middle School to assist the students and the staff. The SRO assists with school safety, is used as an instructional resource for teachers, and welcomes students' questions about a variety of concerns. The school resource officer also conducts investigations when warranted.

Sixth grade students will participate in the "Gang Resistance Education and Training" (G.R.E.A.T.) program as a part of the "Character and Careers" related arts class. Our school resource officer will be the instructor for this program. Students also have an opportunity to participate in YOVASO (Youth of Virginia Speak Out), a program designed to educate students and the community about traffic safety.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students are requested by classroom teachers to have the supplies needed for daily assignments and projects. All school supply information can be found on teacher webpages. Teacher webpages can be accessed from the staff listing on the FMS website (bedfordfms.sharpschool.net). Students may purchase pens, pencils, paper, notebooks, assignment books/agendas, and various school supplies each day from the school store. Please contact your child's counselor if you need assistance with obtaining supplies.

STUDENT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION (SCA)

The Student Council Association is an educational instrument and a unique agency for genuine learning far beyond basic concepts of civics. It requires commitment along with individual involvement. The SCA is made up of an elected group of officers and an elected group of representatives who meet together regularly to promote citizenship, scholarship, leadership, public relations, and cultural values.

Each spring, SCA officer elections are held in both 7th and 8th grade for the following school year. Available positions include president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and reporter. These five offices are available to students who meet the eligibility requirements as stated in the SCA Constitution for Forest Middle School. Each fall, the SCA representatives are elected—one per homebase—in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.

During the monthly meetings, officers and representatives gather to discuss a variety of topics related to the goals of the SCA. Among these are current and upcoming school projects, spirit days, after-school socials, fundraisers, and community service activities.

Forest Middle School Constitution, Article IV – Officers and Duties

Section 2

All SCA officers—president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter—shall be in eighth grade. All officers must maintain a "C" average and have no unsatisfactory marks on their report cards at the time of election and throughout the school year.

Section 4

Any officer failing to maintain a "C" average will be placed on probation for a nine-week period of time, at the end of which he or she will be removed if the grades are still below a "C" average. Also, any officer who is suspended or disciplined with the Modified Instructional Program (MIP) will automatically forfeit their privilege as a member of the Student Council Association. The office will be filled by reelection of that particular office or by the original runner-up from the school wide election. The principal and the student council advisor, as described in Article VII, will declare the final decision. All policies and procedures at Forest Middle School will be in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE POLICY, BCPS POLICY IBEA

Each teacher, administrator, student, and parent/guardian of each student shall sign the "Acceptable Computer System Use Agreement" before using the Division's computer system in accordance with School Board Policy IBEA. **Computer System Use Agreements must be completed by Friday, August 25th.** Students without a computer system use agreement on file will not be permitted to use the computer system at Forest Middle School. The failure of any student, teacher, or administrator to follow the terms of the aforementioned agreement, this policy, or accompanying regulation may result in loss of computer system privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

The School Board provides a computer system, including the Internet, to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. The term computer system includes hardware, software, data, communication lines and devices, terminals, printer, CD-ROM devices, tape drivers, servers, mainframe and personal computers, the Internet, and other internal or external networks.

All use of the Division's computer system must be (1) in support of education and/or research or (2) for legitimate school business. Use of the computer system is a privilege, not a right. The Superintendent shall establish administrative procedures, for the School Board's approval, containing the appropriate uses, ethics, and protocol for the computer system, including the prohibition of illegal materials, prevention of access to material harmful to juveniles, and measures to enforce this policy and regulation. Any communication or materials used on the computer system, including electronic mail or other files deleted from a user's account may be monitored or read by school officials.

Use of the School Division's computer system shall be consistent with the educational or instructional mission or administrative function of the Division as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of students. The Division's computer system is not a public forum.

The School Board is not responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable when using the computer system or for any information retrieved via the Internet. Furthermore, the School Board will not be responsible for the unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the computer system.

The Superintendent shall submit to the Virginia Department of Education this policy and accompanying regulations biennially.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students need written parental permission to stay after school. An after school permission slip signed by the parent is to be given to the home-base teacher. To ensure student safety, students may not remain after hours unless permission is documented. When a student stays after school, the parents are responsible for transportation. The school must have written permission from each student's parent if their child is leaving school with another student, whether by bus or car. Bedford County buses accept a maximum of two guest riders per student, per county transportation policy. The school must have parental permission from each student's parent if a student is to ride with anyone other than his or her parents.

Special programs offered after school may include sports, art, music, socials and clubs. Students will be notified of after school opportunities through the daily televised announcements and program flyers sent home in the Tuesday Folder. Due dates will be established for signing up for special programs and a participation fee may be charged. Students will not be able to sign up after the due date. Parents must complete and sign an after school permission form for a student who chooses to participate in a special program. Forms may be obtained from the home-base teacher. Parents should be aware that programs, such as socials, that have a large attendance, will have special pickup arrangements. Students who are not picked up on time may lose the privilege of future participation in after school activities or special programs. Students on disciplinary probation may not participate in after school activities or SCA sponsored social events.

AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Students are dismissed for all after school activities on the last bus bell. Students remaining after school for athletics, club activities, or other necessary reasons must immediately report to their sponsor, coach, or teacher after the last bus bell. Any student participating in an after school activity must take all necessary books, etc. to the activity or detention area. Students must remain with their sponsor, teacher, or coach until a parent or guardian picks them up. Students are not permitted to remain on school grounds until the start of evening athletic events such as practices and games. Any student found on the grounds unsupervised after the final bus leaves will be required to call home to be picked up.

ATTENDANCE

Students may not arrive on the school grounds prior to 8:15 A.M. No student supervision will be available prior to this time, so please be mindful of this if planning to drop your child off as a car rider. Students who arrive before 8:35 A.M. are to wait in the gymnasium until being dismissed to home-base. Supervision will be provided during the arrival and dismissal of buses.

The Bedford County Public Schools attendance policy is explained in the Code of Student Conduct. Parents are asked to notify the school office by 9:30 A.M. when they know their child will be absent from school. When the student is absent from school for an entire day, or for one or more class periods, a parent or guardian must notify the school with written documentation, note or e-mail. The notification shall contain the reason(s) for and the date(s) of the absence(s). Medical documentation may be required. **The principal will be the judge of the validity of any excuse.** Within five days of returning from an absence, students must present the home-base teacher with a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason for the absence. All absences are considered unexcused until a written note is received from the parent. Excused absences and tardiness include:

- death in the immediate family,
- a subpoenaed court appearance,
- previously approved absence, and/or
- a verified illness

To prevent potential truancy issues, parents are urged to work with the school to avoid unverified/unexcused absences. Attendance should be monitored closely to avoid missing an excessive amount of school. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than 10% of the school year. Bedford County Public Schools allows 10 parent notes to be accepted for each academic year. Students who are chronically absent will be required to have medical notes for illness and the school may not be able excuse other request for absences, such as vacations.

It is the student's responsibility to arrange for all make-up work. Students with excused absences may make up work accordingly: absent 1-2 days will have three (3) school days to make up work; absent 3-5 days will have six (6) school days to make up work; absent 6+ days will talk with the teacher to establish a date for the work to be completed.

Because of the high volume of daily requests we receive for homework assignments, we request that parents call the school office to receive homework information only when the absence is three (3) or more days. The office must receive the request for assignments by 9:00 A.M. in order to have the materials available by 3:35 P.M. the same day.

Tardiness

Students must be in home-base at 8:50 A.M. to be considered on time. Students will not be considered tardy due to late buses. Car riders should be dropped off **prior** to 8:45 A.M. in order to be in class and ready for morning announcements. Students who are tardy to school must stop by the office to receive an admit slip to enter class. The reason for being tardy must be stated. All tardiness is considered "unexcused" until a note is received from a parent, at

which time the validity of the excuse will be determined. Getting to class on time throughout the day is required. Tardiness disrupts classroom instruction and will be treated as a disciplinary and/or truant matter.

Early Dismissals

No student shall be permitted to leave the school prior to the 3:35 P.M. dismissal bell without the written permission of the parent or guardian, except by a police officer with judicial authority. All parents and guardians of a student may have access to their child unless the school has evidence that there is a legally binding instrument or court order which provides to the contrary. Without written permission, the students will go home at the regularly scheduled time.

Parents who need to pick up students before the school dismissal time must sign the student out in the office. Because dismissals are disruptive to the learning environment, parents are strongly urged to limit the number of requests. Classes will not be interrupted to call students except in emergencies; therefore,

- Parents must arrange for the student to meet them in the office by sending a note with the student to the home-base teacher.
- **Students must present all notes from their parents concerning early dismissal to their home-base teacher when they arrive in class in the morning.**
- Students will receive an early dismissal pass from their home-base teacher.
- Students must show at the beginning of the period the early dismissal pass to the teacher from whose class he/she will be dismissed.
- Students must remember to go to the office at the designated time.
- Parents must sign-out the student in the main office (**driver's license required**).

Repeated dismissals from class disrupt classroom instruction and may be treated as a truant matter. Without prior written permission of a custodial parent and administrative approval, persons under the age of 18 and non-custodial adults will not be allowed to sign-out a student.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Parents who have a change in their mailing address and/or phone number should report the change immediately to the office, so records can be corrected and kept current allowing for continued updates regarding student's progress and/or school activities. This is especially important in the event of an emergency.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

The FMS PowerSchool secretary works with families to enroll new students. The school counselor will determine the correct classroom placement for that student, create a schedule, and provide assistance to the new student and his/her family during the transition to Forest Middle School.

We request students obtain a withdrawal form at least one week prior to their withdrawal date when transferring to another school. Withdrawal forms can be obtained from the PowerSchool secretary. The parent/guardian, teachers, librarian, cafeteria manager, and school counselor must sign this form. When complete, this form should be returned to the PowerSchool secretary. We will send the student's records to the transfer school upon their official written request.

HEALTH

Emergency medical information is to be completed for each student through the info-snap system. Emergency contact numbers, in addition to parents' phone numbers, must be provided and current. Virginia law requires all students enrolled in public school to present a current, valid immunization record. No student will be enrolled without proper immunization documentation. **Students currently enrolled in school may be denied continued attendance if immunizations expire or are not current.**

Clinic Use

Students are responsible for notifying the teacher immediately if an injury occurs. In the case of a serious injury or illness, the school nurse or administrator will notify the parent.

Elevator

An elevator is available at Forest Middle School for use by students with a temporary or permanent disability. Verification from a physician is requested indicating the duration a student will need to use the elevator. An elevator key must be signed out from the main office. The key must be returned at the end of each day. Arrangements can be made, if necessary, for a student helper to ride the elevator to assist with books, etc. This request for assistance must be done in the office at the time the key is signed out. Students may not give the key to any other student to use. Students will be charged \$5.00 to replace a lost elevator key. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Emergency/Medical

Parents who have a child with any medical concerns, physical handicap, asthma, diabetes, heart or seizure disorder, food or bee sting allergy, etc. need to notify the clinic. It is important that the required papers are completed so we can assist the child with any medical needs that may arise during the school year.

Immunizations

All students must have proof of required immunizations or provide a religious/medical exemption form. Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade are required to have the Tdap booster or provide a religious/medical exemption form. **ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE THE Tdap VACCINE BEFORE THEIR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.**

Medical Insurance

If your child needs medical insurance, contact the school nurse for information.

Medication – Rules and Procedures

Please adhere to the following procedures regarding the administration of medication during the school day. This policy has been set forth by Bedford County Schools for the safety of your child:

- Acetaminophen pain reliever and emergency use antihistamine are available in the clinic for occasional student use. The appropriate Bedford County form must be signed. Parents will be notified if acetaminophen is given more than twice in a week.
- Any over-the-counter medications must be brought to the school accompanied by the appropriate Bedford county form. In addition, it must be in the original container. Dosage instructions on the label will be followed.
- Self-written notes and/or phone calls by parent regarding medication requests cannot be honored.
- Prescription medication requires a signed permission form from physician as well as parent. These must be on the appropriate Bedford County form. Medication must be in the original pharmacy container (ask the pharmacist for a small labeled container for the school). Any changes in prescription medication dosage must have a physician order. Each medication requires its own medication form.
- Asthmatics may carry and self-administer inhalers if the proper paperwork is filled out along with a physician's signature. A backup inhaler in the clinic is strongly suggested for emergency use. All inhalers must be properly labeled.
- Please do not send medication to school with your child. A parent/guardian must bring the medication to school.
- The Authorization to Administer Medication form and Health Care forms must be renewed each school year.
- Medication must be picked up at the end of the school year; any medication not picked up will be discarded.

Screenings

Student screenings for vision, hearing, scoliosis, height, and weight are scheduled during the regular school day during the month of October. Students in seventh grade and any student who has transferred to FMS, been home schooled, or attended a private school will be screened. If any medical concerns are identified, parents will be notified by letter or telephone call. Parents may opt a child out of screenings; however, a note from the parents must be received as soon as possible to be kept on file. Any child regardless of the grade will be screened if a request is submitted in writing or by phone from the parent.

Sickness

Any student who feels ill must obtain a pass from his/her teacher to visit the clinic. If the student becomes ill between classes, he/she should alert the next period teacher to obtain a clinic pass. Decisions regarding a student's illness and potential early dismissal from school are to be facilitated by the school nurse. As such, all communication with parents must go through the school nurse or administration.

A fever is a temperature of 100 degrees or more. A child needs to be fever free or on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

LOCKERS

Students will be issued a locker. A combination lock is built into the locker. Students should not share the combination to his/her locker. Students will be able to go to lockers at designated times during the school day. Teachers will monitor locker area behavior. Students are not to share lockers with anyone without administrative approval. **They also may not switch or trade lockers without teacher or administrative approval.**

All personal items and books, when not in use, are to be kept in lockers. Lockers should be kept clean and neat. Students are responsible for the condition of their lockers. Stickers may not be placed on lockers. Permanent decorations may not be attached to the outside of lockers.

For security reasons, students should not alter the lock mechanism in any manner. A student is not to open a locker that is not assigned to him/her. School lockers are the property of the school, and the school administration has the right to inspect and search any and all lockers.

LOST and FOUND

A box of "Lost and Found" items is maintained in the main office. At the end of each month, unclaimed items are given to a local charity. "Lost and Found" money, glasses, and valuables are kept in the main office until the end of each marking period. Students are urged to mark personal items with their name.

MORNING ROUTINE

Each morning at 8:45 the "Channel 6" announcements will be broadcast to the school. Announcements continue to stream highlighted and updated information throughout the day in order to provide frequent opportunities for students to receive important information such as cancellations.

Included in the morning announcements are the Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance. The 2000 session of the General Assembly amended Section 2.1-203 of the Code of Virginia to require daily observation of a moment of silence, not to exceed one minute, in every classroom in the public schools of Virginia. The teacher is to ensure that all students remain seated and silent and make no distracting displays during this time. Students may engage in any silent activity that does not interfere with other students.

The legislation states, "All students shall be required to learn the Pledge of Allegiance and to demonstrate such knowledge." The legislation further stipulates that each school board "shall require the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in each classroom of the school division." No student will be compelled to recite the pledge if there is an objection based on religious, philosophical, or other grounds. Students who are exempt are to remain quiet.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTAL RIGHTS

The General Assembly added section 22.1-279.4 to the Code of Virginia, which specifically allows non-custodial parents to participate in school related activities. The law states that unless there is a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents cannot be denied the opportunity to participate in school activities such as lunch breaks, parent-teacher conferences, and extracurricular activities. In fact, the law states that non-custodial parents should be allowed to participate in any activity that is supported or encouraged by school policy. If there is a court order denying access, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide a copy of that order to the school.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Bedford County School Board has adopted Management of the Student's Scholastic Records in the Public Schools of Virginia (Revised, 1989) as the formal procedures and regulations regarding the management of all student records. Any questions regarding the management, access, or release of student information should be directed to the building principal or Office of Student Services. All students will have a scholastic record that is housed in their base school. Some students will also have confidential folders as part of their permanent records with copies housed in the Central Office.

Student records shall be available to help plan the child's education and authorized school personnel shall have access to these records. The student's teachers shall use these records carefully and for the benefit of the student. Under no circumstances shall third parties view the student record without written consent of the student's parent or legal guardian and the building principal's knowledge and consent.

Upon appointment, the parent or legal guardian may see his or her child's scholastic record with authorized school personnel present. By the time a student spends his tenth year in school, he may view his permanent record under the supervision of authorized personnel. Any student 18 years of age or older has access to his records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request, which identifies as precisely as possible the record or records he or she wishes to inspect. Access must be given in 14 days or less from the receipt of the request.

The Family Educational Right and Privacy Acts (FERPA) has developed a "Management of Student Records Notice", which is provided on page 21 of your handbook for review.

Directory Information may include the name, gender, address, telephone listing, date, place of birth of a student, the student's major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, the weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees or awards received by students, and photographs. You have the right to opt-out of directory information.

TELEPHONE/WEBSITES/E-MAIL/OFFICE HOURS

The school office is open daily 8:15am – 5:00 pm. The telephone number for Forest Middle School is (434) 525-6630, Fax: 525-1284; School Board Office: (540) 586-1045; School Closings and Announcements: 586-1045 *333. The website address for Bedford County Public Schools is <http://bedford.sharpschool.net>. Forest Middle School's website address is <http://bedfordfms.sharpschool.net>. The FMS family calendar will be posted on the school's web page. If access to the school's web page is limited, a copy of the monthly calendar may be picked up in the main office.

The office telephone is used for school business or for student emergencies with the permission of a teacher or an administrator. Due to the number of students to be served, the students are not permitted to utilize the school's phone system for personal reasons. Students who are found to be abusing access to the telephone may be assigned restrictions. Students will not be given messages except in an emergency.

All teachers and professional staff may be contacted by e-mail. In most instances an employee's e-mail address consists of the person's first initial and last name @bedford.k12.va.us. Example: Scott Simmons's e-mail address is ssimmons@bedford.k12.va.us. Addresses can be accessed from the school's web page and/or from the teacher's web page.

TRANSPORTATION

All students are provided transportation to and from school on school buses. Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right, and this privilege may be withdrawn for inappropriate behavior to ensure the safety of all riders. Complete bus conduct regulations are included in the Code of Student Conduct.

A student is to ride the bus assigned to him/her. Whenever a student is to ride any other bus, there must be written permission from the parent. No more than two students may ride home with any one individual. If a student is to ride a bus (or in a parent's car) home with another student, a note from both students' parents is required. **It should be everyone's goal (school, parent, and student) to ensure transportation passes are processed by the start of the school day.**

If a student needs approval for a transportation change, the procedure will be as follows:

- 1) Students are to report to the transportation pass station between 8:15 am and 8:45 am to submit notes. When requesting to ride home with another student, both individuals must report to the pass station together so notes can be matched. If students are unable to report to the pass station together, passes will be matched at a later time and students will be issued bus passes during their lunch period.
- 2) Once a note is verified, the teachers on duty will provide a bus pass. Until a student has been issued a bus pass by a school official, they do not have permission to change transportation.
- 3) If a student forgets or loses their note from home, it is his/her responsibility to correct this issue. Students will be allowed to call home using personal devices until 8:45 am.
- 4) Students who arrive late to school will submit their pass to the office when they arrive. Notes are not to be submitted to classroom teachers.
- 5) Bus passes must be submitted to the bus driver upon boarding the bus. The bus driver will allow students to depart the bus only at their designated stop without a bus pass approved by the office.

If a parent needs to make a change in the afternoon that alters the student's typical mode of transportation (car rider or bus rider) the office must be notified by 3:00 pm. Typically, the office is very busy around dismissal time and **requests made after 3:00 cannot be guaranteed**.

In case of inclement weather, the Superintendent may make a decision to cancel school or close early. All major radio and television stations will announce this information as early as possible. Call (540) 586-1045 *333 or check the BCPS website and/or BCPS facebook page @ <http://bedford.sharpschool.net> for up-to-date information.

When parents provide transportation, they are asked to be extremely careful in the parking lot and driveway when students are on the grounds. Students riding in cars are to load or be dropped off in the designated area. Parents may not drop students off on Route 221 to walk up the driveway nor are they to be dropped off in the back of the building. Cars are not permitted in the bus loading area.

VISITORS

People with business at school, when students are present, must report to the main office for approval and obtain a visitor's badge before entering other sections of the building. **All visitors must wear a visitor's sticker when on school grounds. All faculty and staff have been directed by the principal to send any person without a visitor's sticker to the office immediately.** This includes parents, volunteers, former students, and guest speakers. Parents should not expect immediate access to teachers or administrators without an appointment.

Parents and guardians are the only persons permitted access to their child during the school day. This includes eating lunch with their child. All other persons must have written permission from a parent or guardian in order to visit or eat lunch with a student. The principal must approve all such visits at least two (2) days in advance. Exceptions to this policy include law enforcement, social service, and/or court appointed officials.

DISCIPLINE AND SCHOOL RULES

At Forest Middle School (FMS), we are committed to fostering a positive environment in which all students can learn. The primary purpose of the school is to create a learning community dedicated to individual growth and success through the development of independence, character, technological skill, and a desire for life-long learning.

Unwise choices of behavior will have disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges, detention, suspension from school, or an alternative education school. The county discipline policy is found in the *Code of Student Conduct*. In addition to the school rules, each teacher will develop a set of appropriate rules of behavior for his or her students. Students who choose not to follow the county, school, or classroom rules will receive appropriate consequences. Each student will be made aware of the consequences for misbehavior. Parents will be notified when a teacher or administrator is concerned about a student's repeated behavioral problems.

The goal of discipline is to prevent behavioral problems in a proactive way. In order to promote a positive and proactive climate FMS is part of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program (PBIS). This program is a statewide initiative, which uses data to identify areas in a school's climate or discipline that can be improved. This program is an asset to our school and encourages partnerships with parents and stakeholders to provide the best environment for our students here at FMS. The program is built around reinforcing positive behavior. Our goal is to have the Forest Middle School community work consistently to establish a positive and respectful environment. Students will be educated in making wise decisions about their behavior which, in turn, will contribute to their academic success, productivity, and citizenship.

The FMS school store is the center piece of our PBIS program. Students are able to earn points as a way of recognizing their positive behavior. These points can be used to purchase unique items located at the school store.

BACKPACKS/COATS/BOOK BAGS

Students are to store backpacks and coats in their lockers throughout the day. Backpacks and oversized handbags may not be carried from class to class nor may jackets/coats be worn to within the building. A "string bag" is an acceptable size item for students to carry to class.

Hooded sweatshirts ("hoodies") are permitted, though hoods are expected to be removed while in the building.

TRANSITIONS TO/FROM CLASSES

Transitions to and from classes must be done inside the building with the exception of students leaving/returning from PE classes or mobile classrooms. Students are not to transition to or from mobile classrooms using the sidewalk in front of the building without approval from the teacher and administration.

BULLYING/PEER CONFLICT

Peer conflict is defined as disagreement and oppositional interactions, which are situational, immediate and developmentally typical. These types of conflicts are not considered bullying and reflect the realities that any individual may experience socially unkind behaviors. The natural experience of peer conflict, with adult guidance and modeling, will assist students in developing social competency and tolerance, learning personal boundaries and conflict resolution strategies.

In contrast, bullying is defined as using repeated negative behaviors targeting a specific person that may include, but are not limited to threats, verbal or written abuse, physical abuse, harassment, and ethnic or gender slurs. Cyber bullying is the use of electronic media to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group with the intention of physically or psychologically intimidating others. A student, either individually or as part of a group, shall not harass or bully others.

Aggressive touching, inappropriate words or threats, and any display of aggression toward others will be dealt with in a serious manner. Students and/or parents should report incidences of alleged bullying to a teacher, school counselor, or administrator.

Forest Middle School takes all reports of bullying seriously and investigates each report thoroughly. All students are required to sign the anti-bully pledge at the beginning of the school year. Students are also exposed to positive messages, lessons, and activities that support by-stander education and diversity appreciation. Students who violate their pledge are held accountable according to the *code of student conduct*.

BUYING/SELLING

Students are not allowed to buy, sell, or trade food items, or any personal property while at school.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

The school building, grounds, and equipment were designed and selected to enhance your educational opportunities. The appearance of FMS reflects the character of those who attend. Destruction of school property will result in disciplinary action for the student. Additionally, charges will be assessed to replace/repair damaged school property. Students who do not show respect for school property may be required to provide community service to the school. Certain cases of vandalism may be referred to the School Resource Officer.

DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Displays of affection in school or on school grounds are not allowed. These include but are not limited to holding hands, hugging, walking arm in arm, inappropriate touching, or kissing.

DRESS CODE FOR BEDFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In order to promote an orderly and safe learning environment while preparing students for success in the world of work, dress guidelines have been established. Students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school. This means that a student's dress, grooming, and appearance, including hairstyle, jewelry, and makeup shall be safe, appropriate and shall not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Administrators will determine the appropriateness of student dress. Dress that is disruptive, distracting, revealing, or interferes with the educational process will not be acceptable.

Bedford County Public Schools along with the School Board has developed and approved a dress code for the middle school student. These rules are outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

DRUG/ALCOHOL POLICY

Student use, possession, distribution, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, look-alike drugs, steroids, or possession of drug paraphernalia on school premises or at any school function (home or away) is strictly prohibited. Penalties for this violation require mandatory disciplinary action (*refer to the Code of Student Conduct*) and/or court intervention through the School Resource Officer. Tobacco offenses, including possession of e-cigarette paraphernalia, will result in disciplinary action and a referral to the School Resource Officer.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES / PHONES and OTHER DISTRACTING MATERIALS

Using a personal electronic device at FMS is a privilege that carries significant responsibility. The use of personally owned electronic devices for instruction is not a requirement, but an opportunity to enhance educational experiences. Although students are allowed to bring personal devices to school, they do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage of personal devices.

Students who choose to bring phones to school must turn off or silence the device and store it in their locker during the instructional day (8:50 – 3:35). Students **ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CARRY PHONES throughout the building during the instructional day**. Teachers may offer

opportunities for phones to be used in educational activities or as a privilege. If such an opportunity is offered, specific directions will be provided to the class or grade level.

Personal device usage is fully subject to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) at all times while on school property. Devices used to threaten, harass, or compromise the privacy or safety of staff or students may result in disciplinary or legal consequences. **Photographs, audio and video recording, except for teacher directed instructional activities, is strictly forbidden.**

In general, a student in possession of a phone during the instructional day is subject to one or more of the following consequences:

- Confiscation, parent notification, ISS, loss of privilege to bring to school

A student who uses a phone during the instructional day or in a manner that violates the AUP is subject to one or more of the following consequences:

- Confiscation, parent notification, parent pick-up, ISS, MIP, suspension, loss of privilege to bring to school. Certain offenses may also require legal action.

Repeated violations of this policy or refusal to give up a phone/device to a teacher or administrator will result in additional disciplinary consequences.

Other personal items not necessary for instruction or directly related to an educational purpose should be left at home. Items including, but not limited to, hobby items, toys, spinners, collectables, sports paraphernalia, games, etc. are prohibited at school unless special permission is granted by school officials.

GUM

Students who chew gum at school must do so without distracting others or inappropriately discarding it. Gum left in water fountains, stuck under desks, discarded on sidewalks, and in many other places poses a health risk. Students who are not acting responsibly may lose this privilege and be subject to disciplinary action.

HALL PASSES

It is the responsibility of each student to secure a pass to leave an assigned area during class periods. Hall passes will be requested from students who are in the hallway during class time. All students are urged to refrain from excessive noise in the halls and walkways.

REST ROOM USE

Rest rooms are for the convenience of students, not a place to socialize or play. Students share a certain amount of responsibility for keeping their rest rooms clean and in good condition. Students should report any damage to a teacher immediately. The teacher determines use of the rest rooms during class time. Students should allocate time during transitions to utilize the restroom.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A student who is determined to be sexually harassing another person will be disciplined accordingly. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct or comments of a sexual nature. All founded cases of harassment will lead to disciplinary action. Students should tell a parent, teacher, school counselor, and/or administrator if they feel that they are being harassed.

WATERBOTTLE/DRINK POLICY

Each student is permitted to carry water with them during the school day. In order to maintain a clean, safe, and productive work environment for all stakeholders, the following restrictions apply:

- Drinks are restricted to water. Sodas, fruit drinks, and the like will not be permitted in classrooms.

- Water must be in a transparent container. Any container which inhibits visual identification of contents will not be permitted.
- Students are not permitted to share contents of any container.
- Students will continue to be subject to and abide by all teacher/classroom rules, policies, and expectations.
- Students are expected to properly dispose of all trash and clean up or report spills.
- Water will not be allowed in the following locations: library, computer labs, and/or other classrooms that are set-up for lab activities, demonstrations, testing, or similar activities.

Students found to be in violation of this or any other pertinent student code will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedures (including, but not limited to loss of this privilege and/or confiscation of container).

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct specifically outlines the major categories of behavior and states subsequent consequences that may occur as a result of misconduct. A student will have the right of due process when referred to the principal's office for a serious infraction. This entitles the student to tell his version of the accusation of misconduct that has been cited. After hearing the different descriptions cited in the referral, the principal (or designee) determines if any infraction of school rules has occurred. All rules and policies outlined in the Code of Student Conduct will be strictly enforced.

Community Service

Community service normally consists of assisting the custodians in their daily routines. After school community service may consist of duties such as: sweeping sidewalks, weeding landscaped areas, washing lockers, vacuuming halls, cleaning desktops, etc. Parents are notified in advance before a student serves after school community service. Parents are responsible for transportation for any after school community service.

Grade Level Discipline

Teachers have the authority to discipline students without a formal office referral. These disciplinary actions are intended to immediately correct inappropriate behavior before a written referral is warranted. Discipline at this level may include student conferences, silent lunch, or a grade level detention.

Lunch Detention (silent lunch)

Lunch detention is a consequence for minor infractions of school or classroom rules. The purpose of this consequence is to discourage inappropriate behavior before it become repetitive or significant enough to warrant a disciplinary referral. Teachers and/or administrators may assign lunch detention as a consequence for inappropriate behavior.

Detention

According to school board policy, an administrator or teacher may schedule after school detention with prior notification provided to the parent/guardian. Detentions are given as a consequence for repeated student behavioral problems and are used as a short-term intervention technique until the problem is solved or more serious consequences are established. Parents are responsible for transportation. During detention, a student may work on a learning packet designed to correct inappropriate behaviors. Community service may also be required during after school detention. It is the student's responsibility to serve detention when assigned. If a student does not attend an assigned detention, an additional detention period may be assigned or an out-of-school suspension may be incurred. Detention assigned by a teacher is considered a lower-level action as a formal referral is not written. Grade level detentions are typically the result of an accumulation of three or more silent lunches within a

given period of time. A Grade level detention is served with a teacher in a designated classroom. Detention assigned by school administrators is recorded with a written referral and served under the supervision of an administrator or designee.

Disciplinary Probation

Students on disciplinary probation are not in good standing and may not participate in any type of extra-curricular activity. Extra-curricular activities include programs such as clubs, socials, and sports (in or out of season). If a student is enrolled in academic or remediation programs; however, he/she will be allowed to participate in this program. A student may be placed on disciplinary probation at the discretion of an administrator for one or more of the following reasons:

- Excessive disciplinary referrals
- Students who are placed on probation at a discipline hearing
- Other good and just cause as determined by school administration

Parents will be notified in writing when a student is placed on disciplinary probation. The administrator will determine the duration of the disciplinary probation.

In school suspension (ISS) & Modified Instructional Program (MIP)

Administrators may assign students to ISS a disciplinary action. Students will be removed from the regular classroom to an alternate setting to complete the normal classroom work for one or more period / days. MIP is designed to serve as a longer term placement for students who do not respond to lower level interventions or disciplinary actions.

Saturday School

The purpose of Saturday School is to provide a positive educational experience and a meaningful misbehavior deterrent for those students who repeatedly violate school rules. Students who attend Saturday School will receive academic assistance as they complete homework and make-up work. This program will be hosted at FMS and will begin at 9:00 A.M. and end at 11:30 A.M., will be supervised by a teacher, and will consist of a community service project and a character education component.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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 scholastic records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's scholastic records within 45 days of the day the school division receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal or his/her designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will arrange 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 scholastic records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy under FERPA.

▪ Parents or eligible students may ask Bedford County Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They 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 provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) contained in the student's education record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

- FERPA permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school division as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on a School Board; a person or company the school division has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review the scholastic records in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

- Upon request, the school will disclose scholastic records without consent of the parent/guardian or other person having control or charge of the student, to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. Whenever a student transfers from Bedford County Public Schools, a copy of the scholastic record, including disciplinary records will be transferred to the school division the students transfers to upon request from the receiving school division. Disciplinary records include school records related to disciplinary action taken against a student for violating School Board rules or policies on school property or at school-sponsored events.

- Reference Bedford County Public Schools Policy JO – Student Records for additional exceptions that FERPA authorizes disclosure of personally identifiable information without consent.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school division 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, D. C. 20202

NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS), with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, BCPS may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the BCPS to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- School yearbooks ;
- Graduation, theater, athletic, and music programs;
- Video of performances, school activities, and athletic events;
- Articles about school activities and events;
- Lists of those receiving honors, awards, and scholarships;
- Team rosters and class lists.

BCPS produces and participates in television, video, and audio recordings, websites, and still photograph productions that may use your child's name, likeness, or voice. Your child may be photographed or video recorded by BCPS staff members or by vendors working for BCPS for use within BCPS for BCPS education-related activities, for example, student identification pictures or video recordings of classroom activity used for teacher training or student evaluation purposes. In addition to these internal uses, BCPS may disclose photographs of your child to the public as directory information for such uses as school yearbooks. BCPS also may disclose your child's image, name, or voice in BCPS photographic productions or other BCPS- sponsored publicity.

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. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings. Directory information will be released to institutions of higher education that request this information. The high schools will provide a form to parents/students 18 years and older to opt out of disclosure to military and higher institutions if requested.

If you do not want Bedford County Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by September 30, 2016. Bedford County Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name, including nickname
- Name of parent or guardian with whom student lives
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Grade level
- E-mail address
- Photographs and other images that feature the student
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Height and weight of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Most recent educational agency of 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.)

**NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
(PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors ("eligible students") certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education -

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of -

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use -

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Bedford County Public School District has adopted policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes (Reference: BCPS Policy KFB, School – Community Relations). Bedford County Public Schools will notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Bedford County Public Schools will notify parents and eligible students of the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys if the District has identified them at the start of the year. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following are covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution;
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED;
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

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

(PTA PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION)

Forest Middle School offers the opportunity for parents to participate in a Parent/Teacher Association, the PTA. The group will meet regularly to lend support to FMS students and teachers. The meetings are typically held four times per year in the cafeteria beginning at 7:00 P.M. Additional meetings may be held if necessary with 14 days notice. All parents and interested members of the community are welcome to attend. Students are urged to attend meetings and become active in the group.

MISSION

The mission of the PTA is three-fold:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

WHAT IS THE PTA?

The National PTA is the largest and most powerful volunteer association in America, working for the education, health, and safety of all children. The PTA's basic goals are as follows:

- to help parents, teachers, and other interested persons
- to gain knowledge about of the growth, development, and needs of the child
- to foster study as a basis for action
- to encourage and contribute whatever is needed to promote the welfare of children and youth.

The local PTA units are self-governing bodies that work independently to plan programs and activities and to provide services in order to meet the needs of children and youth in their own communities. They work with principals, superintendents of schools, and the school boards to insure that their concerns are heard and met.

The Forest Middle School PTA executive committee consists of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and chairpersons of standing committees. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected by the membership on an annual basis and according to local unit bylaws may not serve more than two consecutive years in the same office. The committee chairpersons are appointed yearly and may not serve more than two consecutive years in the same position. The school principal and a faculty representative also serve on the executive committee.

MEMBERSHIP

It is the goal of the PTA to build an informed, participating membership familiar with its objectives, policies, and programs and to be aware of the concerns of the school community. Traditionally, parents, teachers, and school administrators have been the most likely persons to join the PTA. We encourage grandparents, business leaders, or anyone who cares about children to become members as well. Certainly we encourage YOU to join. The PTA is YOUR vehicle to insure that your child has the best education possible.

There is no better value than a membership in the PTA! At Forest Middle School, a family membership is only \$10.00 per year, which includes membership in the local unit with voting rights and membership at the county, state, and national levels. Our goal this year is to acquire at least 100% membership, which means one membership per child in the school. Please consider joining today. Your children and we need your involvement. There are several ways to join the PTA:

1. During Open House Day,
2. Contact membership chairperson(s),
3. Sign up at any general membership meeting during the year, or
4. Obtain a membership kit from the school office.

PTA COMMITTEES

Committees are the working machinery of the PTA and are vital to its chairperson(s) serving as members of the executive committee. On occasion, a special committee is formed to work on a specific project and is dissolved when its assigned task is complete. Listed below are the standing committees and a description of their responsibilities.

Arts in Education

The goal of the Arts in Education Program is to encourage students to enjoy and participate in the arts, emphasize the need for childhood experiences in literature, visual arts, music and classroom study, as well as for extracurricular activities.

The Forest Middle School program will include:

1. The fall PTA Reflections Art Contest,
2. Local artists, and
3. Additional cultural events throughout the year.

Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee provides activities and favors for the teacher and staff to show appreciation for their efforts and support throughout the school year. Sign up at the Hospitality table on Open House Day or call the Hospitality chairperson(s).

Programs

Program chairpersons plan programs for the general membership meetings. This year's theme and programs are listed on the PTA calendar. Meetings will consist of general business matters of the PTA, speakers, and student presentations. Watch for information on additional programs in the newsletter.

Volunteers

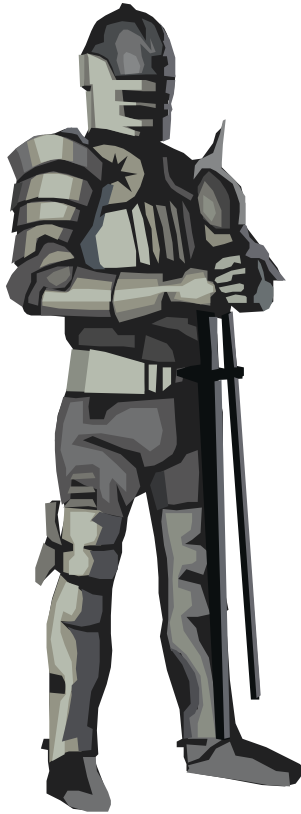
The purpose of the Volunteer Program is to enlist and strengthen the cooperation of parents in the education of children, to provide volunteer help for the individual needs of the children and teachers, and to develop an environment that encourages friendly two-way communication between home and school. We encourage you to become a volunteer. Regardless of how much time you have to give, there is a place and a NEED for YOU! Sign up at the Volunteer table on Open House Day or contact the volunteer chairperson(s).

Ways and Means

The primary responsibility of the Ways and Means Committee is to raise funds to purchase needed supplies and equipment and to make available services and programs to the school, not otherwise provided, in order to further promote the highest quality education possible for our children.



... Inspiring Discovery



Forest Middle School

Family Handbook

2017 – 2018

The Forest Middle School Family Handbook is meant to be helpful to students and parents. It should answer the most frequently asked questions. Should you have a question or concern that is not addressed within this handbook, please do not hesitate to call the school’s main office, your child’s home-base teacher, or any administrator. *Every attempt has been made to ensure the procedures within this handbook are aligned with BCPS policies. BCPS policies are subject to change and always take precedent over any established school procedure.*

Please sign below and return this page to your child’s home-base teacher by August 25, 2017, so we know you have received, read, and discussed a copy of this handbook with your child.

Student’s Printed Name: _____

Student’s Signature: _____

Parent’s Signature: _____

Date: _____