

# **Mt. Vernon Middle School Student/Parent Handbook**



2024-2025

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***This document is a supplement to the WCPSS Student & Parent Handbook that can be found online or in our Main Office.***

## **Mt. Vernon Middle School**

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### **WCPSS MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Wake County Public Schools is to provide a relevant and engaging education and to graduate students who are collaborative, creative, effective communicators and critical thinkers.

### **MT. VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT**

Through positive relationships, relevant instruction, and an intentional learning environment, we will engage students and families in impactful academic and social experiences that build empowered learners.

### **WHO WE ARE**

Mt. Vernon Middle School focuses on the whole child. Our approach to education allows the Mt. Vernon staff to build the social, emotional, and academic well-being of our students. Mt. Vernon follows the WCPSS Standard Course of Study for all academic classes offered. In addition, Mt. Vernon has an award winning PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions Support) program that enables our students to achieve success behaviorally by celebrating their positive decisions and teaching expectations when students need to be redirected. Students use a daily rewards system to reflect upon their performance, behaviorally, in a class and to provide feedback to parents. Based on a student's performance, different daily, weekly and/or monthly rewards/privileges are available.

### **WHO WE SERVE**

Mt. Vernon serves students who are not experiencing adequate success at their base schools. Students referred to Mt. Vernon Middle School often struggle academically and benefit from a smaller student-teacher ratio. Students may also demonstrate Tier II behaviors at their base schools. These Tier II behaviors are typically playful in nature and occur most often during unstructured times and areas. Students who have been successful at Mt. Vernon have demonstrated a history of building positive relationships with adults and have a desire to improve their academics. Once accepted, students attend Mt. Vernon for the remainder of the current school year. Students may return to their base middle/high school for the following school year.

## **PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

At Mt. Vernon Middle School, we strive for a community where all stakeholders (i.e. students, parents, teachers, administrators) are seen as partners in improving educational outcomes for our students. It is Mt. Vernon's goal to create a school where:

- All family engagement initiatives are connected to student learning
- Family knowledge is honored and respected
- Parent networks are valued and cultivated
- Families are actively involved in decisions
- Family engagement happens in the community, not just at school

Throughout the school year, parents will have opportunities to engage in dialogue, information sessions and cultural activities to enhance the learning of their students and the instruction provided by the teachers here at Mt. Vernon. Traditional parent engagement activities will continue to occur. (i.e. parent/teacher conferences, phone calls, etc.) We will work with our families to be strategic to help provide additional learning opportunities throughout the school year to our families.

## **HOME BASE/POWERSCHOOL**

It is critical for families to know what is going on in their student's classroom. Home base is a student information system that gives parents and students access to real-time information including attendance, grades and assignments. All students and parents have access to Home Base. Please contact Mt. Vernon for more information and to register.

## **GRADING POLICY**

In the Wake County Public School System, we are committed to maintaining rigorous performance and achievement standards for all students and to providing a fair and consistent process for evaluating and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and their parents and relevant for instructional purposes.

The information below shares specific information about grading at our school. The Mt. Vernon Middle School Grading Plan has been developed according to School Board Policy #3400.

For more information on these practices, please contact:  
Andria Johnson, Principal, [ajohnson11@wcpss.net](mailto:ajohnson11@wcpss.net)  
Gary Lassiter, Assistant Principal, [glassiter@wcpss.net](mailto:glassiter@wcpss.net)

## Grade Categories and Weights

The following are school-wide expectations for grading:

- Homework – Weighted at 10%
- Formative (classwork, quizzes, projects, labs, etc.) –Weighted at 40%
- Summative (tests, projects, essays, etc.) - Weighted at 50%

As a best practice for assessing student learning, students will be assigned a minimum of nine formative assignments and a minimum of two summative assignments per quarter. Grades are updated in PowerSchool by Friday of each week so that all stakeholders are informed of regular, accurate student progress.

### **The school policy for transfer grades:**

1. For core classes in which a student has been enrolled in a similar class at their base school, two (2) weeks is the minimum time needed to evaluate progress toward mastery of the standard course of study (SCS) in combination with the transferred grade.
2. For core classes in which a student was not enrolled in a similar class at their base school due to that school following a block schedule, four (4) weeks is the minimum time to assess progress toward mastering the SCS in the absence of transfer grades.
3. All transfer grades from the base school will be entered as a Summative grade for the corresponding course. In situations when the transfer grades from the base school are only provided as letter grades, the following scale will be the default percentage value of the transfer grade:

A = 99; B = 89; C = 79; D = 69; F = 59

### **Quarterly grades:**

Because grades can stimulate a student's desire to do well, Mt. Vernon Middle School believes that students should have the opportunity to recover their grade after not being successful during a quarter. To address this concern, a student that earns an "F", that falls below a 40%, will be provided a 40% as their quarter grade. Although the student will still have earned an "F" for the quarter, this will provide students the opportunity to still pass the class should they demonstrate growth in the following quarters. Report cards will reflect a 40% as the quarter grade with a note from the teacher stating the actual percentage earned.

## Homework

The following are school-wide expectations for homework:

- Homework will count for no more than 10% of the overall grade for each quarter.
- If students do not complete or fail a homework assignment, they may be assigned a designated time in school to complete that assignment.

Homework assignments can be found on teachers' individual Canvas site.

### **Absent Work**

Mt. Vernon will follow the WCPSS policy for all missing work due to absences. Students must be allowed at least two days for every day absent (exc./unexc.) to complete missing assignments. The student or parent is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period. Teachers will work with students to make sure that they are aware of what needs to be completed. Assignments can always be found within teachers' Google Classroom site.

### **Late Assignments**

The following is our school-wide expectation for late/missing assignments:

- Late work may be submitted within the current quarter with the following late penalties:
  - A grade decrease of 10% per day.
  - After four instructional days, the highest possible score that can be earned is a 60%.
  - All summative projects will be assigned with a rubric outlining late penalties.

### **Zero Policy**

Students may receive zeros for missing work. Teachers will assure that students and parents are aware of any missing assignments and that multiple opportunities are provided for students to complete those assignments. It is recommended that teachers refer students and parents to PowerSchool to empower them.

### **Prevention-Intervention Plan**

For students at risk of academic failure, our school seeks to provide a prevention/intervention system that promotes successful completion and mastery of work. Details of our plan are below.

The following are school-wide expectations for how we support prevention-intervention efforts:

- Weekly intervention time in Reading/Math
- Seminar time within the school day to complete missing/failing assignments – teacher assistance provided
- Daily agenda provided to assist in organization of all assignments
- Student-Teacher ratio not to exceed 10:1

## **Extra Credit**

Extra credit is offered at the professional learning community's discretion. Extra credit opportunities to enhance grades must be connected to learning outcomes and consistent within PLCs.

### **HOMEWORK**

New skills require practice to be mastered. The time provided in the school day is insufficient to allow students to master all of the new skills they need to learn. To support the learning of students, homework may be assigned daily to support progress towards mastery of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

It is the responsibility of the student to accurately copy all homework assignments that need to be completed. Each teacher will review their individual homework expectations with their class.

Missing or incomplete work as well as work that does not indicate mastery may be reassigned at the discretion of the teacher. With limited time in the instructional day, Seminar, a designated time within the school schedule, may be used for students to complete assignments.

### **INTERVENTION**

Mt. Vernon's staff recognizes that our students may have skills that need to be reinforced above and beyond the lessons within the standard course of study. During the school day, MAV Time will be utilized to help students build skills in Math. Students demonstrating a need for additional support in Math and Reading are assigned to Math Acceleration Support (MAS) or Reading Acceleration Support (RAS) class, Reading and Social Skills. Using data, these groups and activities may vary throughout the school year.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Coming to school every day ready to learn is important for your child's success, and it is required by state law for children between the ages of 7 and 16. Excused absences include: illness or injury, a death in the family, health care appointments, court appearances and religious observances. If you know in advance that your child will be absent from school, please contact the teacher to obtain any work in advance. If an unexpected absence occurs, contact the teacher upon return to school to obtain any missing work. With all absences, please bring in a doctor's note or a note from home and have your child bring it to the main office.

## TRANSPORTATION

Students are assigned buses/cabs by the Wake County Public School System transportation office. All discipline/conduct rules for Wake County Transportation apply to students riding to/from Mt. Vernon.

## BELL SCHEDULE

	6th/Boosters	7th Grade	8th Grade
<b>8:00-8:30</b> <b>Advisory/Breakfast</b>	<b>ADVISORY</b>		
<b>8:33-9:25</b> <b>Period 1</b>	<b>HL/Elective</b>	<b>Core 1</b>	<b>Core 1</b>
<b>9:27-10:17</b> <b>Period 2</b>	<b>HL/Elective</b>	<b>Core 2</b>	<b>Core 2</b>
<b>10:19-11:09</b> <b>Period 3</b>	<b>Core 1</b>	<b>HL/Elective</b>	<b>Core 3</b>
<b>11:11-11:56</b> <b>Lunch/Seminar</b>	<b>11:11-11:36 (Seminar)</b> <b>11:38-11:56 (Lunch)</b>		<b>11:11-11:29 (Lunch)</b> <b>11:31-11:56 (Seminar)</b>
<b>11:58-12:28</b> <b>MAV Time</b>	<b>MAV TIME</b>		
<b>12:30-1:20</b> <b>Period 4</b>	<b>Core 2</b>	<b>HL/Electives</b>	<b>Core 4</b>
<b>1:22-2:12</b> <b>Period 5</b>	<b>Core 3</b>	<b>Core 3</b>	<b>HL/Electives</b>
<b>2:14-3:05</b> <b>Period 6</b>	<b>Core 4</b>	<b>Core 4</b>	<b>HL/Electives</b>

\* Please note, Mt. Vernon administration may adjust the daily schedule at any time to ensure the needs of our students are met.



## DRESS CODE

Students are expected to adhere to standards of dress and appearance. Our guiding principles for the student dress code are similar to those experienced and expected in the workplace: attire that furthers health and safety of students and staff, enables the educational process, and facilitates the operations of the school.

To promote these goals, students may not wear or carry clothing, jewelry, book bags, or other personal articles that:

- Depict profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or violence;
- Promote the use or abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs;
- Are prohibited under Policy 4309 III-2 (Gang and Gang Related Activity) or any other provision of the Code of Student Conduct;
- Threaten the health or safety of staff or students;
- Are reasonably likely to create a substantial disruption of the educational process or operations of the school.

Specifically:

- Students must wear clothing that covers their skin from chest to mid-thigh with opaque (non-see-through) fabric in front, back, and on the sides.
- Students must wear shoes at all times except when changing for physical education or athletic practices or events or when specifically directed otherwise by a teacher or administrator.
- Clothing must cover undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded).
- Breasts, genitals and buttocks must be covered with opaque (non-see-through) fabric.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.
- Head coverings (including hats, hoods, sweat bands, and bandanas) are generally prohibited in the school building. However, students may wear head coverings in the school building as an expression of sincerely held religious belief (e.g., hijabs or yarmulkes) or cultural expression (e.g., geles) or to reasonably accommodate medical or disability-related issues (e.g., protective helmets).

Please partner with the school district to monitor your student's attire and to help our students adhere to the guiding principles set forth in Policy 4316.

## MT. VERNON'S PBIS PROGRAM

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions Support) program enables our students to achieve success behaviorally by celebrating their positive decisions and teaching expectations when students need to be redirected. Students can earn PBIS points for positive academic and behavioral choices during each class. Based on a student's PBIS points performance, he/she can earn daily, weekly and/or monthly rewards/privileges.

### PBIS EXPECTATIONS

Within each area of Mt. Vernon, students are expected to respond to the behavioral expectations established. Students will be taught these expectations daily and feedback will be provided if the expectations are not met. Clear and consistent expectations result in a positive response by students. Below you will find the PBIS Behavior Matrix for the main areas on campus and for the time spent on transportation to and from school. Please contact your teacher or administration if you have any questions.

### PBIS MAVS MATRIX

Expectations	Classrooms	Cafeteria	Hallway	Restroom	Gym	Bus/Cab	ALC/ISS
<b>Model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take turns</li> <li>- Use group process</li> <li>- Model positive characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Say please and thank you to staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist others</li> <li>- Walk away from problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strive to visit during designated times or have a hall pass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show good sportsmanship at all times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interact positively with driver and peers</li> <li>- Observe cab safety rules at all times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resolve conflicts constructively</li> </ul>
<b>Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be ready to learn</li> <li>- Stay on task</li> <li>- Do assigned work</li> <li>- Be in school and class on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leave tables clean</li> <li>- Be aware of nutritional choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move directly to destination</li> <li>- Be on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stay on task</li> <li>- Flush</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resolve conflicts constructively or ask for adult help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show respect for driver, peers, and community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remain on task</li> <li>- Complete assignments in time allotted</li> <li>- Ignore all distractions.</li> </ul>
<b>Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use appropriate language</li> <li>- Display a positive attitude</li> <li>- Speak when called on</li> <li>- Respect property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk quietly to people at my table</li> <li>- Follow directions the first time</li> <li>- Leave cafeteria quietly when dismissed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use positive words</li> <li>- Follow adult directions</li> <li>- Use inside volume</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respect school property</li> <li>- Enter and exit fully clothed</li> <li>- <i>Make only positive comments to peers</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shirttails in before leaving the gym</li> <li>- Refrain from excessive noise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow dress code expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make only positive comments to peers and staff</li> <li>- Respect school property</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep hands to self</li> <li>- Honor personal space and property</li> <li>- Keep personal items in book bag</li> <li>- Speak kind words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep hands to self</li> <li>- Food and drink stay in cafeteria</li> <li>- Place chair under the table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walk on the right side of the hall</li> <li>- Keep hands and feet to self</li> <li>- Be in assigned area or use hall pass.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash hands when finished</li> <li>- Clean up after yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use equipment as intended</li> <li>- Return equipment when signal is given</li> <li>- Exit when directed</li> <li>- Follow all adult directions immediately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wear seat belt</li> <li>- Remain in cab/bus until released by driver</li> <li>- Get off at your stop</li> <li>- Keep hands and feet to self</li> <li>- Keep hands and materials inside the bus/cab</li> <li>- Follow all adult directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow all adult directions</li> <li>- Remain quiet and seated unless given permission by a staff member to speak and/or leave your seat</li> </ul>

## WCPSS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

### Philosophy and Goals

A safe, orderly, and welcoming school environment is essential for student learning. To that end, this Code of Student Conduct is intended to:

- (1) create clear standards and expectations for student behavior;
- (2) promote integrity and self-discipline among students;
- (3) encourage the use of behavioral supports and non-disciplinary interventions as alternatives to exclusionary discipline; and
- (4) provide clear guidance to teachers and administrators as to how, when, and to what extent students may be disciplined for violating conduct rules.

Consistent with these goals, the Board fully endorses and adopts the following “Guiding Principles” from the 2014 U.S Department of Education publication

**Principle 1: Climate and Prevention** Schools that foster positive school climates can help to engage all students in learning by preventing problem behaviors and intervening effectively to support struggling and at-risk students.

**Principle 2: Expectations and Consequences** Schools that have discipline policies or codes of conduct with clear, appropriate, and consistently applied expectations and consequences will help students improve behavior, increase engagement, and boost achievement.

**Principle 3: Equity and Continuous Improvement** Schools that build staff capacity and continuously evaluate the school’s discipline policies and practices are more likely to ensure fairness and equity and promote achievement for all students.

Please refer to the Wake County Student/Parent Handbook for additional information regarding rules and violations. **Please note, based on unique circumstances, principal may utilize a different level of infraction than indicated on the chart.**

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mt. Vernon embraces technology and the benefits technology brings to instruction. We are fortunate at Mt. Vernon to be able to provide a variety of technology to our students. We do recognize that students will come to us with their own technology. This may be for instructional purposes, cab/bus rides or to communicate with family upon leaving school. It is the expectation that students will use their technology appropriately. At the beginning of each class period, students will place their cellphones in the cell phone lock box provided in each classroom. Students are permitted to use their cell phone during breakfast and lunch times only during the school day. If a student is in violation of this policy, the following progression will apply (per semester):

- **1st Offense** – Device is collected and stored in the front office. Student will receive the device back at the end of the school day.
- **2nd Offense** – Device is collected and stored in the front office. Student receives device after 1 week OR parent can retrieve device.
- **3rd Offense** – Device is collected and stored in the front office. Student receives device in 1 month OR parent can retrieve device. Student receives office referral.
- **4th Offense** – Device is collected and stored in the front office. Student receives device end of semester OR parent can retrieve device. Student receives office referral.

## **MT. VERNON PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM**

We recognize that sometimes the PBIS point system may not always be effective to ensure students make positive choices. When the PBIS point system is not effective for a student, additional support may be required. If a student does not respond to the redirection of a teacher during instruction, a “**strike**” may be earned. A strike is an instant removal of a student from the educational environment to the ALC (Alternative Learning Center) classroom and will result in a referral to administration. To earn a strike in the classroom, a student would have received multiple warnings from a teacher. While in the ALC classroom, students will continue on their assigned work. If a student earns more than one strike during a week, additional consequences may be assigned. Please see the strike progression plan below.

### **STRIKE I**

- Student reports to ALC (Alternative Learning Center) for the remainder of the period.
- Counselor is contacted to meet with student and form a plan for the rest of the day
- Teacher completes a behavior referral in SIRS (ECATS).
- Parent is contacted by the teacher to discuss the incident leading up to the strike (prior to the end of the school day).

### **STRIKE II**

- Student reports to ALC for the remainder of the period.
- Teacher completes a behavior referral in SIRS (ECATS), & then assigns referral to grade level admin. Additional consequences may apply.
- Administration is notified and a conference is held with the student. Additional time in the ALC classroom may be assigned by the administration.
- Parent is contacted by the teacher to discuss the incident leading up to the strike.

### **STRIKE III**

- Student reports to ALC for the remainder of the day.
- Teacher completes a behavior referral in SIRS (ECATS), & then assigns referral to grade level admin. Additional consequences may apply.
- Administration contacts parents to discuss incident and additional consequences.