

Holbrook Middle School

Lion's Guide 2024-2025



Home of the Lions

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Principal: Torben Ross

Assistant Principals: Marcia White, and Katherine Cochran

Holbrook Middle School Mission

Holbrook Middle School provides students with a safe, positive environment where students achieve high academic and personal/social success through support from caring, dedicated teachers and staff.

Principal's Welcome Statement

Welcome Holbrook Students and Families to the 2024-2025 School Year!

I look forward to a fantastic year with you all! With the help of our dedicated teachers and supportive parents, we will achieve success in many ways this school year. As your Principal, I am excited to build positive relationships with each of you.

I want to extend a warm welcome to all the students and guardians at Holbrook Middle School. We are proud of our faculty and student body, who work together to create an atmosphere of excellence and positivity. As we begin a new year, we will continue striving to create an optimal learning environment for our students. Our students will excel in academics, athletics, and various other opportunities throughout the school and community. Our accomplishments are evident in the school pride that fills our hallways daily. The success at Holbrook Middle School is achieved through the encouragement and support of our students, staff, parents, and community. We treasure the opportunity to work in partnership with you to ensure your child has a positive experience at Holbrook. With this support, I feel blessed to be part of the BEST middle school in Gaston County.

One of the traditions that makes Holbrook Middle School the BEST is our well-behaved students, and we will continue to set high expectations for student behavior this year. I encourage you to review our expectations and ask that you uphold these standards throughout the year.

Please refer to the handbook as needed to help make this a successful school year for all students, staff, and parents of Holbrook Middle School. I am deeply committed to making a positive difference in the lives of our children. With your assistance, we will achieve this by setting high academic expectations for all children while providing positive support systems to ensure they are met.

Again, I look forward to this year and the success it will bring!

Lion Pride Amplified!!!

Torben Ross

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Principal

Bell Schedule

Tardy bell: 8:30 a.m. Classes Begin

Dismissal: 3:30 p.m. Dismissal

Should students bring water bottles to school?

- Yes. We encourage students to bring filled water bottles to use throughout the school day. Please avoid sending soft drinks and energy drinks with your child to school.

Arriving at School

The building will open at 7:45 a.m. for car riders and walkers. Students arriving before 8:00 will report to the cafeteria. All students should report to their homeroom teacher's classroom. **Students must not arrive before 7:45 a.m. due to safety concerns.** Students will eat Breakfast in the cafeteria. Breakfast and lunch will be free to all students this year.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up Areas

Car riders must be **dropped off and picked up** in the main parking lot of the school. Students are not to be dropped off anywhere other than the main parking lot due to safety. Bus students are dropped off and picked up at the bus lot located at the back of the school. **This driveway is for bus traffic ONLY.** No parking or pick-up is allowed in the bus lot.

Leaving School

If you must leave school before the end of the day, you must be signed out in the office by a guardian. Your parents/guardians must come to the office before you will be allowed to leave school. **Failure to sign out in the office before leaving is considered skipping and will result in disciplinary action.**

Parents, if you need to sign out your student, we encourage you to sign them out before **2:45 pm** due to traffic in the car line and difficulty leaving the parking lot. Once the car line begins to form and due to the traffic pattern, it is difficult to leave the parking lot at this time.

Tardy Policy

Any student arriving at school after 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy. The reason for the tardy will determine if it is excused or unexcused. Valid excuses are limited to medical/dental appointments, court appointments, late buses, or being detained by a school official. If you arrive after 8:30 am, you must sign in at the office. We understand that occasionally families run late in the morning; however, students who are chronically tardy to school will receive consequences. Habitually tardy students may also be referred to the school social worker and/or other student support personnel for further intervention.

K-8th Grade Student Attendance

Gaston County Schools

The following summary provides key information on significant statements from the Gaston County Schools' Board of Education policy on student attendance. To view the full policy, please visit our GCS website at www.gaston.k12.nc.us.

School Day Attendance

- The school year is 180 days. Students must be in attendance for at least 168 days. Only 12 absences, including excused and unexcused absences, are permitted each school year.
- For students to benefit from the instructional day, it is important for students to **arrive on time** and **remain at school** for the entirety of the school day.
- For students who exceed twelve absences, each school shall have a promotion/retention committee that must review information on these students and make a recommendation to the principal regarding the student's promotion or retention status.
- To be recorded present, a student must be present at least one-half of the school day.

Documentation

- Following any absence(s), a student is required to present a written document from the parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence.
- All absences will be coded unexcused in the computer until a written note is received from the parent or guardian.
- Written documentation must be presented within **two school days** after the student returns to school; otherwise, the absence(s) will be recorded as unexcused.
- If unexcused absences reach ten in a year, our social worker may file a warrant for violation of the school attendance law. You will receive letters on 3, 6, and 10 unexcused days.

Communication

- After each absence, excused, or unexcused, the principal/ principal's designee shall inform the parent/guardian/custodian by way of a personal or computer-generated telephone message.
- Before six (6) cumulative absences of any type the principal shall notify the parent/guardian by mail to share information regarding the Gaston County School attendance policy.

Make-Up Work

- Upon the student's return to school, arrangements for make-up for excused or unexcused absences shall be made within three (3) school days. Due dates for make-up work will be at the discretion of the teacher.

Holbrook Middle School Attendance and Make-Up Work Procedures

- On the day you return from an absence, you must bring documentation to your Homeroom teacher that contains the following: your name, date(s) of absence, reason for absence, and parent/guardian signature to have the absence excused.
- Parents can call the school office or communicate with the student's teachers to request work if the absence will last more than three days. Please allow 24 hours to collect the work.

7th Grade Immunization Requirement

Per North Carolina state law, all incoming sixth-grade students are required to receive a booster dose of the TDAP immunization. Any child who does not receive a TDAP booster will not be allowed to attend school, due to NC State law requirements. Please see the school nurse or an administrator if you have questions regarding immunization requirements.

Academic Information

Report cards are sent home with students at the end of each nine-week grading period. Interim reports are sent home with students at the midpoint of each nine-week grading period (4 ½ weeks). Interim reports are an indicator of a student's progress during a grading period. If parents have questions or concerns about a report card or interim, call or email your child's teachers to set up a conference.

The Gaston County Schools' grading scale is as follows:

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

Conduct grades are:

- 1 = excellent
- 2 = satisfactory
- 3 = needs to improve
- 4 = unsatisfactory

GCS Grade Reporting Dates

Report Cards: every nine weeks

10/17/24, 01/09/25, 03/20/25, 05/30/25

Honor Roll

Holbrook Middle School encourages all students to do their very best work, complete all assignments on time, study for tests and quizzes, and be responsible for their learning. Engaging in these types of studious behavior typically results in students' receiving good grades on their report cards.

At the end of each grading period, students who received all A's or all A's and B's will be recognized on the Holbrook Middle School Honor Roll. Students on the Honor Roll will be celebrated every nine weeks. Individual teachers or teams may offer additional incentives.



Student of the Month Assemblies

Holbrook Middle School may hold monthly assemblies to honor students for a variety of reasons. Each team, including Encore, will recognize a Student of the Month who exemplifies the Character Trait of that particular month. In addition, one male and one female athlete and students who are nominated for the Do the Right

Things awarded are also recognized.

In-person and remote learning (when necessary) responsibilities

Student Responsibilities

- Understand Canvas assignments before leaving school and record them accurately in your planner.
- Take home all necessary materials to complete assignments.
- Schedule and organize time for remote assignments.
- Review your grades on the portal and be an advocate for your education.
- Confer with teachers about grades and homework concerns.

Take care of your Chromebook as you travel from in-person learning. Chromebooks will be turned in to homeroom teachers each day to be charged. Chromebooks will not be taken home.

Parent Responsibilities

- Encourage, support, and show interest in your child's work during in-person and remote learning.
- Log on to the Parent Portal through the GCS website regularly to review your child's progress.
- Assist students in developing good study habits by providing a comfortable, well-lighted area free from distractions.
- Evaluate your child's activities to be sure he or she has enough time to study and participate in family and outside activities.
- Encourage students to complete homework independently, unless otherwise instructed.
- Review your student planner and other work samples and folders at least once a week.
- Acknowledge good effort and work habits!



Cheating

Any attempt to obtain credit for work done by another person is unacceptable. Cheating includes copying someone's homework, giving someone your homework to copy, getting or giving help on a test, or copying word-for-word from a book. For instance, when a student cheats, a grade of zero will be assigned, and the teacher will notify parents. The parents will be notified again on the second offense. A parent conference may be requested if the problem persists.

Responsible Use Policy

Each student will be required to complete a *Responsible Use Policy* agreement the first time they log onto a school computer for the year giving the student permission to use the computers and the internet at school. If you wish for your student to not participate, please review the beginning of the year information to opt-out.

Student Support Services

The counselors are available to see students individually or in small groups. Sessions can focus on such areas

as peer conflicts, substance abuse, depression, career planning, etc. Students who want to see a counselor must secure a pass from his or her teacher. Parents are welcome to contact the counselor by telephone or email, and we ask that you make an appointment if you wish to see a counselor in person. The counselors also assist in the following areas:

Scheduling
Community Agency Referrals
Enrichment Programs
Registration
Mediation

Counseling
Classroom Guidance
Student Records
Individual Academic Programs (504 Plans)
Academic Requirements

Conference Requests

We welcome the opportunity to meet with parents and guardians to discuss any concerns or issues that may arise. If you need to schedule conferences and appointments, please schedule those in advance. This will ensure that your concerns are addressed in the best possible way. You may contact the school office at (704) 836-9607 to schedule conferences or email your child's teachers.

Safety Drills

Periodically the school will have various safety drills, including for fires, tornadoes, and lockdowns. Students are expected to remain quiet and follow all directions from teachers and staff in an orderly manner.

School Security

All persons entering the school campus and buildings are subject to search by metal-detecting devices and are required to sign in at the front office with a valid ID. The front office is accessed through the main doors and remains locked during the day. Please "ring the doorbell" located to the right of the door by pushing the button. This will allow the front office to identify persons entering. In addition, the school campus is monitored by surveillance cameras at all times. These measures are in place to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff, and visitors.

Students should only use designated entrances and exits. Also, students must not be in any unauthorized area of the building or campus at any time. This applies during school hours and at after-school events. Finally, per school board policy, school officials may conduct random classroom or locker searches at any time, including through the use of metal detectors. School officials may also conduct other searches based on reasonable suspicion. Please see a school administrator to view the full search policy.

Lost and Found

Articles found should be hung on the hooks outside the restrooms in the cafeteria. Owners may claim their property from the lost and found hooks. Students are encouraged to mark clothing, pocketbooks/purses, book bags, books, etc. with their names so that lost items may be returned to them. Unclaimed lost and found items will only be kept for two weeks.



School Telephones

Students may use school telephones **only** in emergencies. Emergencies may include illness or the arrangement of transportation after school. You must have permission from your teacher (with a note) and the school office staff to use the office phone. **We safeguard our students' instructional time; therefore, students will not be called out of class to receive phone calls.** Phone messages for students will be delivered to students at a time to not interrupt instructional time. No phone calls will be allowed after 2:45 p.m.

Withdrawal Procedures

If you need to withdraw from school, your parents or guardian needs to contact the guidance department. You will need to get a withdrawal form from the front office, which will require you to return all textbooks, library books, and any other items that belong to the school and pay any fees or charges you still owe. After your teachers sign the form, you will need to take the form back to the office so that we can get all the needed information to your next school.

Cafeteria

Breakfast is offered to all students beginning at 7:45 a.m. Students arriving on a late bus will always be offered the opportunity to eat breakfast. Students may bring lunch or receive one from the cafeteria. **All breakfast and lunch will be free to all students this year.**

Students who require modifications to their school meals for a diagnosed medical condition (allergies, diabetes, celiac disease, etc.) must have a completed ***Diet Order*** form on file at the School Nutrition office. *Diet Order* forms may be obtained from the School Nutrition office, cafeteria manager, or school nurse. The parent or guardian of the student requiring a special diet will be notified by the School Nutrition department regarding the effective date of the diet order.

To ensure safety and sanitation, all foods served to students in the school must be obtained from a commercial food service entity which is subject to local rules, regulations, and inspections.

Medication

Holbrook Middle School strictly enforces the Gaston County Board of Education's policy concerning medication. Accordingly, Holbrook Middle School will not give medication to students without written permission from the student's parent or guardian. Long-term medications (those given at regular intervals throughout the year) must be in the properly labeled original container.

Additionally, your doctor and parent/guardian must complete an *Authorization of Medication for Students in School* form. This form is available in the school office. Administration of short-term medication (that which is given for a brief period) must be requested in writing by a parent/guardian. All medication should be in the original container and parents are responsible for picking up medication within one week after the last requested administration, otherwise the medication will be destroyed. **No students may carry medication on their person during school or on a school bus.**

Asbestos Information

The EPA requires Gaston County Schools to perform surveillance of asbestos materials in all Gaston County schools every six months. All asbestos materials are in satisfactory condition at Holbrook Middle. We shall continue to manage them in place, as recommended by the accredited management planner.

Athletic Information

Holbrook Middle School offers softball, football (7th-8th), volleyball, golf, basketball (girls and boys), soccer (girls and boys), wrestling, track (girls and boys), and baseball. To be eligible for athletic participation, a student must:

- be a resident of the school administrative unit in which you are assigned or have a valid transfer granted through the superintendent's office;
- Meet your grade level promotion standards;
- be in attendance 85% of the semester before participation (no more than 13.5 total absences: excused and unexcused)
- provide the school with a copy of the physical exam;
- not be 15 years old on or before August 31 of the school year.

If you are absent from school or have OSS or ISS, you are not allowed to practice or play in a game or match on that day. In addition, each coach will set forth team rules in accordance with school and school system rules, and each student-athlete is expected to follow those rules. Also note that once a student enters the 7th grade, he or she only has two years of athletic eligibility.



Clubs and Organizations

All students at Holbrook Middle School can belong to a particular club of their choosing. Some clubs are more popular than others, but we honor students' first, second, or third choice of a club. Some of the clubs offered at Holbrook Middle School are the Junior Beta Club, Battle of the Books, FCA, Crosswalk, Science Club, Robotics Team, Student Council, and Drama.

Junior Beta Club

The purpose of establishing a Junior Beta Club is to encourage high academic achievement, reward merit, and promote high moral character. This club is open to all 7th and 8th graders who qualify. The qualifications for membership are:

- Students must have a yearly average of no less than 90% and no grade below 80 for initial placement in the Beta Club.
- Students may not have any grade below 80 during the time of their membership in the Beta Club.
- A grade below 80 will result in probation.
- Students may not have more than one probationary period and two probationary periods warrant removal from Beta Club.
- Students must have no conduct rating of "unsatisfactory" in any class.

Eligible students are inducted into the club in the spring of the school year. There is a fee for national dues that will be collected when students are inducted into the club.

Behavior Expectations

One of the most important lessons education teaches is discipline. Good discipline is the key to developing self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. Students are expected to exhibit good citizenship at all times and to follow instructions from **any teacher or staff member**.

The Gaston County Board of Education has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that has been provided to each student; students are given a copy at the beginning of the year or when enrolling. Please take the time to review the rules and the consequences of violating each rule. The student behavior guidelines are strictly enforced at each Gaston County school and Holbrook Middle School.

In addition to the school system behavior guidelines, Holbrook Middle School has core expectations for behavior outlined below: The Holbrook Way

- Be respectful to adults, peers, property, and self.
- Be prepared for all aspects of your school day.
- Follow directions.
- Take an active role in your education.

Procedures for Handling Student Discipline

Students who misbehave will receive fair consequences and follow the student code of conduct to protect the rights of all students and staff members. The following explains the different levels of offenses and how behavior will be dealt with at each one.

Minor Offenses

Classroom teachers will handle minor misconduct according to the teacher and team discipline plan within their classroom. Examples of minor offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Talking during instruction
- Out of seat without permission
- Lack of materials/preparation/homework
- Sleeping/daydreaming/inattention
- Off task/not working on assignments
- Childish/immature behavior
- Passing notes
- Off-task/not following directions
- Non-permanent property damage
- Not fulfilling Holbrook Student Responsibilities

Redirect Offenses

Certain behaviors will result in a student being sent to Redirect for the remainder of that class period.

Redirect offenses include:



- Abusive language
- Classroom disruptions that interfere with the learning of others
- Talking back to a staff member
- Defiance/ Insubordination
- Repeated minor offenses when the teacher's interventions did not work

When a student is sent to Redirect, the following actions will occur:

1st Redirect: Parent/guardian will be contacted

2nd Redirect: Parent/guardian will be contacted

3rd Redirect: Parent/guardian will be contacted; the student is referred to a counselor

4th Redirect: Parent/guardian will be contacted; the student will receive 1 day of ISS; the student will have a behavior conference with the teacher(s), counselor, and Assistant Principal.

5th Redirect: Parent/guardian will be contacted; the student will receive 2 days of ISS; mandatory parent conference with teachers and Assistant Principal.

More than five Redirect referrals may result in additional In School Suspension (ISS), Out of School Suspension (OSS), alternative placement, or other consequences as determined by the school administration.

Major Offenses

Major offenses or disruptions will be referred to the school administration. Examples of major offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Significant property damage
- Weapons and dangerous instruments
- Smoking/possession of tobacco products/vaping/e-cigarette and materials
- Drugs/paraphernalia
- Physical abuse/fighting
- Theft
- Profanity directed at teacher or staff member
- Sexual harassment
- Communicating threats
- Repeated Bullying
- Any action that endangers the health or safety of any person

Students referred to the administration for misbehavior will be subject to the following disciplinary measures:

- Lunch Detention (LD)
- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

Out-of-school suspension (OSS) is the exclusion of a student from the regular school program for a period of one to ten school days. Students may attend an alternative-to-OSS program at the Warlick Academy during the term of their suspension.

Repeated school violations may result in the administration referring a student to the problem-solving team, including the Warlick Academy, or seeking a long-term suspension. Long-term suspension is the exclusion of

a student from school for the rest of the school year. However, the administration reserves the right to refer students for alternative placement or may seek long-term suspension for students at any point.

Bus Rules



Bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, all students are expected to follow school rules from the time they begin waiting for the bus in the morning until they leave the bus stop area in the afternoon. Bus riders must follow bus rules and the Gaston County Schools Student Code of Conduct; otherwise, they may face suspension from the bus and suspension from school. Food and drink are not permitted on the bus.

For safety and liability reasons, students may not ride a bus other than their assigned one.

Prohibited Items

Students are advised that Holbrook Middle School assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen electronic equipment or other items of value. Holbrook administration will assist (if possible) in recovering items; however, the responsibility of the property lies with the student (owner of the device). When electronic items are brought to school, the following rules will apply:

- **Cell phones must be turned off and given to the homeroom teacher, per the HMS Student Code of Conduct.**
- Only water bottles are allowed in the classrooms. All outside beverages and food (*from McDonald's, Starbucks, etc.*) should be consumed and disposed of by the 8:30 a.m. bell.
- Students are also prohibited from bringing energy drinks to school or school events.

Failure to obey the above rules will result in the item(s) in question being confiscated and turned in to the office. The item(s) will remain in the office and may only be picked up by a parent or other designated adult. Beginning with the third offense, students will be assigned ISS or OSS for repeated violations of school rules.

Dress Code

Students are expected to maintain appropriate dress and appearance that will not, in any manner, disrupt class or school-related activities. Therefore, the following dress requirements will be enforced:

- **Hoods are not permitted to be worn inside on the Holbrook campus.**
- **Headphones/earphones/air pods should not be worn on the Holbrook campus.**
- **Pants are to be worn at the waist with belts buckled. No holes showing body parts.**
- No tank tops, cut-off T-shirts, bare shoulders, backless shirts, or halter tops; all shirts/tops must cover the stomach completely.
- If students are wearing leggings or jeggings, their shirt must come to the top of the thigh, covering the students' front and back



sides at all times, including standing and sitting.

- Underwear must be covered at all times.
- Shorts and skirts must not show any underwear or body parts.
- Hats, combs, picks, and sunglasses are not to be worn inside any school building.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Chains used to secure wallets or otherwise attached to pants/belts are not permitted.
- Necklaces, bracelets, etc. with spiked points are not permitted at any time.
- No clothing with indecent language or images (sex, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gangs) is to be worn.
- No pajama bottoms or bedroom shoes are allowed.
- Any other clothing that disrupts the learning environment shall be prohibited.
- Other changes in styles/fashions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis per the GCS student behavior guidelines.

If a student violates the dress code, a parent/guardian will be contacted and the student must obtain appropriate attire. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary actions.

The majority of dress code violations can be avoided by reviewing the dress code policies frequently (especially during the warmer months) and by parental monitoring of student attire. If you think you may get in trouble for wearing something, do not wear it!

Final Notes

- It is extremely important that Holbrook Middle School be made aware of any changes to your demographic information. We must have reliable contact information in case of an emergency. If you have a change of address, phone number, physician, emergency contact information, etc., please inform your teachers and the office staff immediately by providing current documentation.
- Please note that all Holbrook Middle School staff members are at school to help you achieve success. You must comply with the directions of ALL staff members at ALL times to achieve this success.
- Gaston County Schools will be closed when the Superintendent considers the weather conditions unfit for the safe operation of school buses. School closings or delays will normally be announced by 6:00 AM on TV channels 3, 9, 21, and 36, and most local radio stations. In most cases, Gaston County Schools will also notify families at home with a Connect-Ed phone call, through the GCS website or Gaston County Schools App.