

# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

August 2014

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to Henderson Middle School! You are part of a wonderful educational opportunity designed to meet the challenges of early adolescence. The teachers, parents, administrators and the community, collaboratively create an educational environment that is "Highly Motivated for Success". You and your classmates are expected to meet the HMS standards for excellence and contribute to the development of an enduring HMS tradition.

Henderson Middle School is Motivated to.....

Live responsibly

Embrace diversity

Achieve academic excellence

Respect everyone

Nurture the developing learner

**Please read this handbook carefully and completely.** It is your guide to Henderson Middle School. It will provide important school information and will answer many of your questions. This handbook will be revised as policies are developed or amended. We reserve the right to provide revisions as necessary. In addition, this book is your hall pass and must be with you at all times if you are released from class and in the halls.

**Parents: please review the daily agenda/planner portion of this book with your child nightly.** It is your guide to classroom activities and expectations. Parents, we want you here at Henderson Middle as often as possible. Please feel free to come and visit anytime. We would love to have you volunteer in our various offices and/or media center. We can always use extra help.

For answers to questions and concerns not covered in this handbook, please speak with a HMS administrator or teacher. The HMS staff appreciates your interest, cooperation, involvement and continued support of our outstanding middle school program.

Sincerely,

Terese Allen

"ALMA MATER"

Hail to the Blue and White  
Stand firm for truth and right  
Wisdom our guiding light  
Leads ever on.  
Thy Mem'ry keep us strong  
Tho' passing years grow long  
This ever be our song  
Hail Henderson!

## COURSES AND CREDITS

As a middle school student you are scheduled for 300 minutes of academic time in the core areas of language arts, math, science, social studies and ELT on a daily basis. You will have a different connections class every nine weeks constituting four areas of study: vocational education, fine arts, family and consumer education, physical education and health.

A unit in the core areas is defined as successful completion of two semesters in the same subject. A unit in health and physical education is defined as successful completion of the number of hours of instruction required by the Georgia Department of Education. Courses taken and grades earned in middle school will be recorded on the permanent history. Only courses taken in grades nine through twelve earn Carnegie units toward graduation with the exception of World Language and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Math 1.

By state law mandates of No Child Left Behind, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students must earn a satisfactory score on the CRCT to be promoted to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

## MAKING THE GRADE

The following grading scale for the school will be used:

<u>Scale and Range</u>	<u>GPA Computation</u>
<b>A</b> 90-100	<b>A</b> 4 points
<b>B</b> 80-89	<b>B</b> 3 points
<b>C</b> 71-79	<b>C</b> 2 points
<b>D</b> 70	<b>D</b> 1 point
<b>F</b> 0-69	<b>F</b> 0 point

## THE COUGAR'S BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The rights of the individual student to learn will be protected at all times. Any student behavior which interferes with this right will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions. The following discipline rules and procedures are outlined to ensure that all students are aware of the actions which violate school rules:

1. Students are expected to show respect to themselves, each other, their teachers, administrators and staff.
2. Students should not use profane, vulgar, or obscene words or gestures.
3. Students are expected to be on time to class and be prepared to learn with appropriate materials.
4. Gum, food, or drinks are not allowed in classrooms.
5. Hats, electronic devices, sunglasses, flip-flops and cameras are not allowed at school.
6. Bookbags may be used to carry books to and from school only. They must be kept in lockers during the school day.  
This includes mesh, nylon, canvas, etc. and purses that can be worn as a bookbag.
7. Appropriate dress is required at all times.
8. Students in the hallways during class must have their agendas.
9. Students may not sell items in school unless approved by an administrator.
10. To eliminate disruptions in the classroom, deliveries (i.e. flowers, balloons, etc.) to students are prohibited.

## TELEPHONE USE / MESSAGES / FORGOTTEN ITEMS

School phones are for business only. **PHONE MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS MUST BE RESTRICTED TO TRUE EMERGENCIES.** Students will not be called out of class to come to the phone. Non-emergency messages that students need prior to dismissal will be included in the school-wide afternoon announcements. HMS staff has been directed by the principal to ask the nature of the emergency. You must have your agenda as your pass to use the phone. Deliveries of forgotten items or messages to students cause interruptions to instruction. In addition to classroom disruption, HMS does not have enough staff or volunteers to see that student messages and forgotten items are delivered in a timely manner. Therefore, such deliveries will be made only if a true emergency exists. Students may check in the Attendance Office between classes for forgotten lunches, assignments, written messages from parents. Balloons and flowers may not be delivered to students during the school day. **HMS supports families' efforts in teaching responsibility to students; thereby we do not deliver non-emergency messages.**

## **VISITORS, GUESTS, AND RELATIVES**

We are a friendly school, but there are too many people here to allow you to bring friends to school. Parents need to check-in the office and obtain a visitors pass. No other visitors will be allowed.

## **AGENDA PLANNER/HALL PASS**

You need your agenda, which will serve as your hall pass, with you at **ALL** times. Happy hall wanderers without agendas will be escorted back to class or to the appropriate assistant principal's office.

## **BREAKFAST / LUNCH**

We offer both a morning breakfast program and a mid-day lunch program. Free and/or reduced breakfast and lunch applications will be given out during the first week of school. A new form is required each year. All food should be eaten in the cafeteria. No food or drink should be consumed in the school building at any time, other than lunch period! While at lunch you are expected to clean-up your own mess; that means you should pick up paper and throw your tray away in the trash barrels.

Full price for breakfast is \$1.30 and lunch is \$2.15. Reduced price for breakfast is \$.30 and lunch is \$.40. There will be no charges. These prices are subject to change based on DeKalb County School guidelines.

## **SCHOOL ATTIRE/DRESS**

Neatness, cleanliness, and appropriate dress are expected of all HMS students at all times. Any article of dress that tends to draw unfavorable attention, interferes with instruction, threatens health or safety, or is in obvious poor taste is considered out of order. Students must wear shoes while on campus. No flip-flops/No open-toed shoes. No pajamas. Hats and caps are inappropriate for inside wear and should be placed in your locker upon arrival at school. Bandanas or scarfs of any kind are not allowed at school and may not be worn as scarfs. Scarfs that cover the majority of the head are not permitted.

### **Jackets, coats and windbreakers**

- Not allowed in classrooms
- Must be put in lockers during the school day

**All pants, shorts, skirts must be worn at the waist. Pants must be the proper size fit (No baggy or tight fitting clothing) There should NOT be any rivets, lacing, holes or patches. This applies whether skin is showing or not. The length of the shorts, skirts, dresses and jumpers must be worn below the fingertips when the arms are fully extended. Lace, chiffon, or other see-through clothing may not be worn even with a shirt underneath. Midriff tops, tank tops and tops that do not fully cover the stomach are not allowed.**

**This is a generous policy and, therefore, students must adhere rigidly to its intent. The principal's or assistant principal's decisions on individual student dress issues will be final. When a HMS student fails to follow the basic standards of good taste and good grooming, he or she will be asked to correct the problem. If necessary, parents will be called to deliver an appropriate change of clothes.**

## **KID'S STUFF**

Items which distract or disturb others are not to be brought to school. Such items are "squeeze bottles", CD players (with or without earphones), Ipods, MP3 players, lasers, electronic games, beepers, basketballs, footballs, cameras, playing cards, sunglasses, skateboards or any other recreational item. If you bring these items to school they will be confiscated and not returned to you. Your parents or guardian may come to the school to retrieve the item if you expect to get it back. If you bring these items and they are stolen or misplaced, the school is not responsible.

## **CELL PHONES**

Henderson Middle School will adhere to the DeKalb County School System policy on cell phones. Students may not use cell phones for conversation or text messaging during the school day.

## **YOU SEE, I HAVE THIS PROBLEM**

Henderson Middle takes pride in its guidance and counseling programs. Services offered are social and emotional, academic, career and group counseling, and guidance. Counseling can be done on a one-time or a continuing basis. In addition, the counselor can assist in referrals to outside agencies. Students wishing to see the counselors are encouraged to stop by and sign up for appointments during the change of classes.

## **CAN I GO TO THE MEDIA CENTER?**

The library or media center, open each day from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., is designed to enrich your educational program. It is helpful in all areas of school work - from writing a term paper to preparing a power point presentation. It also provides a pleasant atmosphere for leisure reading and listening.

You must have a pass with a purpose in your agenda to come to the media center. When you exit please have an exit stamp placed on your pass. Book checkout is for two weeks and three books can be checked out at one time. Fines are charged for late materials.

## **CHRONIC TARDINESS**

Students are expected to be in school and in class on time. **First tardy** – warning, **Second tardy** – warning/parent contact, **Third - fifth tardies** – after school detention. **Sixth tardy** – in team suspension, **Seventh - tenth tardies** – referral to in-school suspension, **Eleventh +** - 10 days ISS, counselor and social worker referral.

## **I NEED AN ASPIRIN**

The office staff can dispense no medication of any kind. Medication should be brought to the assistant principal's office, located in the Attendance Office, in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician with your name, medication, dosage, and time to be administered. Written permission should be provided by the parent or guardian requesting the school to comply with the physician's orders regarding the administration of medication.

## **I THINK I BROKE MY LEG**

If you are injured while participating in any school activity, you should notify your instructor immediately. The teacher will send you to the attendance office. Any first aid which is necessary to meet the immediate emergency will be done. After this has been done, your parents will be contacted in regard to further medical treatment. Each student must understand that the school is not liable for doctor and hospital bills resulting from accidents of any kind.

## **SAFEKEEPING FOR MY STUFF**

Each student will be given the opportunity of obtaining a locker. A \$1.00 fee is charged for maintenance. You should not share your locker combination with anyone. You will be held responsible for any damages to your locker. You are reminded that the unauthorized removal of any contents from another student's locker will be dealt with as theft.

## **TRYING TO MAKE MONEY**

All fund raising conducted by school personnel, students, or Booster Clubs, must be approved by the Principal. If you are found selling/buying candy or any prohibited item from an unauthorized vendor, you will be disciplined and the items will be confiscated. There is no selling/buying during school hours.

## **FIGHTING**

**Fighting is a no-no!** All participants will receive a disciplinary referral. If you choose to fight, you can count on being suspended!

## **ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL**

- **Parent Drop-Off may occur 30 minutes before the start of school.**
- **Parent Pick-up must occur 30 minutes after the end of school.**

All HMS students who remain after 4:00 P.M. must be participating in a school activity under the supervision of a teacher or administrator and must have made prior arrangements for transportation home at the conclusion of the activity.

## **HOW TO AVOID REFERRALS**

As a student at Henderson Middle School it is your responsibility to:

1. *Be punctual.* Get to school and to class on time.
2. Be prepared. Bring all materials that you need for your classes.
3. Be *courteous.* Show consideration for the other students and school staff.
4. Be *respectful.* Students who destroy or vandalize school property will be required to pay for damages.
5. Be proud. Our school is special and so are you!
6. Be *neat.* Dress is a matter of taste; learn to dress tastefully.
7. Be *yourself.* Each of you is important to our school.

## **YOU HAVE CHOICES!**

Most people are faced with unpleasant or seemingly unfair situations in life. These are often the result of conflicts. There are many ways to handle such situations. Some choices are against rules and regulations. Furthermore, some choices are not effective. The following are some suggestions and ideas to improve the choices you make.

- Before taking any action, calmly review the situation.
- Consider if the choice you are about to make is worth risking the consequences of the action.
- It is not the situation that your peers will remember, but rather, it is how you handle the situation.
- No one enjoys being criticized in public. Talk about problems in private.
- Touching another student, even when "playing", is inappropriate in school.
- Fighting is not a mature way to handle problems.
- Treat other people as you would like to be treated.
- Ask for adult assistance or mediation when a conflict occurs.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular and prompt attendance is the responsibility of the student and the parents. The only valid excuses are illness and medical appointments, a death in the immediate family, mandated court appearances, or an emergency outside the control of the student or student's family.

Absences for reasons other than the above listed ones will be classified as unexcused. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, babysitting, car trouble, oversleeping, truancy, and beauty shop appointments.

If you must be absent, your parents should call 678-874-2911 between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. on the day that you are going to be absent. Otherwise, bring a note to school signed by your parents when you return.

Leaving school for appointments without checking out through the Attendance Office will be treated as truancy.

## CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

Any student leaving the school campus during the day must complete all check-out procedures in the Attendance Office. A secretary or administrator must talk with your parent before you may check-out. **NO CHECK-OUTS ALLOWED AFTER 3:30 PM.**

You must use your agenda as your pass to go to the Attendance Office to check-out. YOUR PARENT OR GUARDIAN OR DESIGNATED ADULT MUST BE NAMED ON THE NOTE AND PRESENT THE PROPER I.D., IF ASKED, AS THE PERSON AUTHORIZED TO CHECK YOU OUT. THE DESIGNATED ADULT MUST BE 18 OR OLDER.

- A. Confirmed Appointments: Confirmed appointment notes with your parent's signature and telephone number where they may be reached should be taken to the Attendance Office between (8:20 - 8:45 a.m.) for confirmation. You will be cleared to sign out at the scheduled time in the Attendance Office.
- B. Illness or Other Emergency: If you must leave school during the school day because of illness or other emergency, you must complete all check-out procedures.

## HOMEWORK / MAKE UP WORK

Homework and make-up assignments may be obtained through the HMS Counseling Center for excused absences of **more than 3 days**. For less than 3 days, students should use the "Buddy System" and call a classmate or check the teacher's website. It will be your responsibility upon returning from an absence to confer with your teachers to determine what assignments you have missed and the deadline for making them up. Please check above for what constitutes an excused absence.

**Normally, it takes at least 24 hours from the time assignments are requested to collect assignments and other related materials from all the teachers involved.**

The number of days of excused absence determines the length of time the student has to make up academic work. Normally, students receive one day of make-up time for each day absent. **All quizzes, oral reports, etc. must be scheduled before or after school, rather than during class time. Teachers only address makeup work during their planning period(s). Instruction is not interrupted to secure assignments.**

## WHERE'S MY BOOK?

The DeKalb County Textbook Policy states:

*Students shall be responsible for careful stewardship of school property. Students who lose or destroy school property shall be required to reimburse the DeKalb County School Board of Education for the current replacement value of the item(s). Students who return school property which exhibits wear in excess of that which could be attributed to normal use shall be assessed for damages.*

Immediate written notice shall be sent to parents/guardians when a student needs to make restitution for lost, destroyed, or damaged school property. If restitution is not forthcoming in a timely manner, appropriate action shall be taken to facilitate restitution.

Students who owe for lost, destroyed, or damaged property shall be denied the privilege of checking out additional materials until the DeKalb County Board of Education is compensated. Students may continue to use the school's learning resources or equipment within the confines of the school or media center.

## ELIGIBILITY AND ACTIVITIES

All athletic activities including Band, Chorus, Plays and Literary activities are regulated under the Constitution and By Laws of G.H.S.A. and the policies and procedures of the DeKalb County School System. You must pass five classes in the semester preceding the semester of participation. The application of these rules and procedures promote competition on a more nearly fair and equal basis. Contact your coach or sponsor for specific information regarding eligibility. You must have a physical examination conducted by a medical doctor, insurance, or waiver, and parent consent prior to participating in any athletic activity.

An example of the types of activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

<b><u>Performing Groups:</u></b>	band, chorus, drama, orchestra
<b><u>Student Government:</u></b>	6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> officers/ reps
<b><u>Publications:</u></b>	yearbook, newspaper, literary magazine
<b><u>Interest:</u></b>	Math Counts, Science Olympiad, Future Educators, Technology Education, GLOBE, Foreign Language, PRIDE, Delta Eta (4-H)
<b><u>Athletics:</u></b>	7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> grade football, basketball, track, cheerleading, and intramurals
<b><u>Honorary:</u></b>	National Junior Honor Society, Junior Beta Club, Top Cat Award, Triple A Awards, Department Awards, Honor Roll, Principal's List

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

The development of good character occurs over an extended period of time. Students will have opportunities for continuous exposure and practice of the identified character traits by integrating the teaching of character into the existing curriculum.

The following character traits will be covered monthly throughout the school year.

August.....	School Pride
September.....	Respect for Others
October.....	Fairness
November.....	Citizenship
December.....	Compassion
January.....	Perseverance
February.....	Courage
March.....	Self Control
April.....	Honesty
May.....	Self Respect
June.....	Cooperation
July.....	Courtesy

Think about these words. Use them on a daily basis at home, in the community and at school.

### REMEMBER:

"Your thoughts become your words.  
Your words become your actions.  
Your actions become your habits.  
Your habits become your character."

## THIS AND THAT

### PROGRESS REPORTS:

Throughout a semester, a student and his/her parents/guardians will be informed about his/her progress. Formal progress reports will be issued at the midpoint and end of each nine week connection rotation. Progress reports will be mailed. **Please submit \$6.00 to PTSA to cover the cost of mailing.**

### SCHOOL AND PARENT COMMUNICATION:

Henderson attempts to communicate with parents through many different methods; however, the best means is through direct contact with your child's teacher and/or team. Teachers are available during their planning period, before school or after school. You can make an appointment through the counseling office or leave a message for one of the team members to give you a call. If you have an address or telephone change please let us know by calling the registrar.

### PARENT EXPECTATIONS:

Parents are expected to take an active role at Henderson Middle School. Parent involvement is crucial to student success at Henderson Middle School. Volunteer opportunities are available for all parents. *(For information on available placements, call a member of PTSA).* Parents who work outside the home are asked to check with their employer to determine if the employer offers "release time" for volunteering at school and/or conferencing with teachers. **Every HMS parent is asked to commit volunteer time to the school.**

### SECURITY:

All outside doors are locked for security reasons. When entering the building you must come to the office, sign in, and receive a visitor's pass.

### LOST AND FOUND / VALUABLES

A lost and found bin is located in the HMS Attendance Office. Students may check this area for lost items. **Unclaimed items are donated monthly to charitable organizations.** Students are encouraged to keep their books, purses, jackets, and other personal items in their lockers or with them at all times. In addition, these items should be clearly marked with the student's name. HMS is not responsible for lost, damaged, stolen or donated items. Parents are always welcome to come look for lost items. **HMS is not responsible for any valuables. CD players, Ipods, MP3 players, radios, and headphones are not allowed in the building.**