

JOHN CHAVIS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student Handbook



Home of the Wolverines

103 South Chavis Drive
Cherryville, NC 28021
Phone: 704-836-9606

Matt Rikard, Principal
Sarah Gillespie, Assistant Principal

Principal's Welcome

Welcome to John Chavis Middle School, and the 2020-2021 school year! I look forward to getting to know each student and family as the school year proceeds. I am happy to be part of the JCMS family, and I believe that together we are going to achieve great success this year.

You are fortunate to attend one of the best middle schools in Gaston County. There is a strong tradition of success at JCMS and in the community of Cheryville. There are many great things to be proud of at JCMS, and I am sure that all of our students and staff are proud to be a Wolverine. I believe that we have the best middle school staff that will serve the needs of every child.

Please remember that the job of the school is to prepare students for success, and to be productive and responsible citizens. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, your teachers, or any trusted adult in the building.

This handbook is provided so that you have as much information as possible concerning school activities, rules, policies and procedures. This handbook works in conjunction with the GCS Student Code of Conduct. The goal is to ensure that every student has as successful of a school year as possible. Our goal is to make sure that every student reaches their fullest potential while at JCMS.

I want to wish that everyone has their best school year ever. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns in regards to your educational experience while at John Chavis Middle School.

Sincerely,

Matt W. Rikard

Matt Rikard

Principal

Wolverine PRIDE

John Chavis Middle School is a place where students spend a great part of the day. Every student should take pride in themselves, their work, their community and their school. John Chavis students will demonstrate the fundamentals of Wolverine **PRIDE**:

Positivity, Responsibility, Integrity, Discipline, and Excellence.

Student Information

It is extremely important that John Chavis Middle School be made aware of any changes to demographic information. We must have reliable contact information in case of an emergency. Please contact front office staff immediately of any change of address, home phone number, parent/guardian work phone number, or emergency contact information.

Visitors

For the safety of our staff and students, all visitors **must check in at the front office** upon entering the school. A state issued ID is required. Visitors are not allowed anywhere in our building without permission from the office and a visitor's badge. Students not enrolled at John Chavis Middle School are not permitted to visit during instructional time.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Morning Arrival

Supervision for all students begins at 7:15 a.m. All students will report to the gym upon arriving on campus. Students wishing to eat breakfast at school will report to the cafeteria between 7:15 and 7:45.

Car Riders

Car riders will be dropped off and picked up at the back of the school along North Chavis Drive. For the safety of everyone, please use the circular drive for all arrivals and departures. Cars must enter North Chavis Drive from Jacob Street and then exit onto Mountain Street. Due to safety concerns, car riders cannot be dropped off or picked up at the front of the school.

All Parents, guardians and visitors are asked to drive slowly, allow pedestrians the right of way, follow directions and keep **student safety** as their top priority.

Bus riders

Bus riders are dropped off and picked up in the front of the school along South Chavis Drive.

Walkers

Walkers will be assisted by staff members and only cross at designated crosswalks.

Afternoon Dismissal

Once students are dismissed in the afternoon, for safety, they must make their way immediately to the walker sign-out, car rider line, bus waiting area, or team practice location. Students should quickly visit their lockers, gather their belongings, and move to the appropriate area. Buses will not be held for students.

Tardy Policy

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:10 p.m. In order to maximize student learning, it is important for students to arrive at school on time. Students who arrive after school has begun must report to the front office to sign in and receive a pass to class.

Tardies are classified as excused or unexcused. Excused tardies are determined by the principal and include reasons such as illness and medical or dental appointments. We understand that occasionally families run late in the morning; however, students who are chronically tardy to school without a valid reason may be referred to the school social worker or counselor. Students who are tardy/late after 8:00 a.m. must report to the office to receive a permission slip to class.

Late to Class

In an effort to protect the academic time of every student, it is the expectation that students arrive to classes on time from transitions. If students have an issue with arriving on time, the following will occur:

- 1st violation: warning/parent contact
- 2nd violation: 2nd teacher intervention/parent contact (silent lunch, loss of privilege, etc.)
- 3rd violation: 3rd teacher intervention/parent contact (silent lunch, loss of privilege, etc.)
- 4th violation: Transition Plan will be put into place
- 5+ violation: Student should be referred to the office

Signing Out/Leaving School

In general, it is the expectation that all students remain in school for the entirety of the day. However, if it is necessary to leave during school hours, parents/guardians must come to the school's front office to sign their student out of school. Parents/guardians should bring a photo ID with them to the office to sign out a student. **If anyone other than a parent/guardian is to pick up the student, we must have permission in writing from the parent/guardian.** That person must have a photo ID with them as well.

Inclement Weather

Gaston County Schools will be closed when the Superintendent considers the weather conditions unfit for the safe operations of the school. School closings or delays will normally be announced by 6:00am on various TV channels, local radio stations, and on the school websites. In most cases, Gaston County Schools will also notify family at home with an automated phone call.

Student Health Information

If a student has any changes in their health status, and/or any medical conditions/situations that the school should be aware of, those should be reported to the school nurse immediately.

School Sales

No items may be sold at JCMS campus unless they are part of an authorized school sale or club/athletic project.

K-8th Grade Student Attendance

School Daily Attendance

The school year is 180 days. Students must be in attendance at least 168 days. Only 12 absences, including excused and unexcused absences, are permitted each school year. In order to be recorded present, a student must be present at least one-half of the school day (11:30 a.m.). In order 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.

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 until a written note is received from the parent or guardian.

Upon the student's return to school, arrangements for make-up work 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.

Communication

After each absence, excused or unexcused, the parent/guardian will be notified by a computer generated telephone message.



Academic Information

Report cards are sent home with students at the end of each nine-week grading period. Interim reports are sent home at the midway point of each grading period. These specific dates can be found on the GCS calendar. If parents/guardians have questions or concerns about their child's grade, please contact their teachers to set up a conference.

In addition, grades can be accessed at any time through Parent Portal online. Parents/guardians can receive a secure login from our school office for this purpose. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to monitor their academic performance throughout the school year. Teachers, counselors and administrators are available to address any concerns or questions you may have.

Homework Responsibility

Student Responsibilities

- Understand homework assignments before leaving school
- Take home all necessary materials to complete the work
- Schedule and organize time for homework assignments
- Speak with teachers if there are any concerns about your work

Parent Responsibilities

- Provide encouragement and support for your student
- Assist students with developing good study habits
- Make sure your student has enough time to complete their work, while still having time to participate in family and outside activities
- Monitor your student's work through PowerSchool, Canvas, or Google Classroom
- Reach out to teachers with any concerns about work or grades

Conference Requests

Every staff member at JCMS is committed to the success of our students. We recognize this is a team effort, and will provide regular communication. Meetings between parents/guardians and teachers, counselors and administrators is an integral part of this success.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with parents and guardians to discuss any concerns or issues as they arise. Please reach out to the school or email the teacher directly to schedule an appointment.

Cheating

Any attempt to obtain credit for work done by another person is unacceptable. Cheating includes copying someone's homework, giving someone your homework, getting or giving help on a test, or copying from outside sources. If a student is caught cheating, a grade of zero will be assigned, and the teacher will notify the parent.

School Counselor

The school counselor is available to see students in small groups or individually. Sessions can focus on such areas as peer conflicts, substance abuse, depression, career planning, etc. Students who want to see the counselor must secure a pass from their teacher. Parents are welcome to contact the counselor by telephone, e-mail, and/or make an appointment to meet in person.

Safety Drills

Fire and safety drills are held periodically throughout the school year. No matter the drill, students should listen carefully to any instructions from teachers or administrators and move silently and quickly to the designated area. Note: Pulling the fire alarm without cause is not only a danger to people in the school, but also a crime.

School Security and Searches

All persons entering the school campus and buildings are subject to search by metal detecting devices. In addition, the school campus is monitored by surveillance cameras at all times. Finally, school officials may conduct random classroom or locker searches at any time. 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.

In accordance with 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.



Responsible Use Policy

Each student will be required to complete the on-line *Responsible Use Policy*, which gives students permission to use the computers as well as the internet at school. Failure to comply may result in loss of computer access and privileges.

Minor offenses: emailing, YouTube, playing games, off-task, etc.

- 1st violation: warning/parent contact
- 2nd violation: loss of access for the block
- 3rd violation: loss of access for a day/ISS
- 4th violation: MTSS Behavior Plan concerning technology

Major offenses: viewing inappropriate material, damaging devices, etc.

- ISS or OSS, depending on the severity of the violation

School Telephones

Students may use school telephones **only** in emergency situations, such as illness. Students must have permission from both their teacher (in writing) and front 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 will be delivered at the end of the day.

Deliveries

School policy prohibits the delivery of flowers, balloons, etc., to students. Our office staff will refuse to accept any such deliveries. The goal of this policy is to free the instructional day from interruptions and distractions.

Lost and Found

Articles found should be taken to the front office. Owners may claim their property by identifying it in the front office. Students are encouraged to mark clothing, pocketbooks, book bags, books, etc. with their name so that lost items may be returned to them. Unclaimed lost and found items will only be kept for two weeks.

Lockers & Earbuds

The cost for a student locker is \$7.00. The locker fee is not the equivalent of purchasing a lock. The locks are school property. Students are not allowed to use personal locks. Lockers will be assigned to students by teachers at the beginning of the school year. Students will be allowed to go to their locker only at designated times determined by their teachers. The contents of the locker are the sole responsibility of the student to whom that locker is assigned, and lockers and their contents may be searched **at any time** by school officials. Students should not share lockers. Students will be charged a replacement fee if their lock or earbuds are lost or stolen. Book bags, including small gym bags, must be kept in lockers.

Cafeteria

Students may bring a lunch or purchase one in the cafeteria. All cafeteria food and drinks must be consumed in the cafeteria. We ask that all students maintain pride in their cafeteria by leaving tables, chairs, and floors clean, and properly disposing of trash.

Students who require modifications to their school meals for a diagnosed medical condition (allergy, 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 School Nutrition regarding the effective date of the diet order.

Medication

John Chavis Middle School strictly enforces the Gaston County Board of Education's policy concerning medication. Accordingly, JCMS will not give medication to students without written permission of the student's parent or guardian. Medications given for more than two weeks, must be signed by a physician (those given at regular intervals throughout the year) and must be properly labeled in the original pharmaceutical container.

Additionally, a 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 of time) 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.

Students may not carry any type of medication on their person during school, including aspirin, cough medicine, and similar items. All such items must be kept in the school office with a note from the student's parent/guardian.

Dances

School dances are held at John Chavis Middle School. Admission to dances will be posted. Concessions are sold inside the dance, and outside food and drinks are not allowed.. Only students who currently attend JCMS may attend dances. In addition, students may not attend dances if they have received ISS or OSS since the date of the most recent dance.

As with any after-school event, all school rules and code of conduct are enforced at dances. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior at all times during dances. Failure to do so may result in students being sent home early and not being allowed to attend later dances, in addition to regular disciplinary actions. Students must be picked up on time following the dance; failure to do so may result in loss of privileges to attend future dances.

Athletic Information

John Chavis Middle School offers a variety of athletic activities for students including softball, volleyball, golf, basketball (girls and boys), soccer (girls and boys), wrestling, track (girls and boys), baseball, football (7th and 8th grade only), and cheerleading. 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
- ☐ for fall eligibility a student must pass 3 of 4 core courses in the preceding spring semester **and** meet local promotional standards for the previous school year
- ☐ for spring eligibility a student must pass 3 of 4 core courses in the preceding fall semester
- ☐ receive and pass a physical exam
- ☐ not be 15 years old on or before August 31 of the school year.

Absent students or those who served ISS or OSS 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 district rules, and each student-athlete is expected to follow those rules.



Behavior Guidelines

One of the most important lessons that education should teach is discipline. This does not appear as a subject; however, it underlines the entire educational structure. Good discipline is the key to developing self control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. Students are expected to display good citizenship at all times, and follow instructions of any teacher or staff member of JCMS.

The GCS Board of Education has adopted Student Behavior Guidelines that outline the rules and the consequences of violating each rule. The full Student Code of Conduct is distributed to students at the beginning of each school year. John Chavis Middle School addresses discipline and issues consequences in accordance with the GCS Code of Conduct. Specific rules and consequences for JCMS are also clearly presented to students by school administration at the beginning of each new semester. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any item brought to the school that distracts from the educational process is prohibited.
2. All electronic devices must be locked up during the day. The school accepts no responsibility for lost or stolen items. If electronic items are confiscated, they will be returned only to the parent. ISS may be assigned for repeated violations.
3. Misbehavior in school or athletic events may result in removal from that event. The behavior may also result in loss of privilege from attending future events, and additional school consequences, up to and including suspension.
4. Students should walk on the right side of the hallway. Pushing, shoving, running and general horseplay will not be tolerated.
5. Book bags and gym bags are to be locked in your locker.
6. There should be no bodily contact between students. Please keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
7. After you arrive on campus, you are not to leave without permission.
8. The administration retains the right to issue consequences for acts of discipline not specifically stated and to alter penalties as deemed necessary.

Procedures for Handling Student Discipline

Gaston County Schools has adopted a comprehensive Code of Student Conduct. All students will receive a copy of the at the beginning of the school year. All students are expected to abide by these rules.

Teachers will handle minor misconduct in the classroom. However, if a student's behavior does not improve with the teacher's efforts, he/she will be referred to the administration for appropriate disciplinary measures. Teachers will use consequences such as, but not limited to: a warning, a conference with the student, parent conference, silent lunch, changed seating, or sent to another room for a time-out.

Teachers may send a student directly to U-Turn for certain behaviors, including:

1. Abusive Language, Defiance
2. Classroom disruptions that interfere with the learning of other students
3. Talking back, disrespectful towards a staff member
4. Repeated minor offences when classroom interventions do not change the behavior

Repeated offenses, despite teacher intervention, will result in a **U-Turn referral** and placement for the remainder of the class period. Parents will be contacted with each U-Turn placement. Five U-Turn referrals/placements will result in one day of ISS. Continued referrals will result in further disciplinary action including ISS placement, OSS, and an MTSS Behavior Plan. When a student is sent to U-Turn, parents/guardians will be connected by the teacher in order to address the situation.

Students referred to the administration (**office referral**) for repeated misbehavior or major offenses will be subject to the following disciplinary measures:

- ❑ In-school disciplinary measures such as a verbal warning, behavior plan, parent conference, detention, or in-school suspension (ISS); or,
- ❑ Out-of-school suspension (OSS). OSS is the exclusion of a student from the regular school program for a period of one to ten school days.
- ❑ MTSS Behavior Plan implemented by the students' teachers

Major offenses for which students may receive an office referral without warning, teacher intervention, or U-Turn referral include, but are not limited to: profanity directed at a staff member or directed to a student in a way that disrupts the learning environment; possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs; bullying, sexual harassment, or racial slurs; possession of a weapon; fighting beyond horseplay; instigating a fight or recording one; being in an unauthorized area; threatening a student or teacher; theft; vandalism; and major misuse of technology.

Repeated school violations may result in the administration referring a student for alternative placement, including the Warlick Alternative School, 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 long-term suspension at any point.

Bus Rules

Gaston County Schools offers bus transportation to any qualifying students. However, all students are expected to follow school rules from the time they begin waiting for the bus in the morning until they leave their bus stop area in the afternoon. Students must follow the directions of the bus driver and remain seated at all times while on the bus. Any behavior affecting the driver's ability to drive the bus or endangering the safety of passengers or the public will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences including suspension from the bus and/or school. Bus transportation is a privilege not a right

For safety and liability reasons, students are not allowed to ride buses to which they are not assigned without the permission of an administrator. Students needing to ride a school bus other than their assigned bus must bring a note signed by a parent/guardian, including the reason, date, and contact information. The student should give the note to school staff in the front office before school. Permission will be verified by school staff, and the note will be returned to the student who must show the note to the bus driver before they enter the bus. Bus changes cannot be arranged or verified at the end of the school day.

Cell Phone Policy

All student cell phones must be secured in student lockers during the school day from 8:00 a.m. - 3:10 p.m. School staff are not responsible for lost or stolen phones. Students who are found to have a cell phone in their possession during the day may have the phone confiscated. All confiscated cell phones are taken to the office and must be picked-up by a parent.

1st violation: Warning/Device confiscation/parent pick-up

2nd violation: Device confiscation/parent pick-up

3rd violation: Device confiscation/parent pick-up/1 day of ISS

4+ violations: Device confiscation/parent pick-up/ Multiple ISS/OSS

Dress Code

Students are expected to maintain appropriate dress and appearance that will not, in any manner, disrupt class or school-related activities. While trying to be understanding of today's styles, we must provide an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The following dress requirements will be enforced.

Disciplinary Action: If a student violates the stated dress code, the student will be required to change into appropriate attire. If appropriate attire is unavailable, students will be given a sweatshirt, T-shirts, or sweatpants until a parent/guardian can bring the appropriate attire to the student. When a parent/guardian brings a change of clothes, the student must return the borrowed item to the front office. If a parent/guardian is unable to bring a change of clothes, the student must return the item to the front office at the end of the school day. Repeated violations will be considered non-compliance and will result in appropriate disciplinary measures.

The majority of dress code violations can be avoided by reviewing the GCS Dress Code Policies. If you think you may get in trouble for wearing something, do not wear it!

