

# Forest Middle School



*Preparing Future Ready Cavaliers*

## **Student - Family Handbook 2023-2024**

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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. Marc Bergin, Division Superintendent, PO Box 748, Bedford, VA 24523, (540) 586-1045.

### **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. That building opened in September 1994. This year we celebrate the full opening of the new building addition to FMS as it serves students in grades 6-8, with a current enrollment of approximately 955 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 lifelong learning.

### **GOALS**

Our goals at Forest Middle School are to:

- To inspire discovery in students through a strong instructional program with an emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

## 2023-2024 BCPS Secondary Bell Schedules

		Regular Schedule	Clubs / LC / Events Schedule**	Two Hour Delay Schedule	Two Hour Early Dismissal Schedule
Arrival		8:25-8:45	8:25-8:45	10:25-10:45	8:25-8:45
1st Period		8:45-9:40*	8:45-9:20	10:45-11:20	8:45-9:20
2nd Period		9:45-10:35	9:25-9:55	11:25-11:55	9:25-9:55
3rd Period		10:40-11:30	10:00-10:30	12:00-12:30	10:00-10:30
Clubs / LC / Events			10:35-12:25		
4th Period / Lunch		11:35-1:00	12:30-1:55	12:35-2:00	10:35- 12:00
1st Lunch / Class	L	11:35-12:00	12:30-12:55	12:35-1:00	10:35-11:00
	C	12:05-1:00	1:00-1:55	1:05-2:00	11:05-12:00
2nd Lunch / Class	L	12:05-12:30	1:00-1:25	1:05-1:30	11:05-11:30
	C	11:35-12:00 / 12:35 - 1:00	12:30-12:55 / 1:30-1:55	12:35-1:00 / 1:35-2:00	10:35-11:00 / 11:35-12:00
3rd Lunch / Class	L	12:35-1:00	1:30-1:55	1:35-2:00	11:35-12:00
	C	11:35-12:30	12:30-1:20	12:35-1:30	10:35-11:30
5th Period		1:05-1:55	2:00-2:30	2:05-2:35	12:05-12:35
6th Period		2:00-2:50	2:35-3:05	2:40-3:10	12:40-1:10
7th Period		2:55-3:45	3:10-3:45	3:15-3:45	1:15-1:45

## 2023-2024 FMS Bell Schedule

		Regular Schedule	Two Hour Delay Schedule	Two Hour Early Dismissal Schedule
<b>Arrival</b>		8:25-8:45	10:25-10:45	8:25-8:45
<b>Homebase</b>		8:45-8:50	10:45-10:50	8:45-8:50
<b>1st Period</b>		8:50-9:42	10:50-11:23	8:50-9:23
<b>2nd Period</b>		9:45-10:37	11:26-11:59	9:26-9:59
<b>3rd Period</b>		10:40-11:32	<i>*3rd Period after 4th</i>	10:02-10:35
<b>4th Period/Lunch</b>		11:35-1:00	12:02-1:22	<i>*(Go to 5th Pd before 4th)</i> 11:14-12:34
<b>1st Lunch/Class</b>	L	11:35-12:00	12:02-12:27	11:14-11:39
	C	12:05-1:00	12:32-1:22	11:44-12:34
<b>2nd Lunch/Class</b>	L	12:05-12:30	12:32-12:57	11:44-12:09
	C	11:35-12:00/ 12:30-1:00	12:02-12:27/ 12:57-1:22	11:14-11:39/ 12:09-12:34
<b>3rd Lunch/Class</b>	L	12:05-1:00	12:57-1:22	12:09-12:34
	C	11:35-12:30	12:02-12:52	11:14-12:04
			<b>*3rd Pd - 1:25-1:58</b>	
<b>5th Period</b>		1:03-1:55	2:01-2:34	<b>*10:38-11:11</b>
<b>6th Period</b>		1:58-2:50	2:37-3:10	12:37-1:10
<b>7th Period</b>		2:53-3:45	3:13-3:45	1:13-1:45

### BCPS Schedule

- Instructional Day: 8:45 AM - 3:45 PM
- 7 instructional periods. Each period lasts 53 minutes (**except for on modified schedules**).
- All teachers will teach for 5 instructional periods. Of the remaining 2 periods in the day, 1 will be for instructional planning and 1 period will be used for duties as assigned by the principal.
  - Special education teachers will have 1 period for instructional planning and 1 period for case management.

SGSTC	Regular	Club / LC / Event	2 Hour Delay	2 Hour Early Dismissal
<b>AM Sessions*</b>	9:05-11:15		11:05-12:10	9:05-10:15
<b>PM Sessions**</b>	1:10-3:20		2:10-3:20	12:10-1:20

### Important information regarding Forest Middle School Bell Schedule:

<b>Frequently Asked Questions:</b>	<b>Regular Schedule:</b>
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What time do the doors open for students?	8:10 AM Car Riders, 8:25 AM Bus Riders
What time does breakfast begin to be served?	8:25-8:45 AM
What is the earliest time that I may drop off my child?	8:10 AM
What time does 1st period class start?	8:50 AM
What time do the morning announcements begin?	8:45 AM
What time does the tardy bell ring?	8:45 AM

## **INSTRUCTIONAL INFORMATION**

Please be sure to read the [Bedford County Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Bedford County Program of Studies](#) 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 History Day, 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.

This year FMS will offer a full slate of middle school athletic teams. Please go to the FMS [Athletics tab](#) for all important dates and information relating to sports teams.

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**

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires all school divisions to provide a character education program for its students.

### **COUNSELING PROGRAM**

The counseling 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 advice on personal or social issues and does not cover classroom activities or academic / disciplinary intervention.

## **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 and [on the BCPS website](#). Please refer to the guide for procedures. Students may be opted out of the program by parental request. Teachers will send opt out forms home before they begin to teach these concepts.

## **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. 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. 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 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.

### **Middle Schools (Grades 6-8)**

- Report cards will be issued at nine week intervals on the 5<sup>th</sup> day following the last day of the previous nine weeks period. Final report cards will be issued to students on the last day of school or mailed home.
- All students will be issued an interim after the end of the fourth week of the grading period. Students who are performing below a C or who receive an I (Incomplete) will receive a second interim after the end of the seventh week.
- Nine-week grades for all courses will be calculated using the following scale.

A	90-100	Highly Proficient
B	80-89	Above Proficient
C	70-79	Proficient
D	60-69	Below Proficient
F	Below 60	Insufficient Evidence of Proficiency
-		Not applicable
I		Incomplete work

- Semester grades will not be assigned for middle school courses. Final grades will be determined by averaging the four nine-week grades. When determining the final average, any nine-week average below 40 will be converted to a 40 for averaging purposes.



- A semester grade for high school credit courses will be determined by averaging the two nine-week grades and the exam grade, which may not count for more than 10%. When determining a semester or final average, any nine-week average below 40 will be converted to a 40 for averaging purposes. The exam grade will not be used to determine the semester or final grade for students who are exempt from exams according to Policy IKC and choose not to take the final exam. The final grade will be determined by averaging the two-semester grades together.
- In any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, a parent may request that the grade be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course (See Policy IKEB). If the credit is stricken from the transcript, the SOL score cannot be used toward verified credits needed for graduation.

### **INFOSNAP**

Infosnap is an online student registration program that replaces the paper forms that were previously sent home. All necessary school forms are completed online. Each student receives a personalized Snapcode to access the program. All forms must be completed online. If assistance is needed, please contact the school at 540-586-7735.

### **HOMEWORK and MAKE-UP WORK**

Homework is an important part of the instructional program. Homework can be in many forms: written, reading, projects, studying, etc., and is 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. Teachers are also utilizing web based resources such as Canvas, 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 Canvas pages or Google pages for assignments. When students are absent they, and their parents, can keep current on assigned work by emailing teachers, or checking teacher's Canvas pages.

### **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. 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:**

**BRAINPOP:** [www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com)  
**USER NAME:** fms1 **PASSWORD:** fms1

**Discovery Education-** [discoveryeducation.com](http://discoveryeducation.com)- **Log in with your Google account**

**Explora--USER NAME:** FMSJF **PASSWORD:** Library22!  
**Virginia Collection Database (Gale Resources) - - PASSWORD:** schools  
**World Book Online - - USER NAME:** bcswo **PASSWORD:** bedford  
**Follett Shelf--USER NAME:** lunch number **PASSWORD:** Your last name

\*\*\*The library is open Monday – Friday from 8:25 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent contacts will be made throughout the school year. A conference day for parents is 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 date established for conference day. 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/sneakers/rubber soled shoes. 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 the password, use your child's last name. Teachers may also use an instructional program called PLT4M to assign exercise programs to their students.

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.

## **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 ensure 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.

## **STUDY SKILLS**

### **How to Be a Successful Student:**

1. 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 workload.
5. Fully utilize resources like Parent Portal, Canvas, 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.
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**

	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
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6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading SOL	*		
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math SOL	*		
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading SOL		*	
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math SOL		*	
Civics/Economics SOL		*	
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science SOL		*	
8th Grade Reading SOL			*
8th Grade Math SOL			*
*** World Geography SOL			*
*** Algebra 1 SOL	Students enrolled in Algebra 1	Students enrolled in Algebra 1	Students enrolled in Algebra 1
*** Geometry SOL		Students enrolled in Honors Geometry	Students enrolled in Honors Geometry
*** Algebra II SOL			Students enrolled in Honors 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 / CHROME BOOKS**

For the majority of courses at FMS a class set of textbooks is provided to each classroom. Thus, students will not be required to carry textbooks from class to class. For some courses a student workbook/text will be provided to each student. These worktexts are able to be written in by students. If an actual textbook is issued to students, they are responsible for its upkeep and return. Failure to return a book, or returning a book in a ruined condition could result in replacement costs for the student.

All students will be issued a ChromeBook. Care of this device is the responsibility of the student. Please refer to additional information provided at the beginning of school concerning the care, use, and responsibilities associated with being issued this device. The student/family is responsible for the replacement or repair costs for any loss or damage to a student's Chromebook.

## **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.

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 have food allergies or other disabilities that restrict their diet must have a Dietary Modification Medical Statement Form filled out by a licensed medical authority on file in the school clinic. If a parent needs to request substitutions or meal modifications, they should contact, School Nutrition Supervisor at [suzanne.quesenberry@bedford.k12.va.us](mailto:suzanne.quesenberry@bedford.k12.va.us) for further information.

For more information about the School Nutrition Program, including menus, please visit [Bedford.sharpschool.net](http://Bedford.sharpschool.net). Click on Areas of Support; choose Operations and then School Nutrition.

### **Free/Reduced Meal Applications**

Visit **LINQ Connect** to complete an online application for free/reduced meals.

Paper applications are available in the front office of your child's school.

Eligibility is determined by household size and income. An eligibility determination letter will be mailed to you.

### **Online Payment Provider**

Families may deposit funds to student meal accounts with a credit or debit card online at **LINQ Connect** <https://linqconnect.com>. This is a secure, third-party vendor. Any funds that were remaining on student's MySchoolBucks accounts from prior have been rolled over and are active on the students account through LINQ.

Beginning August 1, 2023, online payments have a processing fee of 3.95% of the transaction amount with a minimum fee of \$2.85 per transaction.

Payments may be made at **no charge** in all school cafeterias by cash or check.

There is no charge to maintain your LINQ Connect account, which allows families to view student meal transactions and set spending limits or restrictions.

### **Meal Prices**

#### **Lunch**

Student: Elementary \$2.50/ Secondary \$2.75 / Adult: \$4.00

#### **Breakfast**

Student: \$1.35 / Adult: \$2.75

#### **Milk**

\$0.60

\*\*For the 2023-2024 school year, reduced-price meal costs will be waived.

### **Menus**

Visit the **Titan Parent Portal** to view breakfast and lunch menus. Menus are available in multiple languages and include nutritional information. They may be viewed without creating an account.

Menus may be filtered by: School, Allergens, Dietary Restrictions

Menus are preplanned, however, unforeseen circumstances sometimes occur that may affect the ability to serve certain food items. When this occurs Nutrition Managers update their school's menu specifically, as time allows. Please understand in limited cases, the menu may not be updated until the day a meal is served. In addition, changes will be advertised through school morning announcements.

## **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 Emergency Operations 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 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. If you have any questions regarding Yearbook, please contact Ms. Dean directly at [adean@bedford.k12.va.us](mailto: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.

### **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 [here](#). 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 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> 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

Please see Bedford County Public Schools policy [IIBEA](#) for information on technology use.

## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students need written parental permission to stay after school for an event. An after school permission slip signed by the parent is to be given to the teacher/sponsor of the activity. 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/or program flyers sent home, or via the school web page. 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 will be distributed in different manners depending on the event. 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. Students are to leave school by bus or car and are not allowed to walk off school grounds without special permission.

## ATTENDANCE

Students may not arrive on the school grounds prior to 8:25 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. 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 email. 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 **three days** of returning from an absence, students/parents must provide the office with a written excuse or email from 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 or email is received from the parent. All

absence notes, emails, and questions related to attendance can be sent to: Ms. Kris Gilley; FMS Attendance Clerk/Registrar at: [kgilley@bedford.k12.va.us](mailto:kgilley@bedford.k12.va.us).

**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 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 to excuse other requests 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.

**Tardiness**

Students must be in their Homebased by 8:45 AM to be considered on time. Students will not be considered tardy due to late buses. Car riders should be dropped off **prior** to 8:40 AM 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. Consequences per semester are as follows:

- 1st and 2nd Tardy~ Teacher conference with student
- 3rd, 4th and 5th~ Parent phone call and Lunch Detention
- 1<sup>st</sup> Referral (6<sup>th</sup> tardy)~ 1 day ISS
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Referral (7<sup>th</sup> tardy)~ 2 days ISS
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Referral (8<sup>th</sup> tardy)~ 1 day Saturday school
- 4<sup>th</sup> Referral (9<sup>th</sup> tardy)~ 2 days Saturday school
- 5<sup>th</sup> Referral (10<sup>th</sup> tardy)

**Early Dismissals**

No student shall be permitted to leave the school prior to the 3:45 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. 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 truancy 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 Registrar/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 Registrar/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 Registrar/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. A student needing assistance may request that one (1) friend help them by carrying books/supplies to class, and thus ride the elevator with that student.

#### **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 7th and 8th grade are required to have the Tdap booster or provide a religious/medical exemption form.

**\*\*\*7th Grade: Meningococcal (MCV4) immunization**

**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:

- 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 parents regarding medication requests cannot be honored.
- Prescription medication requires a signed permission form from a 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.

**LOCKERS**

Student lockers will generally not be used during the 2023-2024 school year. However, if a student specifically wants a locker then they can request one from their Homebase teacher. All students will be permitted to carry a backpack containing their supplies in order to be fully prepared for all

classes. Additionally, FMS will not require students to carry textbooks to class. Teachers will have class-sets of textbooks available for students in order to accommodate the lack of locker use.

### **LOST and FOUND**

The school maintains a lost & found location. 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 announcements will be broadcast to the school. Announcements continue to stream highlighted and updated information throughout the day on several big screen TV's in order to provide frequent opportunities for students to receive important information such as game/practice cancellations, lunch menu, and upcoming events and important dates.

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.

### **SEARCHES**

When there is "reasonable suspicion" school authorities have the right to search book bags, lockers, pocketbooks, totes, etc. without a search warrant. Dogs may be used to detect any contraband on school property. Contraband items may be seized by school authorities and may be turned over to the police department.

### **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 8:00 am – 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 can be acquired via the BCPS Facebook or twitter page. Parents are also encouraged to download the BCPS app for timely notifications. The website address for Bedford County Public Schools is [HERE](#).

**Forest Middle School's website can be found [HERE](#)** 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 will not be given messages except in an emergency. Parents are encouraged to email their student directly to relay any information or messages to them.

All teachers and professional staff may be contacted by email. Email addresses can be accessed from the school's web page and/or from the teacher's Canvas 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. 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 8:25 AM and 8:40 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 8:40 AM. 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.

4) 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 selection 9 or check the BCPS website and/or BCPS facebook page 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 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. 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.

## **BACKPACKS/HOODIES/HATS**

Students will be allowed to carry backpacks throughout the day. Hooded sweatshirts (“hoodies”) are permitted, however hoods are NOT allowed to be worn during the instructional day. Hats are permitted, however “costume-type” hats are NOT allowed. Administration will have the final decision on any hat in question.

## **TRANSITIONS TO/FROM CLASSES**

Transitions to and from classes must be done inside the building with the exception of students returning from PE classes, and students using the courtyard. Students will also be allowed to use the courtyard when moving between both buildings since the courtyard is secure.

## **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/items 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**

BCPS has created standards for student dress in order to empower learners for future success and foster a safe and dynamic learning environment. BCPS operates in a manner that respects differences based on sex, race, color, national origin, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, ancestry, marital or parental status, and other factors. For these reasons, the School Board and school staff rely on students and parents to exercise good judgment in selecting appropriate clothing that does not disrupt learning or cause a safety concern. Students must wear a shirt and pants, shorts or a skirt or the equivalent (dress, jumper, etc.) and shoes. Clothing must cover the torso below the armpits as well as the buttocks.

The following types of attire (including clothing, jewelry, or other displayed personal belongings) are prohibited:

1. Attire that has language or images that are offensive, profane, vulgar, discriminatory, or racially/culturally divisive. This would include confederate flags, swastikas, KKK references, or any other images that might reasonably be considered hurtful or intimidating to others.
2. Attire that has language or images that promote illegal conduct, violence, or the use of drugs or alcohol.
3. Attire that causes or is reasonably likely to cause a substantial disruption to the learning environment.
4. Attire that causes or is reasonably likely to cause a safety concern.

Some school or classroom activities and curriculum may require specific dress guidelines (e.g., physical education). Any such requirements will be explained by the school staff and addressed in a course syllabus/parent letter. Students are permitted to wear any religiously or ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle. Staff members will not enforce the dress code by direct physical contact with students, and no student will be required to undress in front of any other individual to comply with the dress code.

## **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 (vape) paraphernalia, will result in disciplinary action and a referral to the School Resource Officer.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES / PHONES and OTHER DISTRACTING MATERIALS**

Using an electronic device at FMS is a privilege that carries significant responsibility. Students are discouraged from bringing personal devices to school. The school is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage of any personal device. Since BCPS will be issuing students their own Chromebook, phones and other electronic devices will typically not be needed in the educational process.

**STUDENTS MAY BRING PHONES TO SCHOOL BUT MUST TURN PHONES OFF OR SET TO SILENT AND STORE THEM IN THEIR BOOKBAG/BACKPACK/LOCKER DURING THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY 8:45 AM TO 3:45 PM.**

**IN SHORT, PHONES ARE TO BE OFF, OUT OF SIGHT, SILENT, AND NOT IN USE at all times during the instructional day.**

**Violations of this policy will result in a parent having to come to FMS to retrieve the device. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action up to and including detention, ISS, and loss of phone/device privileges.**

Students may only use phones before or after the instructional day or by special permission from their teachers.

If permission for the use of personal devices is granted, device usage is fully subject to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) at all times while on school property. **Any device 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.**

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. Individual teachers may decide not to allow gum in their classroom.

## **HALL PASSES**

This year FMS will be using the **E-Hall Pass** system, and students will be trained how to use it once school begins.

## **RESTROOM 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 restrooms clean and in good condition. Students should report any damage to a teacher immediately. The teacher determines use of the restrooms during class time. Students should allocate time during transitions and lunch 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.

## **WATER BOTTLE/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:

- o Drinks are restricted to water.
- o Glass bottles/containers are not allowed, nor are squeeze-type sports bottles
- o Sodas, fruit drinks, and the like will not be permitted in classrooms. **Energy drinks are not allowed at school (cafe, classroom, or bus).**
- o Students are not permitted to share contents of any container.
- o Students will continue to be subject to and abide by all teacher/classroom rules, policies, and expectations.
- o Students are expected to properly dispose of all trash and clean up or report spills.
- o 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, 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**

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 becomes 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 with the principal or the division's Discipline Hearing Officer.
- Other good and just cause as determined by school administration

Parents will be notified or a parent conference held when a student is placed on disciplinary probation. The administrator will determine the duration of the disciplinary probation.

**In-School Suspension (ISS)**

Administrators may assign students to ISS as 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 periods / days. ISS is designed to serve as a longer term placement for students who do not respond to lower level interventions or disciplinary actions.

**After-School Detention**

Students may be assigned after-school detention for certain behavioral infractions. In such cases parents will be notified of the day the detention is to be served. After-school detention will run from 4-5pm. Students serving after school detention may be picked up in the main office at 5pm.

**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

**Out of School Suspensions:** An administrator, acting as an agent for the Division Superintendent, may suspend a student from school for serious level infractions. Parents will be notified of a suspension in writing. Suspensions are assigned as specified by the division's *BCPS Code of Student Conduct*. Students are not permitted on school grounds or to attend any school sponsored activity when suspended from school.

## **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 unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official includes a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

§ Upon request, the school 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 your child's school principal in writing by September 24, 2021. 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 (ED) –

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 JOB, Administration of Surveys and Questionnaires). 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